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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

O God, our shield, as we approach the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, we thank You for raising up leaders who appeal to the better angels within us. Use our lawmakers to lead the quest for justice to roll down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream. As they lead our Nation, guide them around the obstacles that hinder their progress, uniting them for the common good of this great land. Lord, enable them to go from strength to strength as they fulfill Your purposes for their lives in this generation. May they stand for right and leave the consequences to You.

We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

THE PRESIDING OFFICER led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, January 16, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SCHATZ thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 294, the flood insurance legislation.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 294, S. 1926, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, on this issue alone we have been trying for months to move this vote. On our side we have heard constantly, persistently, and always from Senator LANDRIEU indicating how important this is to her State and to our country. So I would hope we can finally have a pathway forward on this today with a consent agreement.

It is my understanding Senator ISAKSON of Georgia is going to come to the floor soon and we will try to do that. I just want to alert everyone to the fact if that isn't going to work out, we are not going to delay this any more. We will file cloture and move on it when we get back from our next work period.

SCHEDULE

Following my remarks, Mr. President, and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 3547, which is the legislative vehicle for the Omnibus appropriations bill.

The filing deadline for first-degree amendments to the House message is 1 p.m. today. Under the rule, the cloture vote on the motion to concur in the House message to accompany the omnibus will be an hour after we come in tomorrow morning. There have been requests by both Democrats and Republicans to move the vote forward, and if that is possible—I am happy to cooperate with all Senators, if the majority of the Senators would like to do this early—I will be happy to see if we can get a consent agreement to do that.

We are also working, as I have indicated, on the flood insurance bill and we will continue to work on that.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 1931

Mr. REID. Mr. President, S. 1931 is due for a second reading, I am told.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1931) to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. I object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard. The bill will be placed on the calendar.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS

Mr. President, on this side of the aisle, we have not put to one side and forgotten about unemployment compensation extensions for 1.5 million desperate Americans. I wish to just spend a minute or two on this issue, but we have not forgotten this and I want to direct everyone's attention to an editorial in one of America's leading newspapers of today. Here is what it said.

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

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Republican Senators are pulling out every fake excuse they can think of for filibustering an extension of jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed. . . . The majority leader, Harry Reid, was mean to us and wouldn't let us offer amendments, they say.

We have heard that a lot. I am really a mean person.

Democrats refused to pay for the benefits. It's President Obama's fault because people can't find work because he won't approve the Keystone XL oil pipeline.

The article goes on:

The truth is the Republican Party simply does not believe that job seekers who have been out of work for 6 months or longer deserve government assistance. The most hard-hearted believe cutting benefits will give people an incentive to get back to work. The most cynical are hoping for widespread misery, which they can pin on ''Obama's economy'' for political gain in the elections this fall. Whatever the reasons, nearly five million unemployed people will go without benefits by the end of 2014, unless the party backs down.

The most appalling demand from Republicans was that benefits be paid for with cuts to other programs.

That is certainly the truth. The article continues:

For example, Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire proposed requiring that parents have a Social Security number to receive the child tax credit—a move that would eliminate an important anti-poverty measure for millions of children who are citizens though their parents are not.

We will have more to say about this. We are not going to leave this issue. This is a cutting-edge issue for the American people. Republicans outside Congress believe this is the right thing to do—the majority of Republicans.

HOUSE-PASSED OMNIBUS

The Senate today will consider the House-passed omnibus spending bill, an important bipartisan agreement that keeps our country on a responsible path while preventing another manufactured crisis—and we have had so many of those.

I cannot say enough about the work of the senior Senator from Maryland Ms. MIKULSKI. We came to the Senate together. She is someone who identifies with the people of Maryland as no one has ever identified with the people of Maryland, but in the process she also identifies with people around America. That is why she is revered in Maryland. She has been to Nevada, and we love her in Nevada also.

I don't know of anyone else who could have done what she did, working with the Republicans in the House. I admire her so very much, and I am very happy to have reached the point where we are today. After 3 years of damaging cuts to vital social programs, this bill finally increases investments in the middle class.

Is it perfect? Of course not. There is so much good to say about this bill. But Senator MIKULSKI, who represents the State where the headquarters of the National Institutes of Health resides, got an extra $1 billion for them—more than they got last year. It is too bad the Republicans' cost-cutting whacked them $1½ billion in the year before, but what she did with the NIH is exemplary of what she has done to help America.

So enough about her, but she has done something no one else could do.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

FREE TRADE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, yesterday, I said there were a number of things the President could announce in his North Carolina speech that would draw bipartisan support and actually boost the economy. One of the things I was particularly disappointed he didn't push—at least push harder—is trade.

As I said, this is one of the brightest areas of his economic agenda, but if we as a nation don't act quickly and decisively, the world is going to literally pass us right by. We are going to miss opportunities to benefit economically, to open foreign markets to American goods and to America's political and cultural influence.

When we look at the rest of the developed world, from Europe to Canada to Australia, they are practically falling all over themselves to negotiate more and better opportunities, while we basically have sat on our hands, a consequence of the President's inability to persuade his own party—his own party—to expand trade-related jobs.

So we need to catch up, but we can't do that without leadership from the President, the kind of leadership as we have seen in the Senate from the chairman of the Finance Committee, who himself obviously is a Democrat. He has been a tireless advocate for trade and for American agriculture. Yet with his retirement looming on the horizon, I am afraid there might not be many Democrats left in the Senate willing to help lead on this issue. That is why we need the President to be deeply involved. We need him to step up for American workers and increase exports by bringing his own party on board with a trade promotion bill that was introduced just last week.

The authority in that legislation is key to enabling the administration to conclude critical trade negotiations that hold incredible promise for American jobs and economic growth. With our economy in such dire straits these days, opening new opportunities for American goods through trade should be a real no-brainer. It is an issue that used to be fairly bipartisan around here, and it can be again, if the President is willing to lead. Millions of middle-class families and small businesses are counting on him to do just that.

So I look forward to him promoting the benefits of trade and the legislation I mentioned in his State of the Union Address. I hope we will hear about that. When he does so, Republicans will be right there with him to move the trade promotion bill through Congress in a bipartisan fashion.

EPA COAL REGS

Last week the Obama administration published a regulation that would effectively ban coal-fired powerplants from being built in the future.

The head of the EPA, who will be testifying on this regulation today, basically admitted as much herself when she called it ''significant economic lift.'' She knows the technology this regulation requires is prohibitively expensive; that her own agency knows it is nowhere near—nowhere near—ready for adoption; that even some White House officials do not believe her plan is feasible, and that is the point. The point is to eliminate coal jobs in America.

That is why I wasn't surprised by emails that recently came to light—emails which appeared to show EPA officials colluding with extremist special interests in devising impossible-to-achieve regulations. The emails even referred to previously shuttered powerplants as ''defeated,'' making the intent behind coal-related actions abundantly clear.

Here is the other thing. This new regulation is not even expected to reduce emissions in a meaningful way—not even expected to reduce emissions in a meaningful way. What it will do, however, is trigger a section of the law that would allow the administration to eventually shut down coal-fired plants that exist today.

In other words, it would allow the administration to achieve its true aim of eliminating coal jobs completely. For struggling middle-class families across eastern Kentucky, this is just the latest punch in the gut from Washington, from an administration whose own advisers seem to believe that ''a war on coal is exactly what is needed,'' from one of the President's advisers.

Some call this regulation outrageous. Some say it is extremism at its worst. Here is what I call it. It is absolutely cruel because here is what is lost in this administration's crusade for ideological purity, in its crusade for approval of coastal editorials—human lives are affected, the lives of people I represent, folks who haven't done anything to deserve a war being declared on them.

These are the Kentuckians who just want to work, provide for their families, and deliver the type of low-cost energy that attracts more jobs to Kentucky. And coal is what allows so many of them to do all that. It provides well-paying jobs. And, as Jimmy Rose of Bell County, KY, who has now become a rather famous country singer, puts it in his hit song, ''Coal Keeps the Lights On.''

I remind my colleagues that coal does more than keep the lights on in Kentucky; it keeps the lights on here too, both figuratively and literally. From the anti-coal blogger tapping out a tweet to the EPA staffer cooking up a meal, millions of Americans rely on coal to power their homes and their offices. In recent years, coal has accounted for about 40 percent of the

electricity generated in our country. That compares to just 3.5 percent for sources such as wind and solar. So even if the administration were to achieve its dream of eliminating every last coal job, it is not as though they could just fire up a few windmills to cover the gap. It is going to take a very long time—decades—for alternative sources to even come close to providing the same level of jobs and energy as coal. In other words, the administration's ideological crusade doesn't even seem to have a logical end game. It is basically just ideology.

Here is the thing. Republicans agree that alternative and renewable energy sources are necessary for fuel diversity, but we believe wind and geothermal and solar should be part of an ''all of the above'' energy strategy which also includes coal and natural gas and the oil we can get right here in North America, with Americans providing the workforce.

Another key difference is this: Republicans look at Kentucky coal miners and see hard-working men and women, not obstacles to some leftwing fantasy. That is why I, along with 40 Republican cosponsors—including my friend and fellow Kentuckian RAND PAUL—intend to file a resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act to ensure a vote to stop this devastating rule. We believe the EPA regulation in question clearly meets the definition for congressional review under this statute, and I am sending a letter to Comptroller General Dodaro outlining the reasons why that is the case.

If the majority leader were serious about helping Kentuckians, he would stop blocking the Senate from passing my Saving Coal Jobs Act. It is commonsense legislation that would give elected representatives of the people a greater say in how coal is regulated in this country. There is no reason for him to keep it bottled up a moment longer.

Look. Kentucky is facing a real crisis. The Obama administration appears to be sending signals that its latest regulation is actually just the beginning in a new, expanded front in its war on coal. Already the administration's regulations have played a significant role in causing coal jobs in my State to plummet. These are good jobs which pay more than $1 billion in annual wages to my constituents. For every miner with a job, three more Kentuckians will hold a coal-dependent job as well.

The majority leader and his Democratic caucus now have a choice: Are they going to stand with the coal families under attack in places such as Kentucky and West Virginia and Colorado or are they going to continue to stand with the powerful leftwing special interests who want to see their jobs completely eliminated? That is the choice. It is pretty clear where I stand and where most of my colleagues on this side of the aisle stand.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

SPACE LAUNCH LIABILITY INDEMNIFICATION EXTENSION ACT

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the House message to accompany H.R. 3547, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

House message to accompany H.R. 3547, an act to extend Government liability, subject to appropriation, for certain third-party claims arising from commercial space launches.

Pending:

Reid motion to concur in the amendment of the House to the amendment of the Senate to the bill, with Reid amendment No. 2655, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2656 (to amendment No. 2655), of a perfecting nature.

Reid motion to refer the message of the House on the bill to the Committee on Appropriations, with instructions, Reid amendment No. 2657, to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2658 (to (the instructions) amendment No. 2657), of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2659 (to amendment No. 2658), of a perfecting nature.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I come to the floor today as the chairperson of the Appropriations Committee—a committee I am honored to chair—to support the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2014. This bill passed the House on Wednesday with a stunning and amazing vote of 359 to 67. The purpose of this agreement is to fund the operation of the Federal Government for the remainder of fiscal year 2014.

The vote in the House, which I hope will be paralleled here in the Senate, shows what working together based on civility, listening to each other, being willing to compromise but not capitulate on principle, negotiating on what are the appropriate fiscal levels—this shows we can get the job done.

In today's era of shutdown, slowdown, slamdown politics, where negotiating occurs on cable TV rather than in committee rooms, we worked together. Setting aside partisan differences, working across the aisle and across the dome, we looked to find how we could put together a bill both sides of the aisle and both Houses could agree upon.

This is what the American people deserve: Us doing the business of the country, legislating in due diligence and regular order. They want a government that works as hard as they do, and working under a very stringent deadline, we were able to do this. After 3 years of damaging cuts that have hurt our efforts to help people, this agreement turns the corner.

We recognized that we needed to focus on growth in jobs and lower the unemployment rate but not increase our debt or our deficit. We worked very hard to do that, to increase the kinds of public investments the American people would approve of—keep America strong, keep our economy strong—and to do the diligent work we need to do.

This bill is something called an omnibus bill which includes all 12 appropriations bills. That means we have 12 subcommittees—defense, health and human services, labor and education, energy, water, financial services—and each one has to do their funding work. Ordinarily, we would bring one bill up at a time, but that was not to be. So where we are is this is a consolidated bill of all 12.

We have been working on this since the President sent his budget to us this spring. We held over 50 hearings, listened, did due diligence, and marked up our bills. We were ready to come to the floor in the fall, but it was not to be. We had to wait for the Budget Committee to do its work to give us a top line so we could get to our bottom line.

On December 18, just before Christmas, Congress gave us that cap on discretionary spending. We knew what we wanted to spend, but, again, we know we have to be a more frugal government. We know we have to be smart not only about spending but about saving, getting rid of dated, duplicative, and dysfunctional programs, and we were able to do just that. On December 18 we were given a cap on discretionary spending of $1.02 trillion. We met that cap. We worked nonstop over the holidays, resolving differences in both money and in certain policy areas.

What we do today is we come here with an agreement that is bipartisan. I emphasize that. The agreement is bipartisan. It is bicameral; that means both sides of the Capitol. It has also been one of compromise but not, on either side, capitulating on principle.

I am proud to say this agreement meets our national security needs and ensures the readiness of our troops and keeps us safe at home. It also meets the compelling human needs of our middle class and our most vulnerable. At the same time, it also invests in America's future by strengthening our physical infrastructure and also supporting research and development to save lives, spur growth and innovation and everything from lifesaving biosciences to aeronautics. And we want to make sure we are looking not only at jobs today but jobs tomorrow.

Before I give more detail about this agreement, I will highlight one of the reasons I am very proud of something we have done in this bill. Our legislation pending before the Senate restores the full cost-of-living adjustment for our working-age disabled military retirees and survivors of our departed servicemembers. Their COLAS were mistakenly reduced by 1 percent in the recent budget agreement. This agreement fixes that error.

I wish to make this note: It is limited in scope. It fixes the error for disabled

military retirees and departed servicemembers. It is not the comprehensive pension reform necessary. We will await the Presidential commission which will come before the Senate, and we will be able to implement and work on their recommendations in due time.

I encourage my Members that to vote for this bill is to support the fix that helps our most vulnerable patriots. It is limited in scope but an important downpayment to restoring full COLAS for military retirees of working age who are either disabled or are part of the departed servicemembers.

This agreement provides for our national security. It has $11 billion more than current levels for operation and maintenance, $1 billion for the National Guard and Reserve so that our units are ready for missions overseas and/or at home. The resources also support the Defense Department's 3 million Active-Duty, Reserve, and civilian employees. This bill, if it passes, eliminates the need for civilian furloughs in 2014, and it also prioritizes readiness.

The agreement funds important areas in other protections of national security—an area I am very keenly interested in. An increasing threat to our people and our economy is cyber security. One need only look at the headlines. From Target to Neiman Marcus, 40 million Americans or more were hit by hackers whom we expect came from a non-NATO member country. There is a growing nexus between organized crime and those who have other predatory intents to the United States. We have $11 billion in here for cyber security for the Department of Defense, the FBI, Homeland Security, and important research agencies.

This agreement also keeps its promises to veterans in terms of health care, and we pay particular attention to the VA disability backlog. We believe that if you were on the frontlines over there, you shouldn't face a long line here when you have applied for your disability benefits. Working with the relevant authorizing committee, we believe we have been able to come up with it.

This bill also makes important investments in America's human infrastructure and meets compelling human needs in health care, education, and childcare. We have increased our investment in Head Start by $1 billion, making sure 90,000 more kids across the Nation are part of early childhood education programs that improve their school and reading and math readiness. We have also increased the childcare development grants by $154 million, meaning 22,000 more lower income families will be able to afford childcare—about 24,000 children in Maryland alone.

In our committee, we believe welfare should not be a way of life but should be a way to a better life. Childcare development grants enable women to move from welfare to work.

Also, for those who are working at a minimum wage where often full-time work means full-time poverty, if you are going to work, childcare should not eat up half of your already modest income. The child care development grant is a tool, along with the child care tax credit, to enable people to be able to work and make sure work is worth it.

We are also very conscious, on both sides of the aisle, of the need of Federal support for special education. We do not want a continued unfunded Federal mandate, where we require certain programs for special needs children but do not meet the Federal responsibility for paying for it. We have money in the bill for this.

Energy assistance and help with food and housing we have been able to do here. But we believe the best social program is a job. There is no doubt about it. To be able to work at a full-time job that supports a person's family and let's them get on the opportunity ladder for the American dream is what we hope to do. We believe, many of us, that with jobs helping build America's infrastructure we meet two needs. We have an aging, decrepit, sometimes even dangerous infrastructure. The money in this bill will go to important programs such as the harbor maintenance trust fund and also TIGER grants to help with transportation, so we can rebuild America's infrastructure and at the same time put Americans to work on rebuilding our infrastructure.

Also, at the same time we believe we need to look at the jobs of tomorrow, where we fund the kind of basic research that only government can do, that leads to new ideas, that will lead to the new thinking in the private sector that will create the new jobs tomorrow. That means, for example, for the National Institutes of Health, we increase it $1 billion. It means they will be able to do 400 additional studies. It will also deal, not only with our cures for cancer but also the brain initiative will help speed along finding a cure or cognitive stretchout for Alzheimer's. This is good public investment.

When we look at Medicaid funding, a cure for Alzheimer's or cognitive stretchout will not only save families the awful consequences of Alzheimer's—my father died of that—but it will also help our budget. When we look at Medicaid, 80 percent of the beneficiaries on Medicaid are children, but 80 percent of the money goes to long-term care for people who have either Alzheimer's or other neurological impairment diseases such as Lou Gehrig's disease, Parkinson's, and so on. When we can find a breakthrough on Alzheimer's, it will also help lower the cost of Medicaid, and we will be able to put it in other programs.

There is much more to be said about this bill and I will say it later. I see my vice chairman is on the floor and he will want to speak and there are others who are also present. I will speak during the day, but I want you to know I am proud of this bill. We did the job that was given us. We played the hand that was dealt us, and what we have come up with is a good deal for the American people. We tried to be smart about where we spent the money and we tried to be very smart in how we saved money.

I yield the floor and look forward to continued debate and passage of this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, I will join my friend and long-time colleague, the senior Senator from Maryland and chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, who has just spoken, in strongly supporting passage of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2014. This bill is a product of a bipartisan and very collegial negotiation between both parties in both Houses of Congress. It is in very large part a compromise of what the House and Senate produced in their respective committee processes last summer.

We, of course, have our differences and each of us would like to have many features in this bill different, but that is the nature of a negotiation and ultimately of a compromise, and that is where we are today.

There is much we would like and much we do not like in this bill, but on balance I believe it represents a middle ground upon which we can all comfortably stand. It is certainly far better than the alternative, which would be another confrontation, another government shutdown, and another giant step further away from establishing some sense of regular order.

It is a matter of record that I did not support the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013. It is and remains my strong preference that we continue to reduce our discretionary spending levels and, more importantly, our long-term mandatory spending levels. As I have said many times, once the Congress has decided what our spending levels are to be, I believe it is the responsibility of the respective appropriations committees to decide how those funds will be spent. The bill before us does exactly that.

This legislation adheres to the statutory budget caps for defense and nondefense spending set by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013. It carries forward a spending level for defense programs that avoids a $20 billion sequester for 2014. The bill funds total discretionary spending below the 2004 level when adjusted for inflation.

Enacting this funding measure will allow Congress finally to advance its current priorities instead of relying on the spending priorities of the past, which of course is the unavoidable consequence of a continuing resolution. Seven out of twelve bills in this omnibus have been relying on appropriations priorities dictated by the fiscal year appropriations for 2012. Instead of giving the executive branch virtually

unfettered discretion, this bill includes hundreds of limits on how the executive branch can spend taxpayer dollars. It provides continuity for key government functions and avoids the uncertainty of additional continuing resolutions.

Since the President took office, we have enacted 20 continuing resolutions. This bill today provides no new money to implement ObamaCare by holding flat the funding for certain accounts at the Department of Health and Human Services and the Internal Revenue Service. It funds the financial regulators who implement Dodd-Frank at a level that is $424 million below the President's request.

We will hear many times today that this bill is not the bill any individual Senator would have written, and that is true. It includes concessions that many would not like to make. But it also contains funding or limits on funding for priorities that are important to Members of both sides of the aisle. In my view, this is the prerequisite for a legislative compromise and is what we have achieved with this bill.

I again thank the chair of this committee Senator MIKULSKI and commend her for setting a tone that made this agreement possible. I join with her in strongly urging our colleagues to support this measure, just as the Members of the House did yesterday by a vote of 359 to 67.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy with my colleagues, Senator GRAHAM, Senator AYOTTE, and Senator ROBERTS.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I bring to the attention of my colleagues the front page of the Washington Post this morning: ''Hill balks at shifting CIA role in drone war.''

> Congress has moved to block President Obama's plan to shift control of the U.S. drone campaign from the CIA to the Defense Department, inserting a secret provision in the massive government spending bill introduced this week that would preserve the spy agency's role in lethal counterterrorism operations, U.S. officials said.
>
> The measure, included in a classified annex to the $1.1 trillion federal budget plan, would restrict the use of any funding to transfer unmanned aircraft or the authority to carry out drone strikes from the CIA to the Pentagon. . . . ''

The Appropriations Committee is supposed to appropriate. The Appropriations Committee has no business making this decision. How many of my colleagues knew that this provision was in this mammoth appropriations bill? I bet a handful. The job of the Armed Services Committee and the job of the Intelligence Committee is to authorize these things. There was no hearing in the Armed Services Committee, there was no hearing in the Intelligence Committee on this issue. Instead, a major policy decision that has to do with the ability to defend this Nation against the forces of violent Islamic extremism is now being decided in a secret annex of a mammoth appropriations bill.

It is not the first time I say that the appropriators have authorized. The appropriators have gotten into the business of the authorizing committees in a way that is a violation of every procedure and process this Senate is supposed to be pursuing.

I believe Senator LEVIN, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, will be as outraged as I am. I believe the chairperson of the Intelligence Committee will be as angry as I am. This is a fundamental function of government that has to do with national security and it is hidden in a provision, in a secret provision of the mammoth appropriations bill. I say to the distinguished chairperson and ranking member, that is not their business.

Some of us have been speaking out for more than a year about the terrorist attack of September 11, 2012, which took the lives of four American public servants in Benghazi, Libya, including U.S. Ambassador Chris Stevens. We have spoken out because of the many questions that still remain unanswered to this day.

We have spoken out and will continue to speak out despite efforts of partisans and proxies of the administration to sweep all of this under the rug. The latest snow job came in December, from the New York Times, that ever-reliable surrogate of the Obama administration, which published a long report challenging some key facts about the Benghazi attack. But as Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan used to say, everyone is entitled to their own opinions but not to their own facts. The facts are stubborn. In reality, what the Times report does is propagate myths. Let's review some of the facts.

The Times claims the following:

> Months of investigation . . . centered on interviews with Libyans in Benghazi who had direct knowledge of the attack there and its context, turned up no evidence that Al Qaeda or other international terrorist groups had any role in the assault.

The Times goes on to claim:

> Benghazi was not infiltrated by Al-Qaeda. . . .

Here are the facts. Al Qaeda-affiliated groups were present in Benghazi, and they were involved in the attack of September 11, 2012. The New York Times itself reported on October 12:

> American officials said [the attack] included participants from Ansar al-Shariah, Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and the Muhammad Jamal network, a militant group in Egypt.

All of these groups are affiliated with Al Qaeda. The New York Times claims:

> Republican arguments appear to conflate purely local extremist organizations, like Ansar al-Shariah with Al Qaeda's international terrorist network.

Again, here are the facts. In an interview yesterday with CNN, the Senator from California acknowledged correctly that Ansar al-Shariah, which played a major role in the attack, is linked to Al Qaeda. We are drawing on the work of our Intelligence Committee which yesterday released its report on the Benghazi attack and its aftermath.

In that report you will find numerous references by the intelligence community before the attack that make clear the nature of the Al Qaeda threat in Benghazi. The claims that Al Qaeda had not infiltrated Benghazi rests on the same rhetorical sleight-of-hand that holds that while groups may align themselves with Al Qaeda, may seek and receive direction from Al Qaeda, may share similar terrorist goals of Al Qaeda, and may even call themselves part of Al Qaeda, but if they are not sitting along the Pakistan-Afghan border or are not part of so-called core Al Qaeda or Al Qaeda senior leadership, then somehow they are not Al Qaeda.

This is the same bizarre language and logic that may have led then-Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice to claim just days after the attack that ''we have decimated Al Qaeda,'' this despite the fact that Al Qaeda-affiliated groups are proliferating and gaining traction all across the Middle East and North Africa, including in Benghazi.

The fact is that the attack against our diplomatic facility in Benghazi on September 11 was carried out in part by Al Qaeda-affiliated terrorists who had a safe haven in parts of eastern Libya. As the Senate Intelligence Committee report finds, the Intelligence Committee provided ample strategic warning about the negative security trends in Benghazi and the likelihood they would further deteriorate. This was the opposite of an intelligence failure; this was clear as day.

Despite these clear warning signs, the State Department was unprepared. Our diplomatic facility in Benghazi was insecure and had already been attacked multiple times. Our military was not postured and ready to respond to contingencies in a part of Libya where attacks against westerners and western interests had already occurred and where the threat of more attacks was growing.

The false narrative the New York Times is furthering just so happens to align with the Obama administration's account of events, but, again, facts are stubborn, and the Senate Intelligence Committee report clearly supports the conclusion that the administration knew or should have known of the terrorist threat in Benghazi during the relevant period and should have pre-positioned assets or made other preparations to better protect our people serving there.

The administration and its allies will continue to try to sweep Benghazi under the rug—including the fact that we have still not received testimony and the presence of the individuals who were present and moved to Germany the day following the attack on the

Embassy and the deaths of four Americans.

Contrary to the President's repeated claim that the tide of war is receding and contrary to his administration's talking point that Al Qaeda has been decimated, the reality is that Al Qaeda-affiliated groups are emboldened now from central Asia to the Middle East and north Africa, all the way to west African countries such as Nigeria and Mali. Indeed, nothing brings this home more tragically than watching the black flags of Al Qaeda hoisted over the Iraq city of Fallujah. Ninety-five brave soldiers and Americans died in Fallujah, 600 were wounded, and today we see the black flags of Al Qaeda hoisted over the city of Fallujah. The problem is getting worse, and that is in large part due to this administration's disengagement from these regions.

Look at Libya today. It is a country that we and our NATO allies intervened to save from the wrath of an anti-American tyrant, and it is now characterized by chaos, lawlessness, and ungoverned spaces that are exploited by those who seek to do harm to our Nation and our interests. According to the Senate Intelligence Committee's report, 15 Libyans who cooperated with our investigation into the Benghazi attack have been murdered.

The administration can blame the Libyans for these problems, just as they blame the Iraqis for Iraq's problems, but they can't escape their share of the blame for failing to support these people who want and need our help to secure their countries. That is why Chris Stevens was in Benghazi. That is why he risked and ultimately gave his life. He believed it was in our interest to lead events in the world and support our friends and those who wish to be our friends in their effort to build stable, successful societies with effective democratic governments. The greatest way we can honor his sacrifice, and those of his colleagues, is by recommitting ourselves to their mission.

Unless America actively supports those in the broader Middle East who wish to replace despair and extremism with hope and freedom, I fear the tide of war will eventually get us again.

I note that my colleague the Senator from New Hampshire is on the floor, and I would ask her and my colleague from South Carolina, is it not true that in this Intelligence Committee report, which is very encompassing, except for one mention in the minority views, there is no individual who is held responsible? So now we have a situation where bureaucracies are responsible but individuals are not. I find that intriguing.

Also, my friend from South Carolina has been trying to interview witnesses for a number of months, if not years, who were at the scene of the attack and then moved to Germany the following day. Isn't it true that we have never been able to interview those witnesses, which could have cleared up any arguments or any doubt about what the attack was all about?

Mr. GRAHAM. I thank my colleague for the question. I finally got to interview a survivor about a month or so ago with Senators MENENDEZ and CORKER. I have only been able to interview one witness after all of these years and months.

If I could, I wish to thank the Intelligence Committee for doing a lot of hard work, but let's not lose sight that this is not just about the State Department. My focus is going to be comprehensive, and Senator MCCAIN has called for a joint select committee, along with myself and Senator AYOTTE, for over a year now. Why? You don't want to stovepipe this. The Intelligence Committee tells us in pretty good detail about the failures of the State Department, but here is my question: In the September 14 White House meeting where the Intelligence Committee prepared talking points for the White House that clearly established that this was a terrorist attack with Al Qaeda people involved—who changed those talking points in that White House meeting?

I have an email—which I hope will be here in a moment—from General Petraeus. Basically, somebody in that meeting or before the meeting is saying to General Petraeus that the White House wants to take references to Al Qaeda out and basically sanitize the talking points. He is upset, but he says: Well, go ahead and do what they want. Nobody admires General Petraeus more than I do, but, quite frankly, somebody needs to revisit that.

Where was the intelligence community for 2 weeks when the President of the United States—not Susan Rice—was telling the entire world: We think this was a protest caused by a video, when the intelligence community knew differently? To my friends in the intelligence community, you need to answer that question. What input did you give? Did anybody pick up a phone and call somebody at the White House? They need to tell the President to quit doing that because it is not accurate.

Another question: On September 15, 16, and 17 of September, all the survivors were interviewed by the FBI in Germany. I have talked to one survivor. I can tell you, in a quick summary, the man was brave and the people on the ground in the State Department deserve medals for going through what they did. But let me tell you this: He said there was no protest. There was not one report from Benghazi about a protest around the Embassy.

The Turkish Ambassador left not too long before the attack. Do you think he would have walked out in the middle of a protest? Do you think the Ambassador would have gone to bed if there was a protest? The people in charge of security never reported a protest because there was not one, and he said there wasn't one. He said: I saw on my screen—and he was in charge of security at the time—16 to 20 heavily armed people running through the gate and carrying a banner in Arabic. At the time, I didn't know what it said. I now know it was the banner of Ansar al-Sharia, the Al Qaeda affiliate.

And to my friends the New York Times, journalism has died at that paper. Do you really believe this wasn't a preplanned terrorist attack with Al Qaeda affiliates in charge? The gentleman said there were four gun trucks around the compound. It was a coordinated military attack, and they were lucky to have survived.

Who started this? Who planned this? The man's name was Qumu, the former Gitmo detainee. I can't say his last name, but I think it is Qumu. The man who started Ansar al-Sharia came from Gitmo. He was a former Gitmo detainee, a Libyan who went back to Libya and started this group. The ''60 Minutes'' report identified him and a Mr. Khattala as the organizers of this attack. All I can say is that there is no mystery about who planned this. It was an Al Qaeda affiliate in Libya.

On August 16 a cable was sent back from Chris Stevens to Washington at the State Department saying: We can't defend the consulate because 10 training camps of Al Qaeda exist in Benghazi; the Al Qaeda flag is flying.

By the way, the Red Cross had left Benghazi and the British had left Benghazi because of attacks by terrorist groups. This was long before September 11.

Don't tell me we don't know. We do know. It was terrorists. It was a former Gitmo detainee who was bin Laden's bodyguard. What did he have to do—have a card? The guy who was in Gitmo whom we let go was core Al Qaeda. He was bin Laden's bodyguard. They caught him in Pakistan. He fought in Afghanistan.

Now, what we don't know from this report is who in the White House changed the talking points.

You want to know what Chris Christie did? Fine. Absolutely fair game. We know what he did when he found out what his people did about the traffic jam. He fired them. He got up in front of the whole world and said: I am embarrassed. It is my fault. I am going to fire the people who did this bad thing.

Name one person who has been held accountable for this bad thing called Benghazi. Name one person at the State Department who has been fired for ignoring repeated requests for additional security on the consulate coming from people in Libya.

By the way, the Accountability Review Board—what did I learn in my interview with the survivor? I found out for the first time that villas B and C—the places that were attacked in Benghazi, the State Department consulate—had their lease renewed in July for an entire year for hundreds of thousands of dollars. I didn't know that. It was leased for well over half a million

dollars. So you are going to tell me they were going to close the consulate in December? That was the conclusion of the Accountability Review Board. That is not accurate.

I will tell you what I think they were going to do. I think Hillary Clinton was going to go down in December and announce that the permanent facility would be open in Benghazi.

To Hillary Clinton's and Susan Rice's credit, these two women pushed the President to keep Benghazi from being overrun during the war with Qadhafi. They got involved, and to their credit they pushed the President to get involved militarily to prevent the slaughter of everybody in Benghazi.

I have been told that the plan for Benghazi was to have a permanent footprint and for Secretary Clinton to go down there as one of her last acts to say: We are here, and we are here to stay. The problem with that scenario is that the security had deteriorated because we had absolutely no plan to fall on after the fall of Qadhafi.

Mr. MCCAIN. I think a lot of people who are observers really have to view this and the actions on the part of the administration—the statement by now-National Security Adviser Susan Rice on every Sunday talk show was that this was the result of a hateful video, a spontaneous demonstration, and that Al Qaeda has been decimated. We can only view that and some of these actions in the context of the fact that it was a political campaign. There was a Presidential campaign going on, and the rhetoric time after time and rally after rally from the President of the United States and his surrogates was this: Bin Laden is dead. Al Qaeda is on the run. The tide of war is receding.

All of these events that took place at the consulate in Benghazi and the death of Christopher Stevens contradicted that storyline. Still, I cannot understand why 2 weeks later the President of the United States was before the United Nations and still talking about how this was due to a spontaneous demonstration and hateful video. You can only understand that, in my view, it was in the context of a storyline that was propagated throughout the 2012 Presidential campaign.

Mr. GRAHAM. I think the White House, in my view—this is a reasonable conclusion but not a fair conclusion because we don't know exactly what happened yet. But I can tell you this: Somebody at the White House on September 14 pressured the intelligence community to change the story of Benghazi. And on September 15, why did they pick Susan Rice? She said that Secretary Clinton was tired and had gone through a lot of trauma. I am sure that is true, but I know Secretary Clinton pretty well. I think she is tough.

Let's put it this way: She could not be on TV to talk about what happened at the State Department because she was distraught? I don't buy that. Does anybody believe that about Secretary Clinton? And if it is true, it is something the American people need to consider. I don't believe it is true. I don't believe she was incapable of going on television, as Susan Rice says. I believe they picked a person very loyal to the President who would say whatever needed to be said. What she said was so far away from the truth that it needs to be investigated. What she said was so beneficial to the President's reelection that it needs to be investigated.

She was speaking definitively about Benghazi on September 15 while the FBI was interviewing survivors on the 15th, 16th, and the 17th. Why would any administration go on national television and tell the world what happened in Benghazi while the FBI is still interviewing people who were in the attack? And where did the FBI's interviews go?

I talked to the Deputy Director of the FBI who is now retired. He said not one person interviewed by the FBI in Germany ever said there was a protest; all of them said it was a terrorist attack. So how could the FBI have interviews from every person on the ground in Benghazi who worked for the State Department saying that there was no protest and it was a terrorist attack, and that not get into the system? Did the FBI just sit on these interviews? Who did they give those interviews to? How could Susan Rice tell the American people and the world we know what happened in Benghazi before the interviews were over? She went on television to spin this story. How could the President of the United States, after the interviews were taken, go before the American people time and time again for weeks and tell a story about a protest that never occurred? This may not be a big deal to my colleagues, but it is a hell of a big deal to me.

When Abu Ghraib blew up, Senator MCCAIN and myself said: This is not a few rotten apples; this is system failure. Before the surge, when Iraq was falling apart, we said: This is not working, no matter what people in the Bush administration are telling us. We know better. We have been there. When Gitmo was a mess, we didn't sweep it under the rug. We worked with Senator LEVIN and Senator FEINSTEIN, two great Americans, to get the definitive truth as best we could about failures at Abu Ghraib, about Gitmo, and we spoke truth to power when it came to Iraq.

Mr. MCCAIN. Regarding Iraq, we called for the resignation of the Secretary of Defense because of the failures in Iraq.

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes, we did.

Now here we are, years later, and the families have no clue as to what happened to their loved ones. Quit blaming the dead guy. This suggestion that Chris Stevens had fault for his own death—Chris Stevens was in Benghazi because that is where he was supposed to be doing what America wanted him to do: Try to hold Libya together. So there is not going to be any blame on the dead guy.

I wish to ask a question of Senator AYOTTE. The Senator from New Hampshire has followed this as well as anybody. Can the Senator describe for us from her point of view the unanswered questions and whether she thinks there is evidence that this was a preplanned terrorist attack versus a protest?

Ms. AYOTTE. I wish to thank my colleagues, the Senator from South Carolina and the Senator from Arizona, who have been relentless in finding the truth about what happened in Benghazi where our ambassador and three brave Americans were murdered.

There are so many questions, but I would start with the accountability question the Senator from South Carolina raised. No one has been held accountable. Who has been held accountable for the failures?

If we look at this intel report, it is very clear the intelligence community, according to this report, provided ample strategic warning that our people in Benghazi were at risk. There were failures, and no one has been held accountable. Why?

As I look at these talking points, the question was raised: Why was the reference to Al Qaeda removed from the talking points? Who did that in the context of a Presidential campaign? But also, take a look at these talking points. There is no reference in these talking points to a video. Look at the actual language of the talking points.

Why is it that the spokesman for the President, on September 13, is out there saying that this is a reaction to this movie? Why is it that Susan Rice, the Ambassador, is on television on multiple shows blaming the video? Not only was it absolutely wrong when she said Al Qaeda was decimated—and it was misleading, particularly the fact that Al Qaeda had been removed from the talking points, but there is no reference in the talking points to a video. So who in the administration made up the video story?

That is important for the American people to know because it wasn't just Ambassador Susan Rice who relied on the video story. It was our President of the United States who talked about the video and talked about it, frankly, after the Ambassador went on all of the Sunday shows on September 16. In fact, the President said as late as September 18 when asked—basically, he talked about the video and said: You had a video that was released by somebody who lives here, sort of a shadowy character—here is what happened—who had made an extremely offensive comment. So we have the President of the United States, as late as September 18, and then again on September 20—we have the President saying on Univision Network, responding to the possible involvement of Al Qaeda: Is Al Qaeda involved? Here is what we do know: That the natural protest that arose because of the outrage from the video were used by the extremists to see if they could harm U.S. interests.

Where did the video come from? Even what the intelligence community came

up with, which was deficient and which was clearly subject to political influence because it removed the reference to Al Qaeda, has no reference to a video. So I think there are a lot of questions that need to be answered.

Here is the most important question: Why has no one been brought to justice? The President, I believe it was on September 12, said: We will find out who did this, and we will bring them to justice. For those families, those victims, no one has been brought to justice. In fact, we have people such as Abu Khattala, who was a former commander of Ansar al-Shariah, who is believed to have been there that night sitting in cafes in Libya giving press interviews, and yet there is much evidence to suggest that he is likely to be involved in this, and many other terrorists, but no one has been brought to justice. So why is that? Why doesn't anyone have the curiosity not only to answer the questions of what happened that night but also to ensure that justice is done?

Mr. GRAHAM. If the Senator will yield, I am trying to find the press statement of the White House official that says the President has consulted with his national security team—I am paraphrasing—about the threats we face throughout the world and that we are ready. This is on September 10. What does this report tell us about September 11? We were so far away from being ready that it is unnerving. So there is a lot to be asked. Why would somebody in the White House issue a statement on 10 September talking about being ready for any contingency anywhere and basically assuring the American people the President is on top of this when, clearly, he was not?

Mr. MCCAIN. Another question for my colleagues: The attack went on for a period of some nine hours, as I recall. Over that period of time, with the hundreds of airplanes, aircraft that we have and the ships and other military capabilities we have in the area, in the Mediterranean, we were not able to get any real significant help. There are a number of accounts of where a team supposedly landed, were held at the airport, were not allowed to move in, and all of that. All of these are questions that have not been answered.

General Ham told the Senator from South Carolina and me over the phone that he didn't have any assets that were capable of reaching Benghazi. Does he mean we don't have the capability over an 8- or 9-hour period to get some relief to an ongoing attack? Again, what was the hangup that kept people at the airport who finally did get there?

Mr. GRAHAM. If I could follow along with that thought, because it is a very good question, No. 1, if the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff publicly testified they knew it was a terrorist attack from the moment it started and told the White House, how did that get lost? How can they start talking about a protest and video when our own Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in real time tell the White House, but they only spoke to the President once with a prescheduled meeting just when the attack started? The Secretary of Defense——

Mr. MCCAIN. We still don't know what the President did that evening.

Mr. GRAHAM. We know he has answered one question. He said he wanted to be transparent and open and let everybody read the story of Benghazi. We have deployed a small force asking questions, and the answer to one question, finally: Did you call anybody in Libya, Mr. President, that night? No. We have a rescue team held up at the Benghazi Airport for 2½ hours.

Ms. AYOTTE. May I also add to that the President—we heard testimony that obviously the Secretary of Defense and others knew right away this was a terrorist attack. Let's not forget the 16-minute interview where he is asked about that on September 12, and he said it is too early to tell exactly how this came about. When he is asked directly if this is a terrorist attack, he would not identify it as a terrorist attack.

I will also add this. What is so sad about this is no one has been held accountable. The warnings were there. Not only were the warnings there from the August 16 cable that came from the embassy, from Ambassador Stevens, saying that the consulate could not withstand a coordinated attack, but what has been lost in all of this? When we talk about the New York Times trying to erase Al Qaeda from this, the day before, Ayman al-Zawahiri, the head of Al Qaeda, released a video just before September 11, 2012, just before this terrorist attack—which, by the way, occurred on September 11, of course, which should have given us a pretty direct clue that this was a terrorist attack. But al-Zawahiri issued this video acknowledging and eulogizing the death of Abu Yahya al-Libi in a drone strike and calling for terrorist attacks. Al-Libi was a Libyan who served as the second in command in Al Qaeda under Zawahiri and was a top leader in the Libyan Islamic fighting group.

Think about the evidence that was there before, not only what we didn't do to protect that consulate but the warnings that a terrorist attack was coming.

Mr. GRAHAM. If I may, who was the person who decided to approve a year's lease on this piece of property in July after it had been attacked in June? They blew a hole in the wall that 40 people could go through on June 10. So somebody said: Hey, this is a great site; let's extend the lease for another year, to July 2013. They never reinforced it, never added any appreciable security, and denied all the security requests. This goes on and on.

If we want to know about the bridge, that is great. If we want to know about what Chris Christie knew when and what he should have known, great, go for it. All fair. Does anybody care about what our President did that night? Does anybody really care if the President of the United States, for two weeks, talks about a protest that never happened, while all of the evidence suggests otherwise? Does anybody really care that the consulate was a death trap and nobody in Washington ever responded? Does anybody care that nobody has been brought to justice? Does anybody in this country care that somebody in the White House, on September 14, obviously for political reasons, took the intelligence and turned it upside down? Does anybody care that Susan Rice, who has nothing to do with Benghazi, was the spokesman for the country, telling a story not founded in fact, founded in political advantage? I think Americans do care.

Ms. AYOTTE. Let me ask the Senator from South Carolina this. Does anyone care that the Secretary of State claimed she knew nothing about this August 16 cable? She didn't know about these cables leading up to what had happened in Benghazi, about the warning the Red Cross left and the French left, the hole blown through the consulate, and the August 16 cable. Yet Secretary Panetta was aware of it. Chairman Dempsey was aware of it when he came before the Armed Services Committee, but the Secretary of State wasn't aware of it.

Mr. GRAHAM. How can the Secretary of Defense know about the security environment in the Benghazi Consulate and the Secretary of State not know? All I can say is it does matter.

Mr. MCCAIN. The fact is no one, no one to this day has been held responsible for the tragic deaths of four brave Americans—no one. The Intelligence Committee report I appreciate. The whole bureaucracy is responsible. Individuals are the ones that run bureaucracies.

I am disappointed that the Intelligence Committee did not have the courage to name the names of the people responsible.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, let me first thank Senator SHELBY and Senator MIKULSKI for their very hard work on this Omnibus appropriations bill. That is what I am down here to speak on. The American people sent us to make choices, sometimes very tough choices. They do not expect perfection, but they do expect us to be fair and to get the job done.

Americans are tired of shutdowns and sequestration and stopgap funding. Today we are making decisions we were sent here to make. The annual appropriations process is the right way to do the people's business. Instead of kicking the can and passing the buck, lurching from crisis to crisis, I think we are making some significant progress.

This was my first year on the Appropriations Committee. I especially wanted to thank Chairman MIKULSKI for her leadership, her unfailing support, and for doing such an amazing job. She once said, ''It is not how long I serve but how well I serve.'' Senator MIKULSKI has proven once again on both counts she is truly exceptional.

This bill returns some sanity to the budget process in Washington. I am pleased that for the most part it does well by New Mexico. New Mexico plays a unique role in our Nation's national security. This bill provides strong funding levels for the safety and security of our Nation's nuclear deterrent, including the important B61 project at Sandia National Labs. The President's request of $537 million is fully funded. The highly qualified employees at Sandia will continue their vital mission making sure these weapons are managed safely and securely. This is not something we should shortchange.

This bill also provides equally important funding for Los Alamos National Laboratory in northern New Mexico. The workforce there has been reduced in recent years. This bill will stabilize things for 2014. Both of these labs are critical for nuclear security. But they are much more than that. They are also engines for the innovation in aerospace, biotech, cyber security, and new energy technology.

New Mexico is proud to host both of these labs. But the Department of Energy also has an obligation to our State and other States on legacy cleanup. The funding levels do not fully meet our request, but they do provide strong increases over 2013 for cleanup at Los Alamos and at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in Carlsbad, NM. These cleanup activities are a serious obligation of the Federal Government and are a source of skilled, well-paid jobs for man New Mexico families.

New Mexico is also home to three Air Force bases and the Army's White Sands Missile Range. This bill contains nearly $150 million in construction and infrastructure projects, including $60 million for a TRICARE facility at Holloman Air Force Base. These projects will benefit national security, they will create jobs, and will meet our obligations to the men and women who are serving their country.

The Federal Government also plays a very important role in New Mexico's water infrastructure. We are an arid, Western State. Prudent water management is crucial for our economy. We cannot afford the waste that comes from neglected infrastructure. This bill contains over $120 million in funding for Federal water assets in our State and includes the Navajo-Gallup pipeline, and the Middle Rio Grande Project.

We have been struggling with intense drought. Rural areas and small towns in particular have been deeply affected. Some small communities are seeing their wells run dry. They need help and they need it now. The $1.7 billion in USDA rural development water funding is absolutely essential. This historic drought requires that we rethink how we use water throughout the West. We need to be smart about our strategy. We need strategies that work for individual communities. That is why I advocated for greater funding for the WaterSMART grants, helping local governments and water districts improve water efficiency.

The conference report promotes an innovative drought water-sharing arrangement along the Rio Grande, where we are facing difficult tradeoffs between agriculture, the environment, and urban uses.

This bill also helps meet our obligations to our Nation's veterans. The backlog at the VA is unacceptable. Frankly, it is an outrage. No veteran should wait 1 year or more on their claim. This bill funds a 10-part plan to resolve this problem: improving IT infrastructure, better training, and hiring additional personnel. We dedicated $250 million specifically to carry out the VA's rural health initiative to ensure that veterans in rural and remote areas are not left behind, utilizing telehealth solutions and mobile clinics, bringing veterans the care they deserve without long drives.

I will keep fighting for veterans in New Mexico, including those in rural areas, making sure they have access to the health care they have earned. Many veterans are understandably upset with the recent change in the COLA for working-age military retirees. I am outraged too. This cut was included in the recent 2-year budget agreement passed in December. I did not support this provision and I am working hard to repeal it. Thankfully, this bill ensures disabled veterans and spousal benefits will not be subject to the cuts. Congress has the rest of 2014 to do the right thing. We need to fix this mistake for good for all veterans.

This year, I have had the privilege to chair the Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government. I am proud of the work we have done to safeguard our financial system, protect consumers and support job creation and to strengthen our Federal courts.

The bill provides $112 million for the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, fighting terrorist financing, money laundering, narcotics trafficking, and other illicit financial activity.

To protect the public and consumers, the bill fully funds three key agencies. For the CPSC, $118 million to help protect the public against risk from injury of consumer products; for the FTC, $298 million to combat consumer fraud, fight identity theft, and promote consumer privacy; for the FCC, $340 million to maintain robust networks for emergency communications, political debate, social interaction, and business transactions.

To support job creation, the bill provides $929 million for the Small Business Administration. It also supports the Small Business Development Centers to provide critical guidance to small businesses and emerging entrepreneurs. The bill supports community development in underserved areas, including tribal nations, providing $226 million for the CDFI Fund.

For the Federal courts, the bill provides a much needed increase, $6.5 billion in discretionary funding, 5 percent above the fiscal year level of 2013. Budget cuts have forced the courts to downsize and furlough staff. This bill provides the judiciary the staffing and resources it needs for court offices, probation, pretrial services, and in particular Federal defender offices will be adequately staffed.

The bill also calls for significant investments in the government's capital projects. For the first time in 3 years, it provides the General Services Administration a total of $1.653 billion for construction and repair of Federal buildings and courthouses. I would like to thank my ranking member Senator JOHANNS for his effort this year. He was friendly, honest, and straightforward. It has been a real privilege to work with him.

Finally, I must thank our subcommittee staff, Marianne Upton, Diana Hamilton, Emily Sharp. Like all the committee staff, they have spent time over the holidays, on weekends, and uncounted long hours to help complete the final bill.

In closing, I am very happy to be here talking about the good work of the Appropriations Committee and that good work that has been produced in this bill that is before us for New Mexico and for the Nation.

But I must mention one problem that remains. It is a great concern for many of us from the West. Funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program, known as PILT, has expired. These funds compensate counties in New Mexico and throughout the country where the Federal Government owns a good deal of land, land that cannot be taxed, cannot be developed, cannot be used to help pay for services such as roads and schools and public health and public safety.

PILT is a lifeline to my constituents in many rural communities in New Mexico. I joined with my friend Senator ENZI of Wyoming urging that this crucial funding be included in this bill. Unfortunately, it was not. I realize PILT has not been in the appropriations bill for several years. In fact, it is preferable for it to receive mandatory, long-term funding. But we must find a solution and we must find that solution soon. I am calling for PILT to be included in the upcoming farm bill conference report.

It is a commonsense solution to this very real problem. PILT is a long-term funding program. Our rural communities across the West need consistency. They need to be able to plan for long-term projects. Mandatory long-term funding is the only real solution.

I hope my colleagues will work with me.

With that, I would urge all of my colleagues to vote yes on the Omnibus appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, if I might respond to the very generous comments of the Senator from New Mexico about the work of the committee, I would also like to respond to his comments about PILT. The Senator from New Mexico has spoken very eloquently, as have other Senators from the West, about the need for this Payment in Lieu of Taxes.

The Presiding Officer is a newcomer. I am sure he finds that we speak a different language and our constituents say: We use TILT and PILT. They wonder if we are tilting in the right direction. But to use plain English and plain needs of States that have a large amount of land that is held by the Federal Government, PILT stands for Payment in Lieu of Taxes.

So there is tremendous land owned by the Federal Government in New Mexico; am I correct?

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. The Senator is absolutely correct. In some of our counties, 70 percent of the land in the county is Federal Government land. So what happens, as the chair pointed out, is the Federal Government says because that cannot be developed and it cannot be taxed, we are going to pay you in lieu of taxes.

Ms. MIKULSKI. But they have not been paying?

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. No. The program which has been in place a very long time has expired. We have run out of money. These counties need to be able to plan for their projects. So that is where we are.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I think this is an issue of fairness and justice. I know the Presiding Officer comes to the Senate as a mayor. I came through the route of starting on the city council. We are local government people. We know how we had to struggle with unfunded mandates. Many of us have large Federal institutions in our State that we love, such as the U.S. Naval Academy in my district.

That does not pay taxes, but, my gosh, we are happy to have them. I think we have to resolve this PILT issue. I would say to the Senator from New Mexico, who has spoken to me frequently about this issue, and to all of the Senators from the West on both sides of the aisle: Let's work on this.

I pledge to you that as we move on fiscal year 2015, if it is appropriate to be in appropriations, we will be doing it. But I will also work with other relevant authorizing committees. We have to crack this problem. It has been languishing far too long. I think it is a justice issue, that if the Federal Government owns land on which it doesn't pay taxes, prohibits it then from being placed in other developmental use that could be taxed, we have to in some way pay our fair share.

Isn't that the Senator's perspective?

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. That is exactly my perspective. In these counties, the programs run out. The counties have planned on this money because they have been getting it year after year, and we have to find a way to do this.

I wish to applaud Chairwoman MIKULSKI. They are our people, as the Senator knows—there are Western Senators, Democrats, Republicans, and they have all talked with the chairwoman. We have been talking to the authorizing committees. We have talked to Senator STABENOW in Agriculture in terms of the farm bill. We think there is a way this can be worked out.

I am very encouraged to hear that the chairwoman also believes it can be worked out, is willing to look at this next year in the appropriations process, and work with the authorizers to see this gets done.

Ms. MIKULSKI. As the Senator's colleague and also someone who comes out of local government who knows the challenges local governments face, we have worked on this, again, on a bipartisan basis.

I have spoken to Senator STABENOW and believe she is willing to proceed on how we could do this as well.

I thank the Senator for his comments. I think we have a path forward to talk with Senator STABENOW, with others who are involved in the farm bill, and to move forward, and yet move forward on this bill and lay the groundwork for 2015 so we don't have this recurring problem.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. I wish to tell the Senator how much all of the Senators on this issue appreciate the chairwoman's hard work. I think we need to stay focused. What happens with these counties is they wish to know early on whether the money is coming and how much. If they don't know, they aren't able to spend it wisely.

Ms. MIKULSKI. If I could respond to the Senator.

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Please.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Municipal government is usually in a different fiscal year. Baltimore City Council began January 1, the Federal Government, of course, is October 1, and we are finally getting settled on January 16. We are a little behind the schedule, but we are not behind the eight ball. We are going to work on this.

I thank the Senator for his work, along with Senator JOHANNS, a former Agriculture Secretary and Governor, I might add, and the way the Senator worked on the Subcommittee on Financial Services.

The Presiding Officer, a Senator from New Jersey, took the seat of the late and beloved Senator Frank Lautenberg, and Senator UDALL took Senator Lautenberg's seat as the chair of the Financial Services Subcommittee. Senator Lautenberg would be very pleased to see this today. Although he would want to be here, the fact that the two Senators are in the Senate is very good.

Senator UDALL essentially had a battlefield promotion. The Senator proceeded with such diligence and had constantly in his mind the mission of the agencies, enormous controversy at IRS, and had to step into some very complicated issues. The Senator's faithfulness to duty, the way he went about it with such diligence and verve, is indeed to be commended. I know Senator Lautenberg would believe that his gavel passed into very competent hands. We thank the Senator. We also wish to thank Senator JOHANNS because he helped to carry the momentum.

This is the way the Senate ought to be. Even in a time of great sadness we were able to do our job.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Mrs. MURRAY. As the chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee leaves, I thank the Senator for her tremendous leadership. I thank the Senator for her leadership in getting this bill to the floor.

I come to the floor today to talk about another topic, and that is the 1.4 million Americans who have lost their unemployment benefits and the over 70,000 people who continue to lose them each week. The Senate has found itself in an all-too-familiar place. Once again, some Republicans are refusing to be able to say yes even to the most reasonable of offers, and it is a problem we have seen in this body too many times.

Over the course of the 16-day shutdown last October, we tried time and time again to find compromises to end that manufactured crisis, return Federal workers to their jobs, and reopen our Federal parks and buildings. But for too long Republicans refused to listen to the American people and embrace compromise. Instead, they were standing firmly in a partisan corner—and it is a pattern of what we saw last year in our efforts to pass a budget.

In March of the past year—as every Senator, I am sure, will remember—we spent a week on the Senate floor in a very open process debating and voting on amendment after amendment until the very wee hours of the morning. On March 23 we finally passed our budget after the House had passed theirs the

day earlier. I thought at that time the next step would be to start a conference as quickly as possible. I thought it was a no-brainer.

This is what the American people were expecting, the two sides to get in a room, work out our differences, and avoid another crisis. Every time we tried to start that budget conference—21 times in the Senate—a Senate Republican stood up and said no. They no longer wanted to go to conference, they no longer wanted to follow regular order, they only wanted to obstruct. That took us to a government shutdown, a debt limit crisis, and a lot of pain for families and communities across the country before we could get them in a room with us in a budget conference and agree to a deal the American people expected.

That has been sort of the Republican playbook in the Senate. They say no for as long as they can, they play politics for as long as they can, they hold out and obstruct as long as they can, until the pressure from angry Americans finally reaches a fever pitch, and then, when it is far too late, hopefully come to their senses.

It is getting to be far too late for every single American who lost their unemployment benefits. In fact, as last week's unemployment report showed, nearly ½ million Americans recently gave up entirely. Those who haven't given up spent every single day desperately working to get on a job. Unemployment benefits make all the difference for them and their families while they scour the want ads, pound the pavement, and send out resume after resume.

In fact, I have heard from many people in my home State of Washington, story after story from men and women. One of those was from a man named Gary who lives in Spokane. Gary wrote to me about his wife Linda and how at ''56 years young'' with a degree in accounting and an MBA in finance Linda is still unable to find work. After exhausting her unemployment benefits, Gary and Linda are now forced to live off of his Social Security disability insurance. They are now facing monthly medical expenses and rent of over $1,000 just to stay healthy and keep a roof over their heads. Gary's benefits cover about $900 of those expenses.

With each passing day this Congress fails to act Gary and Linda find themselves further and further behind. Gary concluded in his note to me in a simple plea, written in all capital letters, that said: ''PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE HELP!''

I also recently heard from a woman who was laid off from her job at a plant in Keyport, WA.

She said:

> This year, I have applied for over 200 jobs and, in spite of a stellar resume, have only gotten 4 phone interviews.
>
> I have lowered my standards throughout the year and applied for jobs far below my pay grade to no avail . . . my husband and I have had to claim bankruptcy . . . [and] I truly worry about losing my home and displacing my children.

These are real people, as the Presiding Officer well knows.

I have heard from Traci, a former executive assistant with 20 years of experience, in Everett, WA. After taking time off from work because she had to care for her dying mother and a daughter who was suffering from bipolar disorder and drug addiction, Traci found herself without a job.

After her mother passed away, Traci fell ill, and it made it very hard for her to look for work. While Traci was receiving unemployment benefits that were barely enough to cover the care her daughter required, she was just barely making it. She told me that now she cannot afford food and has lost over 50 pounds. She spends every day searching high and low for one break. She said: ''I just need time for someone to give me a chance.''

A chance. That is all she is asking us for. That is all they are asking, all of these people. They don't want a handout, they don't want to be a burden. They need support while they get back on their feet and on the job.

We in the Senate need Republican support to do that. We are ready and willing to move forward. We have worked to find compromise. When Republicans wanted this extension to be paid for, even though it has been extended time and time again without pay-fors under Republican Congresses and Republican Presidents, we said OK, we will try and find that.

That wasn't enough. When Republicans signaled that they didn't want to pay for an extension by closing tax loopholes for the wealthiest Americans, we again looked to find a compromise.

When we put forward savings from policies that have either been agreed to by both sides or have been taken from proposals championed by Republicans, they once again said it wasn't good enough.

When they asked for amendments, we offered amendments. They again said no.

Unfortunately, Republicans have now reverted once again to pure politics aimed not at the vast majority of American people who want to see this extended, but instead squarely at their most conservative audience possible. Nowhere is that more evident than in the pay-fors they have offered—whether it is the minority leader's amendment that predictably seeks to undercut health care reform or the Ayotte amendment, which is a very disturbing signal in that after joining us in passing comprehensive immigration legislation, Republicans are now doing a complete 180 on immigration in an election year. With that amendment, Senate Republicans are indicating that they are actually going to begin targeting U.S. citizens, children who are U.S. citizens, simply because they were born to undocumented workers. I think that is shameful, and I am shocked that we have reached this point.

These policies aren't going anywhere. Republicans know that. In the end, all they amount to is nothing more than delaying tactics while American families' lives are hanging in the balance.

Make no mistake, families across the country are teetering on the brink today. In fact, nowhere is that more clear than the last heartbreaking story I came to the floor to share with you. I received this yesterday from a woman named Shiela, who for the last 13 years has worked a middle-management job at a national corporation in my State. She started her letter by saying: ''I've never written to any government official, but I'm compelled to do so today.''

Then she told me how she, her husband, and two children had lived a fairly comfortable life, but all of that changed last year when her employer decided to downsize, and she was one of the many Americans who was laid off.

Her husband, who works in real estate, was struggling in a very weak market, as we all know. Suddenly, Shiela's family of four found themselves relying on just over $500 a week in unemployment assistance.

Having graduated from college and business school, Sheila—like so many others—found herself in need of these benefits, and she said never in a million years did she think she would be in that spot.

These are her words:

> I've worked for so many years, paid my taxes, did the right thing for others . . . and now I need help.

In October, Sheila's family lost their house. They are now renting. They do not know if their daughter will still qualify for the student loans she is currently receiving. Sheila's checking account is now overdrawn. Her car payments are past due. She started getting notices from her utility companies. And as my staff talked with her yesterday, she said she was headed out the door to apply for food stamps.

Because of the Republicans' refusal to work with us, we will once again be going home to constituents such as Sheila to explain why this extension hasn't gotten done. I know I will be pointing out the fact that we have compromised time and time again to try to get something done here; that we have all but begged Republicans from the start to work with us on this effort, but I can't help but wonder how Republicans are going to explain their actions.

While I normally don't come to the floor to give advice to my friends on the other side of the aisle, I would certainly like to suggest they do not stare into the eyes of someone who just had to apply for food stamps for the very first time in their life and explain that they can't act until ObamaCare is destroyed. And I hope they do not tell those who are about to lose their home they can't help them until they find a way to cut childcare credits for U.S. children. And I hope they do not tell Americans who spend their days working hard and applying for jobs that pay a fraction of what they have been making they will only be willing to help

them if all of their political demands are met. And I especially hope they do not think making arguments about procedure or amendments or arcane rules of the Senate that only people here in DC pay attention to is an excuse for walking away from 1.4 million Americans at a time when all they want to see is results.

What I do hope is that the experiences they have coming face-to-face with these families will change their tone when they come back here in a week. I hope the stories, such as the ones I shared here today, will once again be the pressure that Republicans have required over and over to finally act. And I hope that soon they will join us in passing our nonpartisan, commonsense bill and finally delivering some certainty and some security for struggling Americans who deserve it.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mrs. MURRAY. Yes, I will.

Ms. MIKULSKI. First, I thank the Senator for the work she did in the Budget Committee, because that budget she worked so diligently on on a bipartisan basis with PAUL RYAN has enabled us to have the allocation for discretionary spending that has enabled our coming here today to make sure the government will function, that it will work as hard as the taxpayers who pay for it, and that we will have no government shutdown and no crisis environment. So I really want to thank the Senator for that.

The question I have for the Senator is in regard to her role as the chair of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing, Urban Development, and Related Agencies. Has the Senator had a chance to look at what she thinks will be the positive job impact of what she has been able to do? Because the Senator funds transportation for the United States. There are TIGER grants that are so important to Maryland and the Port of Baltimore, and also the issues related to housing. In my own hometown the renovation of housing for the elderly—most of it built in the 1970s and 1980s under Carter and Reagan—needs to be rehabilitated. They need to be reformed so they meet new ADA standards, all of which would put men and women to work where, in my State, the job rate among construction workers is enormously high. So building bridges and building homes would sure go a long way. Has the Senator had a chance to look at any of that?

Mrs. MURRAY. Let me respond to the chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee, Mr. President.

I came to the floor today to talk about the millions of Americans who are in need of extended unemployment benefits, but I would tell my colleague that everyone I have ever talked to on unemployment would much rather have a job. As to the question the Senator has asked me in relation to my role as chair of the subcommittee on transportation and housing and the bill we are about to pass here in the Senate, it will have an impact on creating jobs and building that infrastructure so people will have that job certainty. It is extremely important.

On the transportation side of my appropriations bill, the TIGER grant program the Senator has described will bring not only jobs to communities but real projects that will help build a foundation for future economic growth.

There is no one who questions that transportation infrastructure brings jobs today, provides economic development for the future, and is absolutely the way people get to work and home in a timely manner, bringing certainty for so many families we know. That is a critical part of my subcommittee.

The other part of my subcommittee, as the Senator mentioned, is housing. Those issues are so important. I think most people forget if you don't have a place to live it is pretty hard to go to work. Providing some of these programs we do, such as section 8, and some of the reforms we have put in here, is absolutely critical for so many Americans to be able to have the stability and to get out and get a job, so that we don't have to be arguing over unemployment extension here but actually how we can make the investments so this country can work and survive.

I hope we can provide those extensions today, as we struggle to get back on our feet, but meanwhile pass this critical bill the Senator has authored so we can provide jobs and economic support, which is what people want.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator for her tireless effort.

I want to comment on the work the Senator from Washington State did in her role chairing the subcommittee on transportation and housing. What a bipartisan effort that subcommittee put forth. Senator MURRAY and the Senator from Maine Ms. COLLINS worked on a bipartisan basis on transportation, which is what the committee funds, and on housing.

When I speak of housing, this is housing that is primarily related to meeting compelling human need. It also has the money for Community Development Block Grants.

Going back to the days when I referred to the Senator as ''Mr. Mayor,'' now ''Mr. President''—the Presiding Officer—we know—City Council Barb and formerly Mayor Booker—what Community Development Block Grant money means in our local communities. In my State, Community Development Block Grant money is key to local governments solving local problems without a ''one size fits all'' from Washington.

What I like about the Community Development Block Grant money is that its criteria for funding is it has to deal with blight, it has to deal with unemployment, and it has to meet compelling human need. And whatever they do, it also usually results in good-paying jobs in construction. But it is not decided by Washington: Thou shalt build such-and-such under such-and-such Washington rules. It is decided in Newark, in Baltimore, in Phoenix.

What is so important about the CDBG money in transportation and housing is money comes locally. There is Federal criteria—again, eliminate blight, deal with unemployment, and it has to meet a documented need—but it is decided locally by mayors and city councils, by county commissioners, or whatever the form of local governance.

So this is what they did. They worked on a bipartisan basis for adequate funding for CDBG to meet compelling need in the area of housing, particularly housing for the elderly—the so-called section 202s, many of which were built a long time ago and now need to be retrofitted and remodeled. Again, this meets need—coming up to the compliance of what we now know in things such as universal design to keep people out of long-term care or assisted living. This is a wonderful way to meet human need and also generate jobs. So they have done a great job.

I wish also to comment on the leadership they provided, and it was across all of the appropriators in this committee. We are not a committee that makes a lot of fuss; we are not usually a bunch of chest-pounders harrumphing about a policy. We were once referred to in a major historical work about our work as the quiet guardians of the purse. We are not quiet while working with each other, but the work is not well known or well noticed because we have done it in a tone of solving problems and keeping the problem the problem, and not making personalities the problem. That has been done by every single subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee in the Senate. I am proud of them. I think transportation and housing has been an exemplary one, but we will hear this today from others who will be coming up to speak about it. We have done a good job, and I hope other Senators will come to the floor to talk about the work of the committee. If they have any questions, if they want to debate or comment, we are open to those discussions.

I do hope we can move the bill along. I know cloture doesn't expire until tomorrow, but, gosh, if we all come and everyone could have their say, I think we could finish it today. It might be late, but I think we could finish, and then go on with other pressing Senate business. So I urge those who wish to speak on the bill to come to the floor.

I know other Senators will be coming, but until then, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the business on the floor, which is the Omnibus appropriations bill. Let me start by thanking Chairwoman MIKULSKI for her leadership. She has put long hours in on this over the Christmas and New Year's break. When most people were home with families and doing things in their home State, on vacation, she never stopped working. Her team, her staff on the Appropriations Committee, never stopped working. The staff, as always, is kind of the unsung hero around here. They did so many great things to put this together, both Democrats and Republicans, House and Senate—everybody had to work together to get this done and I am proud they did.

I am also proud to be one of the appropriations subcommittee chairs who was able to work on this legislation. As you know, I am chairman of the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. I have worked with my counterpart Senator BLUNT, the ranking member of the subcommittee, to craft part of this bipartisan bill. Again, Senator BLUNT has been wonderful to work with. We appreciate him and his staff as well.

When people hear agriculture appropriations, they often think about farming. That is understandable. We all understand why. That is certainly a key part of the bill, but that is not all it does. Our bill helps farmers with operating loans, conservation practices, marketing. It funds programs that benefit rural communities such as clean drinking water and rural housing, and it supports nutrition programs that help kids across the country.

It also funds international food assistance such as Food for Peace that allows crops grown here at home to be distributed around the world.

This bill, in addition, touches on the Food and Drug Administration. That is an agency that is vitally important to the United States. Here again, just like agriculture is one of the core strengths of the U.S. economy, pharmaceuticals is another area where America leads the world. It is critically important that we have a highly functioning FDA in order for us to keep that competitive advantage.

This bill overall has a huge impact over the U.S. economy, but my subcommittee's part in this bill also has a very significant bearing over the U.S. economy that will continue this recovery. Getting people back to work, getting people focused on domestic jobs and the fact that we make things here and grow things here is critically important for our future.

For example, look at what it is doing to my home State. If I could, I could go around to each one of these desks in the Senate and talk about specific things it is doing in everyone's State, but just in my home State, it is providing funding for many of our universities, including the University or Arkansas at Fayetteville and Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, to conduct cutting edge agricultural research. It is supporting economic development grants for the Delta Regional Authority, which is in our region of the country, to boost the quality of life in the Delta region. It is providing our kids with a safe and stable food supply by supporting, again in our State, the Arkansas Children's Nutrition Center in Little Rock, and it is investing in the technology of tomorrow by funding the National Center for Toxicological Research in Jefferson County, AR.

The NTCR, which is part of the FDA, is also very important and people take it for granted because they don't know what it does, but it is very important. Now they have a new focus on nanotechnology, which they have been doing in the last few years, and that will be a game changer as well. Those are just a few of the challenges.

I could stand here for an hour or so talking about the benefits of the bill and talking about all the provisions and lots of matters that are contained in this bill, but I think overall it is most important to note the agriculture appropriations bill and the omnibus bill overall are an agreement reached because of bipartisanship. We have to look back at what Senator MURRAY and Congressman RYAN did. I appreciate what they did. They laid the groundwork for us to be here today. It was a bipartisan effort, went through both Houses, bipartisan, big votes, and we saw a huge vote in the House of Representatives yesterday. I hope we will see a large vote in the Senate today or tomorrow or Saturday, whenever we get this done. Certainly I hope it is going to be today. Nonetheless, this is a victory for bipartisanship and the agriculture appropriations part of that is important.

But overall, the fact is that Congress is back in business. We are getting things done. We are getting back to what our chairwoman would call regular order. We are working together and that is the only way we can get things done in Washington. But it is also the only way we can secure our Nation's economic future. I hope we will see a lot more bipartisanship in 2014. I know it is an election year. All the talking heads tell us it is going to be hard to do, but certainly I hope we can get that done and 2014, I hope, is a much more productive year in the Congress than 2013 was.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, again I rise to compliment a subcommittee chairman. The Senator from Arkansas took over this committee for the first time this year, so he is a new chairman, but he was not new to the issues. I thank him for the work he did and the bipartisan tone which he set. Again, he has done an excellent job, working with the Senator from Missouri Mr. BLUNT. What was impressive—when we say agriculture, that is one word, but agriculture in this country is very diverse. Am I right that the Senator handles everything from artichokes to catfish?

Mr. PRYOR. We sure do. We handle, as the Senator says, everything from artichokes to catfish and everything in between. In our bill we take the entire Department of Agriculture, with the exception of forestry—that goes to another subcommittee—and we also do FDA. If you look at—for example, I mentioned, agriculture is one of the core strengths of the U.S. economy. It may not be very exciting. We may take it for granted because in this country we have always had productive agriculture, but if we look at the different advantages it gives us as a nation in lots of different ways, we need to keep that core strength going, just like the pharmaceuticals and the Federal Drug Administration; it is critically important.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I also thank the Senator for what he and the Senator from Missouri did, what Mr. BLUNT did, in terms of food safety. I believe when we did the continuing resolution we were—and also when we were shut down—food safety faced the need for inspectors. We both share, in our States, chicken. Chicken is a $2 billion industry over on the Eastern Shore. A lot of good people have good jobs because of good chicken. But without those inspectors, our poultry industry would have been halted.

What were the consequences in those days and what has the Senator done in this bill?

Mr. PRYOR. That is exactly right. Had we not had those food inspectors, it literally could have shut down the poultry plants—but also the beef and pork and other types of facilities—overnight. It could have shut them down and been very disruptive.

One of the great things about agriculture in the United States is we have created a lot of efficiencies in the agriculture economy. So when you have something disruptive such as this, these inspectors can't inspect the meat and they just cannot operate, you start to cause all kinds of disruptions, all kinds of inefficiencies.

Then what happens is the price of that chicken fillet at the grocery store goes up. When we go to a restaurant it goes up.

We do not need to jeopardize our food supply, either on food safety grounds or on supply grounds, because we have—if we look at the United States and what we spend as a per-capita share of our income, we spend less on food than any country in the world. It is in relative terms. We have to use that per capita, because if we have a higher standard of living here, and we do, but it is something we are very fortunate about and because of this legislation and because of what Senator STABENOW is doing with the farm bill—it is all a team effort—we are going to keep that advantage and keep that food and fiber cheap.

Those are all domestic jobs. That is very important. This is growth here,

raised here, processed here, and served here. It is great for domestic jobs. It has a huge ripple effect on the U.S. economy. This bill is part of that and I am proud to have a hand in it.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator from Arkansas as well as his ranking member, the Senator from Missouri Mr. BLUNT, has done a great job. Sometimes Congress gets the rap when we grow the deficit, but here in agriculture, the subcommittee grows good jobs and they grow them by making sure we have a solid approach to agriculture itself, where farmers and producers and distributors are able to do their job. And the work of the FDA, through food safety, has not only kept America safe, but it enables those who produce food in our country to have the right inspections so we have the right confidence to go out to the supermarket.

We are very proud of what they do.

I yield the floor.

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I would say in conclusion, as I look on the floor and I see Senators from Alabama, from Maryland, from Maine, from Connecticut, agriculture touches each of these States. It touches them differently. Agriculture is truly a matter of national pride. Every State contributes, basically every person benefits from it.

Again, I was honored to be part of this. The chairwoman deserves a lot of credit for working in a bipartisan way and getting it through both Houses.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I am pleased to follow my colleague from Arkansas and join him in applauding the chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee Senator MIKULSKI for her extraordinary and historic work on this measure which serves so well our values and goals and our traditions in the Senate of bipartisan service, putting America first over partisanship. I join my very distinguished colleague from Arkansas who has highlighted so well the values served by agriculture in America and served well by this appropriations bill and by the measure Chairwoman STABENOW is seeking to forge, again through bipartisan work involving both Houses of this body.

Agriculture serves so many of our basic values in this Nation—environmental and consumer values, patriotism and pride in a way of life. In Connecticut, we know deeply and urgently how threatened are these values and traditions, this way of life and the environmental consumer issues at stake.

I am pleased that we are near a compromise, on the verge and the cusp of an agreement on the farm bill that will serve the interests of farmers in Connecticut and around the country.

The dozens of dairy farmers with relatively small farms around Connecticut have said to me again and again that they need help and certainty. That was the message they gave me as I visited their farms around the State of Connecticut time and again, and now apparently help and certainty are on the way.

I am pleased that the farm bill conferees have reached a compromise on the dairy provisions in the farm bill. We are going to be studying them very closely. They have only just been announced. Apparently, the new deal announced by the farm bill conferees would keep the margin insurance program but remove the Dairy Market Stabilization Program. In place of that Dairy Market Stabilization Program, the deal revives the recently expired Milk Income Loss Contract Program known as the MILC Program. The Milk Income Loss Contract Program is a transitional program while the new margin insurance plan is being set up by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Without going into all of the details, I think this agreement represents progress, and I am going to carefully scrutinize it and seek to improve it from the standpoint of Connecticut's dairy farmers. But there can be no doubt—none whatsoever to anyone in this body, which I think we would all agree—as to the importance of the milk industry, beginning with the dairy farmers. Indeed, reflecting the importance of milk to America is the fact that it is the only beverage, other than water, that is permitted on the floor of the Senate, as far as I know.

I am pleased and proud to have a glass of milk on the floor today. This is a first for me in my young experience as a Senator. I am not sure if it is a correct parliamentary inquiry, but I say to the Presiding Officer: Got milk? I'm willing to share.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. This issue is a very serious one because the lives and livelihoods of our farmers are at stake. There is the open space that may be sacrificed if dairy farms surrender and are forced to abandon this way of life due to the increasingly high costs of feed, fuel, and labor that are pressing them as they also encounter potential price reductions. So they are squeezed. Dairy farmers are squeezed.

In Connecticut we mostly have small family-owned farms like the Fairvue Farms in Woodstock, Hytone Farm in Coventry, Mapleleaf Farm in Hebron, Fort Hill Farms in Thompson, Cushman Farms in Franklin, and Graywall Farms in Lebanon. I have visited a number of them. I know firsthand how hard these farmers work simply to keep their farms going. These six farms make up the Farmer's Cow, a group of Connecticut family-owned farms dedicated to producing some of the very best milk in America.

Their milk is so good, in fact, they opened a milk bar—that is right, a milk bar—in Mansfield called the Farmer's Cow Calfe & Creamery where you can choose from five or six different types and flavors of milk to help wash down their delicious and fresh sandwiches, salads, cheeses, and ice creams.

Visit Connecticut and visit the Farmer's Cow Calfe. These are the farms we need to support and keep going. These are the hard-working men and women we need to support. We can and must support our dairy farmers in Connecticut and around the country.

In fact, in Connecticut we have more than 150 dairy farms on 70,000 acres—18 percent of our State's land—which translates into $2 billion in economic activity for the State of Connecticut alone. These farmers need help. They need stability and certainty. Unfortunately, some Members in the House of Representatives have delayed the farm bill for far too long, leading dairy producers to wonder whether the Federal Government is a friend or a foe to their businesses.

Even though Connecticut's dairy industry is a significant contributor to the State's agricultural industry and general economy, the industry's strength and survival depend greatly on the support that the Federal Government can and must provide.

In Connecticut, in 1975 there were 817 dairy farms. Today there are 150 dairy farms. I think that experience is probably reflected by every State represented in this body. Every one of my colleagues, perhaps, can attest to the diminishing number of dairy farmers and farmers in general. Connecticut is doing its part and doing its share so that farms in our State are sustained, and the Federal Government ought to do its part as well.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Connecticut ranks 45 out of 50 States in receiving agriculture-related subsidies. Connecticut received $127 million between 1995 and 2010 compared to the $22 billion received by Iowa and the $24 billion that went to Texas. I have nothing against those States. I am not criticizing those amounts, but the amount we received in Connecticut is a fraction—a small fraction—of what is needed to sustain our dairy farmers, and that is why I will be urging and advocating for dairy farmers in Connecticut under this deal. Their interests are shared nationwide. We need to make sure that the agreement announced yesterday by the farm bill conferees—keeping the margin insurance program, but removing the Dairy Market Stabilization Program and reviving the MILC Program—truly serves milk producers in our Nation, not just the processors but consumers and farmers. We must do right by America's dairy farmers, an often under-represented group in this body, and make sure we do right by our farmers and consumers by giving them the certainty and help they need to continue a way of life and a product that is vital to our health and well-being as a Nation.

I thank the Presiding Officer, and I yield the floor.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Will the Senator from Connecticut yield for a question?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I am pleased to yield for a question.

Ms. MIKULSKI. First, let me thank my colleague for his generous words about the work of this committee. What is on the Senator's desk? I am drinking water.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I have milk. I offered to share my milk with the Presiding Officer. I know that Maine has its share of farmers. I understand the Presiding Officer is not allowed, under our Senate rules, to respond in substance, but I would be glad to share with the chairman of the Appropriations Committee.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I say to the Senator from Connecticut: I have been in the Senate for 25 years, and I have seen a lot of Senators try to put a lot of different drinks in those glasses, but I have never seen milk on the Senate floor. Is that permissible?

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I am told it is a permissible beverage on the floor. If it is not, I am sure I will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

Ms. MIKULSKI. For all of us who just yearn for a calcium-rich diet, it is refreshing to see that. We salute Connecticut and its strong agricultural presence in our economy, and I thank the Senator for bringing a nutritious beverage to the Senate floor that is allowed under the rules. If it is not allowed, I am sure we can have the appropriate committee of jurisdiction allow it.

I think what the Senator is saying is we have a lot of people in our country who work in agriculture, and agriculture is not one field. Agriculture in the United States of America is diverse, and we can't let these small farmers fade away.

I am seeing new, emerging farmers in my State—whether it is for dairy or beef, and so on. With the so-called farm-to-fork movement, this could be the dawn of a new age in agriculture while we preserve that which has been traditional and fed America during good times and bad. So I thank the Senator for his work and his advocacy, and I look forward to working with him.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I thank the chairwoman for her remarks. I wish to express to her, as I do to all of my colleagues, that agriculture and farming really are a way of life. We need to make sure our family farms and all farms are sustained. We sometimes tend to neglect or take them for granted.

Again, I thank the distinguished Senator from Maryland for the time and attention she has devoted over the many years she has been here to the farms of Maryland and the farms of America. I think it is a cause we share. Whether it is Alabama or Georgia or Maine or any other State represented on the floor here today, we need to make sure we provide the safety net where it is necessary and the support when it is due but also keep in mind that consumers ultimately are the beneficiaries, the men and women and children, having four children myself. Also, having for a time actually worked on a farm, I know this product is central to the American existence and the American way of life.

I thank the chairwoman, and I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I see the Senator from Arizona is on the floor, and I would inquire of the Senator if at 12:30 he is planning to speak on the War Powers Act.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the chairwoman. I was awaiting the arrival of my colleague from Virginia, who was going to speak first.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I say to the Senator from Arizona, I think this is an important discussion. We will do it any way the Senator from Arizona wishes. If my colleague wishes to proceed, that would be fine with this side of the aisle. Whatever way the Senator from Arizona wishes to proceed on this important topic is fine.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator from Maryland. I hope the Presiding Officer will chastise the Senator from Virginia for being tardy. I know he is very capable of that. So I will go ahead and begin, although I had planned on the Senator from Virginia being first. He is the sponsor of the bill which I am cosponsoring. I thank the chairwoman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Chair.

(The remarks of Mr. MCCAIN and Mr. KAINE pertaining to the introduction of S. 1939 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to talk about the omnibus for a brief time before Senator LEAHY has some remarks to be made.

First of all, I thank the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee and their staffs for their hard work to draft a sensible funding bill that I think meets the needs of the American people, a bill that helps us move past the stalemate and disagreements of the past few years and does what the American people sent us to do; that is, roll up our sleeves, work together, work hard, and govern.

Recently, folks have put politics and partisanship ahead of our constituents and our responsibilities, and the results have not been pretty. But thanks to Chairman MIKULSKI and Ranking Member SHELBY and their counterparts in the House of Representatives, we now have a responsible bipartisan bill we can work with, one that invests in our future to strengthen our economy but that makes tough choices so we can continue to get our fiscal house in order.

Approving this bill helps avoid another round of devastating sequester cuts, avoid a government shutdown, and avoid some of the bitterness that is dragging down economic growth.

In Montana, our seniors, children, women, and civilian members of the military—to name a few—felt the sequester cuts head on. Kids could not go to Head Start. The elderly could not get meals, women faced cuts to reproductive health programs, Defense Department employees were forced to stay home, and our military was dangerously close to being hollowed out.

This bill makes smart choices to continue to reduce our deficit, while investing in core national priorities—those being education, health care, infrastructure, research and development, and defense.

At the same time, it continues our fiscally responsible approach to governing by reducing or eliminating funding for dozens of programs that had been left on autopilot after 2 years of continuing resolutions, and it repeals the recently enacted reduction in the annual cost-of-living adjustments for disabled military retirees and for survivors of military retirees.

This particular change is very important for folks who have been medically retired and for survivors, the folks who are more likely to be on a fixed income, and it was done without any fanfare and without any grandstanding. Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY figured out how to fix it.

Let's be clear. This is one step in a two-step process. We have more work to do to address the military pension issue to make sure it works for the men and women of the military who have made great sacrifices on our behalf.

I also thank Chairman REED and Senator MURKOWSKI for putting forward a smart Interior bill. By ending sequestration, we are able to make some real progress in Indian Country and in protecting some of America's most unique landscapes.

The Interior bill increases funding for the Indian Health Service, which is necessary, it increases funding for Indian education and for promoting good stewardship of our public lands.

This Interior bill is critically important to States such as Montana. It will improve the quality of life for folks on our seven reservations. It will create more tourism and recreational opportunities throughout Montana. I am concerned, however, by the absence of one measure. It is a measure approved by the Senate Appropriations and Rules Committees. It is bipartisan. It saves money. It brings more transparency and accountability to a town that needs more of both. More than one-third of the Senate is a cosponsor.

This act is called the Senate Campaign Disclosure Parity Act. Right

now, candidates for the Senate do not have to electronically file their campaign finance reports with the Federal Elections Commission. Now they can voluntarily e-file. Maybe the Presiding Officer did. But many of our colleagues do not.

Instead, all a Senate candidate has to do is take a big stack of documents, drop them at the office door of the Secretary of the Senate, and head back to the campaign trail. Then what happens? The Secretary of the Senate then sends the documents to the FEC which spends time and money hiring contractors to put those reports on line where they can be viewed by the public. This costs taxpayers nearly $500,000 and God knows how many staff hours each year to make this information available. But the biggest cost is to the American people, particularly to our voters, who have the right to know who is funding the campaigns of their elected officials. It is not as if I am proposing a new idea. Candidates for the House of Representatives must electronically file their financial reports. Presidential candidates e-file. Yet the Senate is stuck in the dark ages. In an era of smart phones and cars that drive themselves and combines that harvest fields using GPS, today the Senate is dropping stacks of paper at officials' doorsteps.

I proudly voluntarily e-file my campaign finance reports. I know many of our colleagues do as well. But that is not enough. Ironically, we do not know why my bill to improve transparency and save money did not make it into the funding bill. I am told it was blocked by the House of Representatives. A few folks over at the House are pointing fingers back over here. That is finger-pointing instead of accountability, politics instead of governance. We can do better.

Here in the Congress, we consistently demand transparency from Federal agencies. That is the right thing to do. But we need to also look in the mirror. We are not doing what we demand of others. But Americans are demanding this funding bill as well. It is a step forward to responsible government. It makes tough choices to getting our fiscal house in order while investing in the future.

This Omnibus is a good bill. It puts our country on more solid footing. It delivers more certainty to small businesses so we can count on them to grow and create jobs. Our constituents sent us here to find common ground. This kind of responsible bill is why we are here. So, once again, I thank the chairwoman and the ranking member for their hard work in bringing this bill to the floor. I look forward to seeing its final passage.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I want to address my remarks, first, to the chairman and the ranking member of the Appropriations Committee. I think you have done a lot of hard work. You have done something that even though I am not in the consensus, you have done what the Senate was designed to do, build a consensus around a bill. There is no question this bill will pass today. So my congratulations to you and my sincere thanks for some of the things you put in the bill that we have been working on that are good governance projects. So I want to say that from the start.

I am not going to talk specifically about the bill. I am going to talk in bigger, broader terms of the problems that are facing us as a country. I have in my hands a book that contains $9 trillion worth of cuts. Hardly anybody in the Senate has read it. They may not agree with 50 or 60 or 70 percent. But there is certainly somewhere in here consensus for us to actually save a whole lot more money than we are doing.

In 2009, a young lady by the name of Madeline showed up outside the Senate. This is what she had draped around her neck. ''I am already $38,375 in debt and I only own a dollhouse.''

Since that period of time, we have managed to markedly change that situation for her for the worse, because today, if she were outside, she would have this sign on her neck. It would say $54,602 and she would only own a dollhouse.

The point I am trying to make is this hole is getting deeper and deeper and deeper. Although I did not vote for the budget agreement, because I think it could have been done better, it was an agreement and had a consensus as well. My criticism is not that the Members of this body worked a consensus, which is exactly what the Senate is supposed to do, but I think as we have done these things we might have lost sight of the big picture. So I want to share with you for a minute what the big picture looks like, because it is not pretty.

According to generally accepted accounting principles, that is not the way we run the government, by the way. We do not use real accounting principles. We use all the tricks and smoke and mirrors we can. This number is indisputable.

The unfunded liabilities for the Federal Government are $127 trillion. Think about that. We cannot even imagine how much that is. Our national debt is $17.33 trillion as of last night. I checked it. There are 14 million households in America. If you take the Federal liability per household, it comes out to $1.11 million. So $1.11 million is what the debt plus the liability is for every family in this country. It is growing. I know we cannot solve this problem over 1 year or 2 years. I am so thankful to the Senator who is leading the Appropriations Committee in her position. I have the most wonderful respect for her. She is a listener. She wants to do right.

But what we have to do is change the direction of this. It needs to go the other way. That requires everybody. If you think about it, if the average family per capita income—this is what it was last year in this country, $53,000—can you imagine how we are going to leverage and afford just the interest cost on $1.11 million?

If you add 5 percent on a million bucks, that is $55,000. That is more—just the interest costs are more than the median family income in this country. So there are parts of this bill that are in front of us that I am highly critical of. I do not like the fact that we play a game with CHIMPs, change it to a mandatory program. To me it is not straightforward to the American people. It is not being honest about what we are actually doing.

What we are actually doing is digging the hole deeper. Let me outline some things we could have done that we did not do before we had the budget agreement, before we had this appropriations bill. The GAO over the last 3 years has identified about $250 billion we could take a large portion away from by eliminating duplication and by putting metrics on programs. Now think about that. That is $250 billion a year.

I have been out here giving speeches on all of this and everything that is duplicative. But the problem is that the appropriate committees have not met to look at the GAO recommendations. They have not acted on them. They have not responded to them. The administration, I will give them credit; in their budget the last few years, they have looked at those GAO reports and made recommendations in their budgets for elimination and consolidation. But we have essentially ignored them.

I know how tough it is to build a consensus in the Appropriations Committee that will get you the votes you need to accomplish that. From the parochial concerns to the budget concerns, I understand that. I am glad we have a number now. I am glad we have a bill that has a number. I think the number is too high if we are ever going to do anything about this. But the fact that we do not do anything that will make a difference in the future in terms of driving this number down—just think. Let's say the GAO is 50 percent right. Let's say they are only 50 percent right. What if we consolidated, put metrics on programs and streamlined them as they recommend and we saved $150 billion a year. That starts going in the right direction. It changes. We start going in the right direction. Now think for a minute. If we have no recessions over the next 20 years and we have great economic growth, 4 percent, we still do not solve this problem. Because the interest costs are greater than the GDP growth associated with our country.

I wanted to give the background of why I come out here all the time and raise the issue of why we are stealing the future from our children. Nobody can deny the fact that we have not done the work. The reasons we have

not done the work are multiple. But most of it is we just will not do the work. We do not have the leadership that requires us to do the work.

Think about Madeline. Let's say she gets a great college education and is in the upper quintile in our country in terms of her earnings when she is 25. With normalized interest rates, she is going to fall behind. So I know we are talking out in the future, but one of the things Thomas Jefferson wanted out of the Senate was for us to be long-range thinkers, not to think about the problem right now, think about what the problem is going to be.

In my 9 years here, I have failed in my ability to convince my colleagues that we ought to be worrying about this problem. Because the promise of America was opportunity. The promise of the poor house is no opportunity. What we have set up for the average American family in the future is the poor house.

It does not have to be that way. We can fight among the priorities, but the one thing we should not by fighting about, the one thing that we should know that we can fix is why would there be 679 different renewable energy programs? Can anybody give any possible justification for that? It is just $15 billion a year, but if you consolidated them down to 20, you could save $5 billion a year. That is $50 billion over 10 years.

Why are there 253 different Department of Justice crime prevention grants? Each of them has an overhead. What we found when we studied this is people get a grant from one, then use the same grant application to go to another grant overhead in DOJ, get the grant from another section, another program, for exactly the same claim. The right hand does not know the left hand. If you consolidated them, one, you would get more money to each individual grant, and, No. 2, you would not have the duplication and fraud and lack of compliance we know these grant programs are loaded with. We have done the work. We have done the oversight.

We have actually studied them—or why are there 209? Think about this—science, technology, engineering, and math incentive programs, education programs, 13 different agencies, $3.5 billion a year. Why do we allow that to happen? This is the real face of who it is going to affect. Yet we won't do the hard work.

It is not the appropriators' job to do that work; I understand that. But one of the things appropriators could do is say we are not going to fund any of these programs unless we consolidate them and put metrics on them. Finally, if they expected to come out in March—and I am so pleased the chairman wants to run the appropriations bills and to get back to normal—to say to the Judiciary Committee, if you want these justice grants run, consolidate them, put restrictions on them, streamline them, and then we will fund them.

So everybody will know, we are prorating 1 year about $480 billion of money for programs that aren't authorized at all. One of the strengths of the Appropriations Committee could be that we could put some demands on the authorizing committee to clean this up.

I want to state a couple more.

Health care has been in the news. How many of us realize we have 91 different health care training programs spending $14 billion a year? Some of my colleagues probably know that, but in the committee of jurisdiction they have done nothing about it.

I don't object to spending $14 billion on health training programs or any of these other things as long as we are doing it wisely, but what I would suggest is for the 91 different programs—which should be probably 4 or 5—the overhead associated with the others is saved for the American public. We could save a significant amount of money for Madeline. Because the real story is our excesses, our lack of work, our lack of consolidation, our lack of streamlining, our lack of elimination and duplication, our lack of demanding the metrics so that we know the programs we are funding out there are working.

We are not going to pay the price for it, nobody in this room. The people who are going to be paying the price for it are Madeline's generation. How are they going to pay for that? What is going to happen? What is the real cost associated with that? It is not a pretty picture. This is what it is: It is a markedly declining standard of living.

Most people don't know that median family income in real dollars in America today is at the exact same level it was in 1989, and it is going backward. Even with a growing economy, it is going backward. The assets available to a family are declining while the obligations for that family are increasing, and we are responsible for that. It is not something we can't fix, it is something we choose not to fix.

I also would say that I have one large concern in this bill. We increased NIH back to $1 billion. We are still not where we were 2 years ago, but we started with $800 million more at the Defense Department, duplicating programs that are already running at the NIH. We are making my list bigger, not smaller. We are going in the wrong direction.

We have great people at the NIH. We have a great leader in Francis Collins. They have markedly improved the management of their grants, their oversight of their grants. Yet we are going to take $800 million and move it over to another set of overhead—with people not nearly as experienced, not nearly as knowledgeable. We are going to be spending money in the Defense Department to study things we are spending money for for the exact same type of thing at NIH. So we are not going to get great value for this money. What we are going to do is waste it. That $800 million should have gone to NIH and every other non-military-related medical program over there. That money should have gone to the NIH.

When we talk to the Senators who started this, both TOM HARKIN and our former colleague, now deceased, Ted Stevens, they would admit to us in private that it was a mistake to ever start it this way, because we are wasting a ton of precious dollars that could be used to save somebody's life, but somebody has a reason for that. I don't know what it is, but I will say in this bill we have $68 billion of appropriations for the Defense Department that have nothing to do with the defense of this country. We don't get all of these savings if we take it out of the Defense Department, but we get $3 billion or $4 billion if we take it out of the Defense Department. That $3 billion or $4 billion could fund NIH back at a level it should be funded or protect Madeline from further decline in her standard of living.

I have made my point. I understand my perspective is not in the majority, but I will guarantee my perspective is with the majority of Americans, that we ought not to have 679 renewable energy initiatives. I don't think we would find anybody in the country who would disagree with me that they ought to be consolidated. They ought to be run efficiently. They ought to have metrics on them, as well as the other hundreds of sets of duplications.

We are going to get another report next month from the GAO, actually in March. It will be their fourth. They are so discouraged because they do all this hard work, make recommendations, and then we sit on them. We don't act.

If I were to have a challenge to my colleagues, it is first to read the reports over the past 4 years and look at the data that shows where we are really wasting money. Then, please, for Madeline and the sake of her generation, act on it. Don't ignore it.

I know it is not easy work. It is hard work. I have done oversight for 9 years in the Senate. But it can be done, it should be done, and the Madelines of America are worth it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. The remarks by the Senator from Oklahoma are very interesting and telling. I listened to him carefully, and I believe basically he is right on the point. I believe basically that we all agree with the Senator that it is important to reduce the waste and duplication in our government. He points out a lot of it. GAO has done it too.

Our staff has met with the GAO several times on ways to address this problem. We know the problem; we have to act on it, and we have to take it very seriously. GAO, as Senator COBURN said, is coming out with a new report. If we work on this, the government is going to be more efficient. We

are going to save money, and we are going to respond to problems in America much better. We are a long way from doing this. I appreciate his remarks this afternoon and I hope a lot of my Senators were looking at that and listening to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mr. JOHANNS. I ask unanimous consent to speak for approximately 12 minutes as in morning business.

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

TPA

Mr. JOHANNS. I rise today to discuss a bill my colleagues and I introduced to establish trade promotion authority, otherwise referred to as TPA. Senators BAUCUS and HATCH, along with Congressman CAMP in the House, introduced the Congressional Trade Priorities Act only last week. The Senate Finance Committee held a hearing on it today.

This bill would resurrect the partnership between Congress and the administration to promote a robust trade agenda. That partnership, known as TPA, came about as a way to thoughtfully and pragmatically exercise Congress's constitutional authority to regulate foreign commerce. TPA effectively combines this authority with the President's authority to negotiate treaties.

Congress therefore provides the marching orders to the President, and the President, in turn, gets an up-or-down vote on the agreement that is negotiated. Some might ask why would we do this? Why should Congress set rules for itself to consider trade agreements through a very special legislative process? Simply put, negotiating modern trade agreements would be virtually impossible without providing some assurance that agreed-upon provisions, negotiated provisions, won't be picked apart after the negotiators shake hands.

Trade agreements span a multitude of issues affecting international commerce. To reach these agreements there needs to be extensive negotiation by representatives of the countries involved, but Congress is hardly equipped to engage in multilateral negotiations with foreign countries. We know that. We can hardly negotiate with each other these days.

TPA allows Congress to set priorities for trade agreements and engage with the President throughout the process. During floor consideration, amendments cannot be offered because it would undermine our Trade Representative. It would undermine our Trade Representative's hand in negotiation.

Imagine our negotiators signing a deal, shaking hands with our counterparts from other parts of the world, and then bringing the deal to Congress. Then, after 535 people offer a plethora of amendments, they have to go back to the other countries and try to reopen negotiations because everything has been changed. No one would ever negotiate a trade deal with the United States again.

So why is that a bad thing? Should we negotiate trade agreements at all? I would argue, unquestionably, the answer is absolutely yes. White Houses from Reagan to Obama would agree.

Furthermore, the overall benefit of free trade is undisputed by the economists. A free rules-based trading system is much better for America than a system where the government picks winners and losers, and it is better for American jobs when the playing field is a level playing field.

I want to give an example: Colombia. In 2011 Congress passed a trade agreement with Colombia—already one of our most important allies in Latin America. That trade relationship is thriving as a result of that agreement. Consider this: Between 2011 and 2013 U.S. goods exports to Colombia have increased 18 percent. At the same time U.S. goods exports to the rest of the world have decreased by 2 percent. Trade agreements are a great benefit to Americans as well as in corners of the world where they need a strong ally.

Unfortunately, that is a message that doesn't always make it through. Instead, we hear a chorus of scare tactics about job losses, environmental concerns—whatever it is. Critics ignore the proven power of trade to expand job opportunities and to improve the standard of living, not only here but around the world. At the same time the lives of millions of people around the world improve. Almost all economists would agree that countries should move toward more free trade, not less.

One need only examine tariff rates to understand why it is in our best interests to pursue trade agreements. U.S. barriers to trade are already very low by global standards. Our average tariff rate is 3.5 percent. Compare that to our current trade negotiating partners. Vietnam has an average tariff rate of 10 percent. Malaysia's average is 6 percent. Japan and the EU both have average tariff rates of 5.3 percent. Only New Zealand has a lower rate than we do. So trade agreements help to level the playing field by bringing down tariffs imposed on our goods by our competitors. Put simply, trade agreements knock down barriers. They open doors for U.S. producers and manufacturers to get our economic engine going again.

Critics falsely claim we are going to experience a flood of cheap imports as a result of new agreements.

My friends, that simply doesn't make sense when our tariffs are already low. Trade agreements bring down our competitors' high tariffs. They level the playing field.

The benefit to trade is especially clear for agricultural products—huge drivers of the economy in my State. Our average tariff on these imported products is 5 percent. Malaysia's is 11 percent, the European Union's is 14 percent, Vietnam is at 17 percent, and Japan has an agricultural tariff rate of 23 percent. These countries all already have a number of trade agreements in place with other countries. That means we face restrictions while our competitors reap the benefits of the open market. We are on the sidelines while other countries are filling the orders and creating the jobs. Trade Promotion Authority paves the way to lowering these barriers and, in some cases, eliminating them altogether.

Of course, tariffs are not the only barriers our exporters face, and TPA would help us address the others too. Countries also impose nontariff barriers, often claiming some illegitimate basis in science, and they have brought our industries to their knees. Modern trade agreements address those barriers as well, and we cannot get good trade agreements inked without TPA.

In general, the U.S. abides by true science-based trade standards. This is less common, however, in the rest of the world, to say the least. Trade agreements help bring export markets in line with the same kind of science-based standards that we apply to our imports. So if you are concerned about foreign countries blocking American exports, you should support TPA. Without TPA it becomes much harder to open those markets for American workers.

We should all get behind this TPA bill and get it across the finish line so that new trade agreements can clear the way for more Americans to be hired as export demand increases.

I am pleased President Obama now recognizes the immense benefit that trade provides to our great Nation. Despite being all talk and no action on trade early on, this administration is currently negotiating the two largest trade agreements in history. In my opinion, it is time for the partisan bickering to end. There are clear job-creating benefits to our country, and it is time for the President to make that case to the American people and to his allies in Congress.

In a couple of weeks the President will have an opportunity to do so in the State of the Union address. I hope he follows through. Given the ambition of potential agreements across the Pacific and the Atlantic, the President must lay the groundwork, the vision, for the passage of this legislation. Creating jobs in this Nation is too important to leave at the mercy of electioneering politics. It really is time to act. So my hope is we will pass TPA quickly so we can put Americans back to work.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SESSIONS. My late colleague Senator Byrd liked to say there have been two great Senates in the history of the world: The U.S. Senate and the Roman Senate. He understood the special and crucial role the Senate fulfills in our constitutional Republic. The Senate is where the great issues of our time are supposed to be examined, reviewed, and discussed before the whole Nation, in public. Yet in the last few years we have witnessed the dramatic erosion of Senators' rights and the dismantling of an open process.

We fund the government through massive omnibus bills. This is the bill before us now—1,583 pages stacked up here before us that no one really has a chance to read or evaluate or analyze. Senators are stripped of their rights to offer amendments. We won't have amendments. Bills are rushed through on the threat of panic, crisis or shutdown. Pass it today or the government shuts down. Secret deals rule the day. Work is done outside the public view, and so millions of Americans are essentially robbed of their ability to participate in the process by examining what their Senators do.

Under the tenure of Majority Leader REID, the Senate is rapidly losing its historic role as that great deliberative body. If this continues, America will have lost something very precious.

One of the tactics by which Majority Leader REID has suppressed Senators' rights and blocked open debate is the technique called ''filling the tree.'' This basically means that when a bill comes to the floor, the leader will use his right of first recognition to fill all the available amendment slots on a bill and then block anyone else from offering an amendment. One man stands in the way of his 99 colleagues.

I say one man, but not really all alone does he stand there. His power exists only as long as his Democratic colleagues support his blocking of amendments.

This prevents the body from working its will. It prevents legislation from being improved by amendment, and it prevents Senators from being accountable to their voters on the great issues of the day. This is, of course, why it is done. It has nothing to do with time. It is done because the majority leader does not want to have his colleagues vote.

Our majority leader has used this tactic—filling the tree—80 times already. To put this in perspective, the six previous majority leaders filled the tree only 49 times combined. Senator REID has filled the tree on 30 more occasions than the six previous leaders combined. In so doing, he denies the citizens of each State their equal representation in the Senate. Majority Leader REID, in his efforts to protect his conference from casting difficult votes in order to shield them from accountability, has essentially closed the amendment process. He has shut down one of the most important functions that Senators exercise to represent the interests of their constituents.

Recently, this tactic manifested itself in a dramatic way. To the surprise and shock of many, the December spending agreement contained a provision to cut the lifetime pension payments of current and future military retirees, including wounded warriors, by as much as $120,000 over their retirement period. Other Senators and I have had many ideas about how to fix this problem, but we were blocked from offering them by the majority leader. I tried to offer an amendment to replace the cuts by closing a fraud loophole used by illegal immigrants—cited by the Department of the Treasury—to claim billions of dollars in free tax credits they are not entitled to—billions. It would more than pay for this. But Senator REID and his conference Members, save one—one broke ranks—stood together to block my amendment from a vote.

So I would ask my colleagues: Are you comfortable with this? Do you like having to beg and plead with one person for the right to offer an amendment in the Senate? Do you believe the Senate should operate according to the power of one man?

This omnibus bill, though it restores pensions for our heroic wounded warriors, leaves more than 90 percent of those cuts in place. Shouldn't we be allowed to offer amendments to provide a fair fix for all our warriors and veterans?

But blocking amendments is only one of the many abuses. The other erosion of the Senate has also been front and center in the budgeting process. We are now in our fifth year without adopting a budget resolution. We went over 4 years without the Senate even passing a budget, as required by plain law in the 1974 Budget Act. Instead, taxpayer dollars are being spent through a series of late-minute negotiations and legislative pay caps that are driven through the Senate.

Then we face a massive omnibus bill—this 1,583-page monstrosity—which is rushed to passage without any amendments or meaningful review. The American people have no real ability to know what is in it or to hold us, their elected representatives, accountable. That is, of course, why it is being done.

Today the Senate and the House are considering another omnibus bill, one that will spend more than $1 trillion, with thousands of items of government spending crammed into this single legislative proposal. The bill will be sped through under the threat of government shutdown, with very little debate and no ability to amend.

If you don't accept what is in the bill and vote for it and pass it, Senator REID says, I will accuse you of blocking the bill and shutting the government down. You don't dare vote no. So it is yet another time when we must pass it to find out what is in it. My staff and I have had less than 48 hours to digest this behemoth, but already we have found provisions that would not survive if considered in the regular order where we have amendments.

How is the process supposed to work? Each year, Congress is supposed to adopt a budget resolution. The law requires it. Then, based on spending levels contained in the budget resolution, individual committees report 12 authorization bills. I serve on the Armed Services authorization committee. Based on the expertise and experience of Members serving in those committees, they authorize spending. Senator LEVIN is our Armed Services Committee chair. Senator INHOFE is the ranking member. Senator MCCAIN is on the committee. These are people who have given years of their life to understanding the challenges of military matters.

Then the 12 subcommittees of the Appropriations Committee are to produce appropriations bills for their area of the budget, such as defense, homeland security, and agriculture, which are then to be individually considered, debated and amended on the Senate Floor. So they actually appropriate the funds that the authorization committees authorize to be funded. That is the way the process is supposed to work. This gives each Member, when the appropriations bill hits the floor, a chance to review and analyze each part of the budget and offer suggestions for saving money, improving efficiency, and better serving the taxpayers. That is the way it is supposed to work.

But under the tenure of Senator REID the budgeting process has been totally mismanaged. We have ceased consideration of appropriations bills altogether, basically, relying more and more on autopilot continuing resolutions and catch-all behemoth spending packages like this one. In fiscal year 2006, for example, every single appropriations bill was debated, amended, and passed in the Senate. In 2006 every one was passed, considered, and voted on, and that was good. That is better than we had been doing in the previous years. There were failures during the previous years.

But in 2013—here we are, here—the red indicates that no bill was passed in the Senate. In 2013, again in 2014, none were individually passed. All the funding was done as part of this omnibus process.

I want my colleagues to look at this one more time. The green shows that the bill was brought forward to the floor and was passed. The yellow shows it was brought forward out of committee but not passed on the floor. The red shows it was not even brought to the floor, brought out of committee to the floor to be considered. Do you see how the red has continued in the outyears?

What is happening today is contrary to good policy. It is contrary to the whole idea of what a Senate and a Congress ought to be doing. We have to stop it. I know we have had a lot of frustrations lately, but that does not excuse this trend. It has to end.

In my first year as a Senator—I guess the second year I was a Senator, 1998—every bill was passed. Every bill was passed in 2010. But we have gotten away from that completely. We can go back to that. It is not impossible. Those bills when I first came here were all debated and amended on the floor and went to conference with the House to settle our disagreements, and then a bill was sent to the President for his signature or veto. Over time, however, that has happened less and less frequently, to the point that nowadays we do not debate appropriations bills at all.

Look, Senator MIKULSKI is a great leader in the Senate and one of the people I admire greatly, and so are Senator SHELBY and others. How we got into this process I do not know. But I will just say this: I think it is fair to say that Republicans have clearly advocated for bringing the bills to the floor and having debates on them. I—ranking on the Budget Committee—have clearly advocated we process a budget the way we are supposed to do. But Senator REID has made the decision, backed by his conference, to not bring up these bills. It is a political decision. It is a decision to avoid having to take votes on disputed questions of what should be funded and what should not be funded. That is the problem we are in. So we have crammed all these appropriations into this huge bill under threat of a government shutdown.

A more ominous development, however, is the breakdown of the appropriations process in the Senate and how it is infecting the House of Representatives. It is spreading like the plague over there. In the first year of their majority, the House passed—worked and marked up 6 of the 12 appropriations bills and sent them to the Senate, but the Senate did not consider a single one of them. Last year the House passed eight appropriations bills and sent them over to the Senate. Again the Senate did not act, refused to consider them individually. This year the futility of the efforts of the House began to show as the House passed only four bills. Why should they pass them and send them to the Senate if they are not going to be considered on the floor in a normal, regular order? So they are beginning to erode what they have been doing.

All of us, both parties, have a responsibility to reverse these trends. All of us have a responsibility to return to regular order. It is in the national interest. It is the right thing to do. All of us owe our constituents an open, deliberative process, where the great issues of the day are debated in full and open public view. Each Senator must stand and be counted on these issues, not hide under the table and avoid being held accountable. The democratic process is messy, sometimes contentious, and often difficult. People disagree. But it is precisely this legislative tug-of-war, this back-and-forth which forges a national consensus.

While secret deals may keep the trains running on time in the short run, sometimes they keep the train running in the wrong direction—a direction different from what the American people would like to see. Sometimes it hides bad spending, bad appropriations, bad legislation that ought to be exposed in the light of day.

Secret deals rushed through without public involvement only deepen our divisions, delay progress, increase distrust, and make it harder to achieve the kinds of real reforms the American people have been thirsting for and demanding.

Having to cast many votes on tough issues really does clarify those issues and what the differences are amongst us. That process, I truly believe, openly conducted, can lay the groundwork for more progress than we have today and reduce contention. It will clarify facts and then lead to the finding of common ground. Only through an open legislative process can we create the kind of dialog, the kind of debate, and ultimately the kind of change necessary to put this country back on the right track.

I am going to continue to work to restore the regular order. I really believe it is important. I respect my colleagues. I am hearing more and more my Democratic colleagues expressing these same concerns, and I think there is some unease at the extent to which this process in the Senate has been undermined.

Maybe we can make progress and return to the great open debate and regular order that has made the Senate the wonder of the legislative world.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, pending before the Senate is something called the consolidated appropriations bill. It is consolidated because it consolidates the work of 12 separate subcommittees. As the chair of the full committee, I also chair a subcommittee called commerce, justice, science. I would like to say that what we did in our bill advanced, really, the protection of the United States in terms of Federal law enforcement, important domestic violence programs, but also we promoted trade and new ideas in science. I would like to share what we did. Before I do, I want to explain—many people do not understand, at this point, the Budget Committee and the Appropriations Committee.

The Budget Committee gives us the macro picture, what should be spent on discretionary spending, mandatory spending—spending for veterans benefits, which I believe ought to be mandatory—and also what our tax policy should be. Senator MURRAY of Washington State led that effort. We passed that bill in April. We tried to go to conference, but there was objection to it. Finally, after 3 weeks of shutdown, we were able to get a budget.

This committee was given the job, after the budget was passed, to do the work of the Appropriations Committee. The Appropriations Committee takes the work of the Budget Committee and puts it in the Federal checkbook, line by line.

I would like to elaborate on that, but I know the Senator from New Hampshire has come to the floor—one of our newer members of the committee, but she is not new to good government. She comes to the Senate with an incredible background of serving New Hampshire, particularly in the executive branch as Governor. She brings a sense of what government can do—that Yankee frugality for which New Hampshire is known.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Madam President, I thank the esteemed chair of the Appropriations Committee for her kind words, and especially for all of the work she has done to get us to this point where we have an appropriations bill before us. I know she has worked very hard with Ranking Member SHELBY, the House Appropriations Committee Chairman HAL ROGERS and Ranking Member LOWEY.

It was Senator MIKULSKI's leadership on this bill that got us to an agreement to fund the government for the rest of 2014, and to do it in a way that will support job creation, economic growth, and our national security. So I thank the chairman.

I am a new member of the Appropriations Committee. I am currently the chair of the Legislative Branch Subcommittee, and so I also want to thank Senator HOEVEN, the ranking member of our subcommittee. It has been a real pleasure to work with him to draft the subcommittee work for the Legislative Branch Subcommittee.

For New Hampshire, this bill includes funding for the continued development for the new KC–46A aerial refueling tanker, of which we are very proud. The first round of those tankers will be based at Pease Air National Guard Base in New Hampshire.

It also makes investments in the new military construction project at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. We are very proud in New Hampshire of both Pease and the shipyard because they play a very important role in our national defense. These strategic investments will create jobs, boost the State's economy, and support our men and women in uniform.

I am also very pleased that this omnibus bill funds the Beyond Yellow Ribbon Program. This is a program that connects service men and women and their families with community support, training, and other services. As

we look at the men and women coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, the Beyond Yellow Ribbon Program has been a very important program to help reconnect those returning servicemembers to their community. It has also been very important in New Hampshire. The Beyond Yellow Ribbon Program has been critical in States such as New Hampshire with many members of our National Guard and Reserve returning from duty overseas.

The legislation before us also funds the complete activation of the Berlin prison, just as it funds the Bureau of Prisons. In New Hampshire that funding is going to allow us to get to a full complement of about 340 local jobs in northern New Hampshire, which is very critical to the northern part of our State. It is going to provide a $40 million annual boost to the economy in northern New Hampshire.

I am especially appreciative to the chairwoman of the committee and to all of the members for the effort to help the fishing men and women in New Hampshire who have just been devastated by declining fish populations. The bill authorizes $75 million in disaster relief for those members of our fishing community, so many of whom have had their whole livelihoods taken away from them. This disaster relief money is going to help them during these difficult times. It will help them to recover and rebuild what I believe is one of the most critical economic sectors still in New England. It is certainly one of the oldest.

I am also pleased that this bill reverses some of the reckless cuts from sequestration and instead makes important investments in the future of this country—in our education, infrastructure, and in science and innovation.

Yet it also makes strategic cuts. For example, one of my favorites in the bill is that it prohibits taxpayer-funded expenditures on oil paintings for public officials. This is an idea that Senator COBURN and I have been working on over the last year, and I think it is exactly the kind of government spending we need to get rid of. It sends a message—a signal. Even though it is not a lot of money, it is symbolic for the public to know we are trying to address anything we can, and this is one piece we can agree on, and hopefully it will lead to others. The bill also requires all Federal agencies to become better stewards of taxpayer dollars because it invests in inspectors general in agencies across the Federal Government. Inspectors general help those agencies better identify waste and cut spending.

While making smart cuts, the bill also invests in priorities, such as science and innovation. It provides more funding for medical and energy research and development. Very important efforts are under way at the National Institutes of Health. They are finally going to see some relief in this bill.

It supports education, including funding programs such as Head Start, which have been cut under sequestration. Head Start has been cut in New Hampshire. It is particularly important because the more we learn about the importance of how children learn, the more we understand how critical early childhood education—programs such as Head Start—are to their future development.

The bill also makes infrastructure investments, something on which we have been too far behind in this country. It is going to help us as we look at rebuilding our Nation's deficient roads and bridges and creating jobs.

As we all know—and I know the chairwoman would readily admit—this bill is not a perfect bill, but the legislation before us is a product of the kind of bipartisan compromise that we have to have more of in Washington these days.

While I am very pleased that the bill addresses military retirement cuts for some retirees—survivor widows, survivor benefits, and for the disabled—we still need to keep working until those cuts are repealed entirely for all military retirees. It is something that I have introduced legislation on, and I will continue to work on it. I know there is a commitment from so many of us here in the Chamber to address that.

I will also continue to work to provide full funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, which helps seniors and low-income New Hampshire families pay their heating bills, especially during the cold winter months. This bill makes a small increase in that program, but unfortunately, it is not enough to address the challenges so many families in New Hampshire and in the cold parts of this country are facing as we continue through this very cold winter.

Small businesses in New Hampshire have not forgotten that during the shutdown they faced uncertainty and declining revenues. Federal employees in New Hampshire struggled to make ends meet while being furloughed, and that shutdown—a completely manufactured and unnecessary crisis—cost this economy $24 billion.

I think—in talking to business people around New Hampshire and around the country—one of the most important things that this bill does is it takes the prospect of another manufactured crisis off the table. It puts in place a responsible plan to grow this economy, create jobs, and it takes away the uncertainty that has so plagued families and businesses across this country.

I had the opportunity this week to meet with the head of the business roundtable. One of the things he pointed out to me is that right now we are seeing the lowest percentage of private investment in our economy that we have seen in a very long time—in decades. It is most important that we in Washington provide the business community some certainty so they will make those investments because that is how we create jobs.

We need to put people back to work, and I think this legislation goes a long way to create that certainty and say to the business community and to those people who are unemployed: We are going to keep working on your behalf. We are going to try to make those investments and make sure we create the jobs to put you back to work, to keep this economy strong and growing, and to keep this country competitive.

In closing, I just want to say to my colleagues that now is the time for us to build on this bipartisan success we have seen and that the chairwoman has been able to accomplish with all of her other negotiators. We have this opportunity to build on that and to further promote job creation and economic growth.

Our country needs us to work together on behalf of small businesses, on behalf of the middle class, and on behalf of families. We need to pass this bill. We need to keep working together and address the challenges this country faces.

I urge all of my colleagues in the Senate to support this bill.

I yield the floor, and again I thank the chairwoman for her efforts.

Ms. MIKULSKI. The Senator from New Hampshire is very generous with her remarks, and I want to respond by saying a few things.

First of all, the way the Senator speaks about New Hampshire is the way I also speak about Maryland. When people think about government spending, they think it just goes out in the ether and doesn't generate anything. As the Senator has said, what is spent by the Federal Government really creates jobs in the private sector.

She spoke about prisons. First of all, we appreciate New Hampshire's willingness to accept a prison. Many States don't want them, shy away from them or are afraid of them. New Hampshire has really met a national need, and we know that the staffing that will be provided by the exceptional, patriotic work ethic of the people of New Hampshire will keep our country safe.

Those same guards and administrative staff will be out in their community spending money on housing, at the local grocery store, maybe needing a wedding planner or whatever. So that is one area.

In terms of New England fisheries—for those of us who are coastal Senators, we know what that means. Fishing and seafood is part of our history, and it is actually part of our State's identity. For us in the Senate, the coastal Senators have kind of an affinity with each other for it.

We thank the Senator from New Hampshire for what she has done.

I also want to comment that the subcommittee on legislative affairs that you chair also—it is not like it funds legislators. It funds things such as the Capitol Police, who are sentry here doing their job.

I thank my colleague for her work, and we are so pleased to have her on the committee.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I thank the chairwoman very much.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, would the Senator yield?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I just want to take this opportunity to thank the two Senators who are present. In America's space program, which was potentially on a downward slope, the two Senators have crafted an appropriation that will keep us with a very robust American space program, including the first ''A'' in NASA, which is aeronautics. From science to the new big rocket, its capsule Orion, to the commercial, to the unmanned program exploring the heavens, the chairwoman and the ranking member have it right. I wanted to take this opportunity to express my profound thanks. The Senators are continuing the dream that we built on 3 years ago.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator from Florida. It is wonderful for both me and Senator SHELBY. Senator NELSON is an astronaut Senator. To hear an astronaut Senator say he thinks we are doing the job right means a lot.

The Senate has been blessed by having three astronaut Senators: Senator Jake Garn, a Republican from Utah, Senator John Glenn of Ohio, and Senator BILL NELSON.

Some of us have been in orbit a long time, but Senator NELSON actually knew what he was doing. So I thank my colleague very much. We are trying to add gravity to this bill.

Mr. NELSON. The Senators are doing it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I want to pick up on what Senator MIKULSKI was talking about. Senator NELSON has not only been an advocate for the space program for NASA—and he is. As most everybody knows, has been up there. I was traveling with him one time, and I believe we were over Asia, and he was showing me from the plane—we couldn't see as well as he could—the rotation. I was very impressed.

He has been a stalwart in the advancement of the space program. We both worked hand in glove with him.

I do believe this is a pretty good appropriation considering where we are. I am hoping we will get back to regular order since Senator MIKULSKI and I have advocated for this. We are hoping maybe later today we can vote this bill out with a vote like the House had yesterday.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, I am pleased to come to the floor today to follow-up on the very eloquent remarks by the Senator from New Hampshire and the ranking member and chairwoman.

I am here today to offer a few comments about the appropriations bill. But before I do, I thank the chairwoman and the ranking member for really being a great inspiration to all of us. Amidst all of the controversy and dustups and toxic atmosphere and nonpartisanship going on—or lack of cooperation going on—it is wonderful to see the two of them working so closely together on a bill that is so important to the country.

As the great Senator from New Hampshire said: This is a bill for the people, for jobs, and for our economy. It sends very positive signals across a breadth of industries where the Federal Government is stepping up to be a more reliable partner in these public-private partnerships that are represented in the funding of this bill—whether it is building our highways, building our space programs, funding our Department of Defense, sending money to cities and counties that are doing all sorts of innovative and remarkable things with community development block grant funding with a lot of private partners.

Contrary to popular belief and contrary to some things you might hear on the radio and on television these days, the Federal budget does a lot more than fund the government. It does a lot more than funding government employees. It is sending out literally millions of green lights to small business contractors and to large businesses saying, Let's go. The yellow light was blinking a few days ago; the red light has been on for the last couple of years. This bill literally sends out millions of blinking green lights saying: Get to work. Let's go to business. Let's build highways. Let's build levees. Let's build a space program. Let's invest in the middle class.

In addition, I wish to say how proud I am that under the leadership of Senator MIKULSKI, she has managed to do this within budget constraints. This is not a free spending bill; this is a smart spending bill within constraints so we are also mindful of reducing our debt over time, mindful about paying down our bills.

That is what is so remarkable about this and why I am so proud to support it. I hope we can get as strong a vote as the House did on this bill to show strong bipartisan support, because while it does address our debt and our deficit, it does so in a smart way with investments in what we have agreed to that make a difference to the private sector.

I can tell my colleagues that in Louisiana this is going to have immediate positive effects, and I wish to highlight a few of those now in terms of the Homeland Security bill. I am proud and happy to be the chairwoman of the Homeland Security appropriations bill. I have worked very closely with my colleague Senator CARPER, who is chair of the authorizing committee, and our ranking members, Senator COBURN and Senator COATS, as we authorize stronger parts of Homeland Security and then fund some of these initiatives. I will hit the highlights of just three or four.

One of them is the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard is in our Homeland Security bill. It is a very important component of our government. It is one of the most popular components of our government—popular broadly with business and with people. It is, of course, very popular with the people the Coast Guard has saved from drowning or from wrecks in our open seas, but also for the hundreds of companies and businesses that have contracts with the Coast Guard to provide some real cutting-edge shipbuilding that needs to go on in this country. The Senator from Alabama knows this, the Senators from Mississippi know this, the Senators from Maine, the Senators from Louisiana. We have lost a great deal of shipbuilding in our country to other countries. It is important that we keep as much shipbuilding here through the Homeland Security bill and through the Defense bill here in America—ships that are made in America, ships serving Americans, providing good, solid jobs.

I am proud to support this, along with the tremendous support of Senator COCHRAN, who is a member of my committee, and particularly Senator BEGICH, from Alaska, who fought very hard for a good outcome on the Coast Guard budget, which is above the administration's request and has a modest increase and will be supporting so many important projects for our Coast Guard and the men and women of our Coast Guard. It provides $10.2 billion overall, which is a significant increase, and we did so within our budget constraints.

Another piece I wish to highlight is our enforcement of Immigration and Customs laws. We are in a big debate about immigration reform and the importance of finding common ground on immigration reform for the benefit of our businesses and our economy here in America that demand clear rules of the road, clear processes for people to become citizens and to pay their taxes, who have come here legally, and for people who are here without the current legal papers to give them a path to citizenship once taxes are paid, once they get in line behind people who have come here legally. Protecting our borders is an important component of that as well. In our bill we have put the resources necessary behind enforcing those tough immigration standards and requirements.

We are protecting our border, providing resources for the bill, and that is important to many people in this country as well as people in Louisiana, to have an immigration system that makes sense as well as to provide appropriate jobs and labor to come in and help with so many of the jobs we have in Louisiana today.

We also had a focus in our bill—I think the chairwoman will be happy to hear this—about stepping up an additional 2,000 Customs officers at our airports. We have an international airport in New Orleans. We get a lot of international travel. We may be a little

city, but we fight way above our weight, as does our State, when it comes to international travel. We are a very sought-after destination and we are very happy about that. But there are other States such as New York and Nevada and Chicago that have international travel. Even the State of the Presiding Officer, North Dakota, which is a smaller State—there is a tremendous amount of business coming into the State of North Dakota, both domestic and international, because of their oil and gas jobs and their energy sector jobs. What a howdy-do it is, arriving at our airport or to work with businesses here, or to partner with businesses here to create jobs, and one has to wait in line in Customs for 5 hours. That is no way to greet business men and women bearing gifts of investment and money for our country.

I have taken a strong leadership position on this with the travel and trade organizations, both in hospitality and in international business. I wish to thank their coalition for fighting hard to make sure this bill reflects the fact that business is global, it is international. Our business people are out and in all the time, building wealth for America and, hopefully, the world, but for America, and business people come here to help create wealth and help our middle class to grow. Having Customs agents who operate, making lines shorter, will certainly help that, while keeping our country safe, but also keeping it open for business. Louisiana is a trading State and we are a big port State. We understand trade, we understand international business, and I am happy to be able to fight hard for those priorities.

I wish to mention two other issues. Many committees are working on cyber security. Homeland Security does not take the lead on cyber overall; the Department of Defense and National Security Agency do. But when it comes to securing our government and our government private sector partners, Homeland Security does take the lead. We have stepped up some investments in cyber security. As the Senator from Alabama most certainly understands in his leadership role, this is a real threat not only to our government, to the Department of Defense, to our government as a whole, but to many businesses in America—private, large businesses, and medium and small. They are feeling the effects of these saboteurs and attackers. The government has to stay focused and well invested, working with the private sector, to make sure our defenses and our security are up, and our bill recognizes that.

Finally, something close to my heart and close to my home is the funding for disaster relief. I hope no one ever has to go through what we went through along the gulf coast for Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I know everybody has had terrible storms and floods. But there has never been a storm or a disaster such as this, and I pray to the Lord there will never be another one after it. The damage that was done in dollar amounts, the damage that was done across a vast stretch of land, from Alabama to Texas, the devastation it caused in terms of numbers of homes and businesses lost is unparalleled.

Sandy was a terrible superstorm, and because the northeast is more dense than we are down South, they lost more homes technically than we did, because the dollar damage is still far exceeding in the aftermath of Katrina and Rita. But whether it is Sandy in the east or whether it is floods in North Dakota, which they have had their share of, or Colorado or whether it is storms on the gulf coast, we have to be ready with money to send immediately when people need help.

I am going to say this because it has been a matter of argument between some here: When a disaster strikes, I am not going to look for an offset. I am going to look for the Coast Guard and FEMA to show up with the equipment they have to help people who are either drowning, on their roofs, or watching their houses burn to the ground. I am not going to look for an offset. So as long as I am chairman of this bill, we will have money in this bill to use on an emergency basis when emergencies occur, as they do fairly regularly, unfortunately, in the States we represent down in the gulf coast. Because we are right in the middle of that hurricane alley, these storms are getting bigger and more fierce, and we have to be at the ready.

We have helped Maryland. We have money in for Sandy recovery and there is money in here still for the ongoing recovery. It is phasing out now in the gulf coast, but there are still some projects that have ongoing work, even 9 years after Katrina and Rita.

Let me say it has been a pleasure to work with my colleagues. I wish to thank the members of my committee, particularly my ranking member DAN COATS from Indiana, and I really want to thank Senators BEGICH and COCHRAN for their great work with the Coast Guard and helping me negotiate this through the process. Again, I think these are just some of the highlights of our bill. Nothing would have been possible without Senator MIKULSKI and her determination to get the green light on, because people in my town, in my State are tired of yellow and red. They want to work. They want to go to work. They want to build buildings and build roads and get projects underway. We have lots of permits pending that the money in this bill will allow to be released. So I am proud to vote for it. This is all about jobs, economic competitiveness for America, and good jobs for Louisiana. I am sure every Senator, or almost every Senator, will say the same about this bill, because it was well done. It is a job well done.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, I rise today to again express my great disappointment about a matter of importance to Wyoming and many other public land States that have not been properly addressed by this omnibus bill in the Senate. Instead of producing a legislative solution based on discussions with our colleagues, debate and consideration in committee, and a fair and complete process on the floor, we have a bill before us that was put together by making another deal. Simply put, the Senate fails to do its job when we refuse to allow a fair, free, and open debate about an issue that is of such great concern to the people who will be affected by the decision.

It is no secret; anyone who has seen the Senate in operation as we take up this legislation will know that the back-room deal does not include critical funding that nearly 1,900 counties in 49 States—49 States; that is all but 1—and 3 U.S. territories rely on. One would think this kind of participation would draw an extraordinary amount of interest by us all to make sure this bill was written with the best interests of all the States and all of our constituents in mind. Unfortunately, that doesn't appear to be the case.

So what program is it that draws such interest from 1,900 counties, 3 territories, 49 States—concern from such a widespread portion of our Nation? I am speaking, of course, of payments in lieu of taxes. It is a program that has been in place for decades; it is not an issue that is new to the Senate. That is why I recently led an effort by several of my Senate colleagues urging that appropriators include this critical funding in the Interior appropriations. If they had done that, we would have already completed the work to produce a well-reasoned, well-thought-out answer to an issue of such importance to the States. Unfortunately, our efforts seem to have fallen on deaf ears, so here I am before my colleagues hoping with all my heart that I can make the Senate understand how crucial this funding is to almost every State in the Union.

This body often overlooks the important role of local government in the lives of our constituents. I know this because before I came to the Senate I served as a mayor, as did another handful of people in this body, and I know there are several others who have been county officials. Communities and counties are responsible for providing fire protection, law enforcement, sanitation, public health, and education, just to name a few. They provide these services largely by raising revenue. One common source is through property taxes. In States where there is little federally owned land, local communities have a large number of private homeowners to help provide these services. However, there are States where the Federal Government decided to retain most if not a majority of its ownership of the land. The problem is that these Federal lands cannot be taxed.

Yet local governments must still provide critical fire, law enforcement, and health services in these areas and for the people who work on them. In order to make up this shortfall, Congress created payment in lieu of taxes to compensate local governments to offset the losses caused by having nontaxable Federal lands within their boundaries.

For decades, the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program has provided counties and local governments with funding to help meet critical community needs. One of the reasons the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program was instituted was because of the creation of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which placed a major hurdle on the Federal Government from disposing of public lands. In place of the Federal Government's ability to move land from Federal to private ownership Congress decided to reimburse county and local governments with payments that would replace the revenue lost from the property taxes they would have received if those Federal lands had been transferred to private ownership. It seemed the only fair thing to do back then, and it is still only fair to live up to our obligations as a nation to provide the States with the revenue they are losing because of the laws we have enacted.

I have to tell you, we are talking about 1,900 counties in the United States; 49 States. In some of those counties, it is 40 percent to 80 percent of their total revenue. That is a big cut to make—in 1 year. No transition, just boom, gone. How do you adjust to that if you are those local government people trying to figure out how to balance your budget? After all, I am not aware of anybody who lives at the Federal level. They all live at the local level. So it is the local folks who have to take care of the people.

If we fail to adequately address this issue, we are forcing our communities to make do with less—a lot less—because we are breaking a promise we have made. By doing so, we are forcing them to reduce—or even eliminate—the vital resources upon which their citizens rely.

I wish to emphasize and make it clear that this is not an additional source of revenue. It is not a bonus. County and local governments depend on this revenue when they plan their budgets each year. It is part of the law. They count on it, and without it, their budgets are stretched and strained and they will be bankrupt.

The decision by the Appropriations Committee to not include the vital payment in lieu of taxes funding in the omnibus will place counties across the country in very difficult positions and great financial hardship for them all, especially since there was no transition, there was no warning. It was just done.

We need to stop playing games with the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program and find a way to ensure it is adequately and fairly funded now and for years to come. We could learn a lesson from local governments. I remind you, that is where everyone lives. Many are obligated to have a balanced budget. That forces communities to budget in advance, debate priorities, and stick to considering spending measures through the normal legislative process.

As we look for ways to adequately fund payment in lieu of taxes, we also need to be sure we are not robbing Peter to pay Paul. I was extremely disappointed about the provision in the conference report—now, a conference report comes to us for an up-or-down vote. We do not have any chance to debate them on the floor. We do not have a chance to amend it. But the conference report for the highway reauthorization in 2012 robbed the abandoned mine land trust fund—trust fund—to pay for the payment in lieu of taxes obligation that time. They got paid, though, but we stole from a trust fund to do it. Again, it was a conference report, so there was no opportunity for amendments on it—just like this omnibus. States rely on those funds to clean up high-priority abandoned mines. We should not pit those funds against each other.

Yes, the Federal Government is out of money. We are going to have to prioritize. We are going to have to move some things around. We are going to have to bring down the deficits so eventually we can hopefully bring down the debt. This is not the only time we have been doing this sort of thing.

Twice now we have robbed the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. Where do they get their money? Any private company—private company, not Federal company—any private company that has a pension fund has to pay a tax into this Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation so that in case they go out of business, the people who were promised a retirement will be compensated. They will get compensated 60 percent of what they were promised—just 60 percent. But we have raised that amount dramatically twice now on private corporations that were providing retirement for their workers.

That is all voluntary. They do not have to provide retirements for their workers. If we keep raising that amount, and it does not go to provide assurance that their employees will get their retirement, why would they keep their retirement going?

People are going to lose retirement in the United States. Nobody is starting defined benefit plans right now because of the extra taxes we are putting on it. Twice now we have raised that price, and we have put it to something other than it was promised for. Here is the real kicker: We said that for the next 8 years we are going to steal that money, so we can spend that amount this year.

I am not sure it is legal. How do we force future Congresses to be sure to pay the money—no, we will have already spent the money—so we are asking them to pay back the money, and we are asking them to steal it out of a trust fund. We have to quit stealing from the trust funds. That is the same thing with the abandoned mine land trust fund. That was stealing for 10 years to pay for 2 years. We cannot keep doing that.

Somehow we have to have the kind of budgeting we are expecting these local governments, these towns and cities and counties to do, where they have to balance their budget. We do not have to balance our budget. We just steal the money. But there is a point at which we cannot steal the money anymore.

What do we do now next time on the Transportation bill, when we have already obligated 8 more years of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation to the current highways? We will not have collected that yet. Where do we steal it from next time?

Infrastructure is extremely important. We are going to have to eventually prioritize around here. We are going to have to do the same thing we expect of those towns and counties that we are stealing the payment in lieu of taxes money from in order to keep this business afloat.

The Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program represents a promise we made to counties and local governments all across the Nation. They are looking to us to see how we will act and to see how we will keep that promise. If we fail to do so, it will have an impact on almost every one of us who will surely hear about the repercussions when we go back home to meet with our constituents. I encourage and urge the Senate in the strongest terms to reconsider the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program and the impact we may be bringing to people across the Nation by failing to include it in this legislation.

These are governments that—they have property taxes on the private property. What happens if the people with the private property do not pay their taxes? The local government gets to put a lien on it and gets to put it on the market. Maybe that is what we ought to do with this Federal land: put a lien on it, put it on the market.

It is a debt the Federal Government said they would pay and they are not paying. It is payment in lieu of property taxes. If the property taxes are not paid, there is a way the local government can make up for it, but there is not if the Federal Government just decides to quit paying, and that is kind of what we did. We said taxes are hard to pay. If everybody in America said taxes are hard to pay and quit paying them, we would be in one heck of a fix. We cannot do that to the towns and counties either.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Madam President, before the Senator from Wyoming leaves the floor, I wish to comment about some of the things he said about

PILT and assure him that should the ambassadorship go forward for China, should RON WYDEN become the chair of the Finance Committee, I will become the chair of the Energy Committee, and he has my commitment now to help him work on that.

I am very well aware, having served on that committee for 10 years, how important PILT is—payment in lieu of taxes—to some of the States in the West, primarily less populated States. Their tax base is very affected by the fact that the Federal Government owns a great deal of land.

The Senator knows only 2.5 percent of my State is Federal land. Through the Chair, I would like to ask the Senator what percent of his State is Federal land.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. ENZI. Madam President, 49 percent of Wyoming is Federal land. We understand the value of having some Federal land. We like the people who come to visit it. But there are a lot of expenses that go with that, and to just jerk the money away—right away.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Yes.

Mr. ENZI. In the committee the Senator is talking about with Senator WYDEN, what we have always talked about is a transition to do anything. There are a number of ways we could transition this that I do not think would hurt the Federal Government or hurt the local counties, but it requires a lot of flexibility, it requires going through the regular process in committee and then coming to the floor and making some decisions. This is wrong to just steal it one time.

Ms. LANDRIEU. If I could be recognized.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I want to commit to work with the Senator. I am very sympathetic and understand his position, and we will be talking to the leadership on both sides to see what we can do. It is very hard for that money to come away at such an abrupt time, and there are some issues that I know are pending before the committee where that could potentially get resolved. So I just wish to offer my help and support at the appropriate time.

(The further remarks of Ms. LANDRIEU are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Texas.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, 4½ years ago the United States went through a terrible recession, what we now know as the great recession. But since that time we have had the slowest economic recovery since the Great Depression, and our labor force participation rate, which is a fancy way of saying the number of people, the percentage of people who are actually in the workforce looking for work, is much lower than it was at the height of the recession. So even though the unemployment rate is coming down little by little, the main reason that is true is because people, many people, are simply giving up looking for work. Last month alone 345,000 people dropped out of the workforce. Even when we look exclusively at workers between the age of 25 and 54, their participation rate is significantly lower than it was when President Obama took office.

Meanwhile, 4 million people who are still in the workforce have now been jobless for more than 6 months. As I mentioned, if the Obama economic recovery had been as strong as the Reagan recovery in the 1980s, we would currently have millions more private sector jobs. So what is the President's big idea for helping the economy getting back on track? Last night, according to published news reports, he was drinking martinis and plotting his 2014 political strategy with his fellow Democratic Party members.

He apparently told the Democrats present—at least reportedly—that he would continue to go it alone if he could not get bipartisan support for his agenda by issuing more Executive orders. He would do that if Republicans did not cave in and give him every single thing he wants on every issue.

So rather than talking to Republicans in bipartisan discussions about how we can come together on real solutions to the problems that face our economy and people being out of work, the President instead has defaulted in favor of poll-tested ideas and political gimmicks leading into the runup to the 2014 election.

Sipping martinis and plotting politics while millions of Americans are out of work shows how out of touch the President has become, and unfortunately so many of the folks who vote with him on each and every issue that comes before the Senate. But putting last night's party aside for a moment, I would ask my friends across the aisle a few questions about the recent Senate debate about unemployment insurance.

The first question: If extending unemployment insurance benefits for the long-term unemployed is so important, why did the majority leader not schedule a vote last month before those benefits expired on December 28? That is the first question.

Second question: Why would you want to add $6.4 billion to the national debt, when the national debt is already $17.3 trillion? Why would you want to do that if you knew the bill had no chance of passing, because Republicans were not going to agree to a bill that adds to the national debt?

You might ask whether it is hard to find $6.4 billion in an annual spending budget of $3.8 trillion. I will do the math for you. The $6.4 billion is roughly .0017 percent of what the Federal Government spends in a given year. It seems to me that would be relatively easy to do.

In fact, Republicans had amendments that would pay for the 3-month extension as well as restore the pension benefits for the military that were cut in the earlier budget deal. But the majority leader refused to allow an open amendment process that would have allowed a vote on either one of those. I would ask the majority leader, rhetorically—he is not here in the Chamber, but I am sure he has people listening—why is it the majority leader refused to allow any progrowth measures to the final bill? Republicans had a number of amendments that would have improved the education and training component of our unemployment compensation system.

If you look at the three major causes of long-term unemployment, one is education. We need to deal with that. The other is family choices, harder for government to have an influence on. But the third is jobs and the job environment.

But the majority leader blocked every single opportunity to address either education reforms or job training or to deal with progrowth measures which have actually created more jobs so fewer people would have to be on unemployment and more people would be able to find work, as I know they would prefer to do.

So if the majority leader and our Democratic friends who joined in blocking every Republican idea to either pay for it or to help improve job training or to improve the private sector's ability to create jobs and allow people to go to work, I would like to hear the answer to those.

There is a much better way to fuel job creation, reduce unemployment, and promote upward mobility that does not involve playing politics while millions of Americans are looking for work. For starters, let's pick some of the low-hanging fruit. I bet the Presiding Officer, based on some of the remarks I have seen attributed to her, would agree with this one: The Canadian Government has spent years urging President Obama to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline, which would create thousands of well-paying jobs, middle-class jobs right here in the United States. This administration, this President, actually promised Republicans in a meeting he had with them last year that he would make a decision by the end of last year, 2013. We are still waiting for his decision. All we hear is the sound of crickets when it comes to the Keystone XL Pipeline. But this President and this White House, this administration, could effectively create those jobs with the stroke of a pen approving the Keystone XL Pipeline. It does not get much easier than that.

Indeed, even the President's own former National Security Advisor has said publicly he thinks the President ought to do this, because this is not just an economic issue, this is not just a jobs issue. Every barrel of oil we transport on the Keystone XL Pipeline from a friendly country such as Canada means less oil we have to import from

volatile regions of the planet such as the Middle East.

But beyond the pipeline issue, which is the lowest of the low-hanging fruit in terms of creating jobs and getting the economy moving again, the Obama administration should generally stop hindering our domestic energy production. We have had a renaissance in energy in America thanks to innovation in the private sector, primarily the now some six-decades-old practice of fracking, which has gotten a bad rap in some corners, but also horizontal drilling, pioneered by none other than George Mitchell of Texas who recently passed on.

This combination of fracking and horizontal drilling has led to a proliferation of domestic energy supply, natural gas and oil right here at home. Again, every barrel, every MCF of gas we produce here domestically means less energy we have to import from abroad.

We all know that nationwide the oil and gas industry represents a rare bright spot in the U.S. economy. According to one study, by 2035, unconventional oil and gas resources alone will be supporting 3.5 million jobs and contributing $475 billion to our economy. Why would not the President and our Democratic friends embrace something like that, that would create so many jobs right here in the United States, instead of playing political games and plotting out the next election?

Yet on top of that, to make matters worse, the administration is proposing a proliferation of new regulations on fracking that occurs on Federal lands. I think my friends who perhaps are not familiar with this process should listen. Fracking has been going on for at least 60 years in Texas under the regulatory authority of the Texas Railroad Commission and local jurisdictions. But if you drill a well and you put the casing in and you cement it properly, there is absolutely zero threat to groundwater or drinking water, because the target of the fracking is deep below the surface. So by using good drilling practices and cementing of the casing, there is virtually zero threat to drinking water and the concerns that many people have expressed but which are not grounded in experience.

Think of it this way: If the Federal Government has made such a hash out of health care after ObamaCare by taking over one-sixth of the economy and our national health care, what I worry about is what they would do if the Federal Government decides to take over regulation of fracking. Because it has been handled appropriately at the State and local level. I am afraid they will make a hash out of that as well.

In addition to the other regulations I am concerned about, the administration has announced new regulations that would impose massive additional costs and deliver very little in the way of economic or environmental gains. More regulations are never a good idea if they put an additional burden on business and produce no tangible benefit to the environment. But they are especially harmful at a time when our economic recovery is so anemic and our economic recovery remains so fragile. We simply need to stop placing additional burden by additional regulations on the vital sectors of our economy that we need in order to grow and prosper and create new jobs, especially when there is no demonstrable environmental benefit.

For that matter, let's eliminate all new regulations that do not pass a simple cost-benefit analysis. One new study shows that the Obama administration has imposed more than $112 billion worth of net regulatory costs on the U.S. economy and added an equivalent of 158 million hours of additional paperwork on American businesses.

My colleagues Senator PORTMAN and Senator ROBERTS have each sponsored new legislation that would introduce safeguards against unnecessary job-killing regulations. This brings me to ObamaCare. One of the things that organized labor, which was one of the biggest supporters of ObamaCare, has now come back to the White House and complained about is the fact of the incentives for employers to take what was full-time work, a40-hour workweek and make it part-time work.

Indeed, that is because the President's health care law defines full-time employment as a 30-hour workweek, so people even working part time have to be provided full benefits that those on full-time work ordinarily would qualify for.

But as a result, as many of these labor leaders told the President a few short months ago, many Americans have had their full-time jobs reduced from full time to part time. This trend will only get worse as the administration decides to enforce the employer mandates.

If the majority leader would allow, we have two bills on our side of the aisle that would address that. Senator COLLINS of Maine and Senator SCOTT of South Carolina have proposed defining full-time employment as a 40-hour workweek that would provide some benefit and some relief to people who have seen their hours cut.

One more example of low-hanging fruit: Republicans and Democrats both agree that education is a critical need to allowing for upward mobility.

With that in mind, we should be doing everything possible to support successful education reform initiatives across the country. Yet the Obama administration has done frequently the opposite. Witness what has happened in Louisiana where the administration is trying to derail Louisiana's school voucher program where parents get to choose where the money goes, not the government.

This is all very easy. Some things would be harder, such as major tax reform, although I would point out that until recently Members of both parties agreed that the goal of tax reform would be to lower marginal rates as we eliminate a lot of the tax expenditures or deductions or subsidies or the like.

We want to adopt those kinds of progrowth tax reforms, but we are never going to make any real progress as long as our friends across the aisle insist on using this to raise more money for the Federal Government to spend and not reduce marginal rates—in other words, to basically undermine the benefit of progrowth tax reform only in order to get an additional $1 trillion or $2 trillion to spend.

The stalemate on tax reform reflects a broader problem in Washington. Despite the long-term unemployment crisis and despite the massive drop of people in the workforce and actually looking for work, the President has still failed to put forth any serious job creation agenda. Sure, he wants the government to take more of your hard-earned tax dollars and spend them, because he thinks the government can do a better job than you can spending your own money, but it hasn't worked. Jobs and the economy remain Americans' top concerns. Yet, unfortunately, the President is already now in full reelection mode, recognizing that in his second term his ability to get things done is going to be highly dependent on the midterm elections in November 2014. Hence, rather than working with Republicans to try to address these problems, there are team meetings at the White House sipping martinis and planning strategy for November 2014.

Americans deserve better. They deserve a comprehensive job creation agenda that includes serious tax reform, serious regulatory reform, and serious health care reform, an agenda that makes it easier for business to hire workers and easier for families to pursue the American dream. We have done our best to propose such an agenda but, unfortunately, we are still waiting for the majority leader and the President to take us up on that offer.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. MERKLEY. I am going to speak briefly. My Republican colleague across the aisle has noted he would like to speak next.

I want to take a moment and talk about what has been unfolding on Capitol Hill, with the House, Senate, the Republican caucus, and the Democratic caucus working together to produce an appropriations bill, a spending bill, a bill we refer to in Congress as an omnibus, meaning that it covers all 12 sections that are normally allocated within the appropriations or spending bill world.

I am a new member of the Appropriations Committee. This is the first time I can stand on the floor and feel as though I have gone through a process that is something similar to what our colleagues have done in a bipartisan way over many generations. But that bipartisan collaboration has been sorely missing in the time since I first

came to the Senate. I am pleased to see in this particular moment it is a ray of hope that perhaps we can restore a rational budgeting and spending bill process to address the issues facing America.

I was delighted that Senator MURRAY led the Senate, working with Congressman RYAN, to produce a budget that went through both Chambers.

I am very pleased that our two leaders in the Senate, the Senator from Maryland and the Senator from Alabama, brought the two sides together to work with the House to produce this spending bill, because in the absence of a spending bill that has been deliberated on, what we have is a continuing resolution—which means we might continue to keep spending the money as we did in the past, even though the needs of the present have diverged from the needs of the past. That is inherently wasteful to keep doing the same thing we did before when different challenges are presenting themselves to our Nation.

I wanted to note a few of the things that were done in the course of this bill that I think are very relevant to the challenges we face in Oregon.

Let me start with the Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program. When I went over to visit Oregon's men and women in uniform in Iraq and Afghanistan, they said: When we come home, we hope we will have a job, and we hope our public leaders will work to try to help those jobs be there.

Indeed, when someone comes out of that theatre of war and back into civil society, the structure of a job is very important to your sense of purpose, your sense of rhythm, your financial stability, your role in the family. So we have in Oregon a robust Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program to help bring employers together with our men and women who were in uniform overseas but have now come home. We have so many who serve in the Guard who have gone overseas. They don't come home to work on a military base and still have a daily rhythm, they come home to civilian life.

Restoring and preserving this Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program that was done in this bill is very important to many of our men and women who were in uniform overseas and have come home. It was zeroed out in the President's budget. It was restored in this process. I was delighted to be part of the effort to make sure that happened.

A second item that is very important to Oregon is hazardous fuels reduction in our national forests. Our forests are dryer than they were before. We have more lightning strikes due to the changing weather patterns and, therefore, we have had more acres, thousands of acres, burning.

We need to invest not only on the back end when there is a fire, we need to invest in the front end to thin out the forests that are overgrown, to get rid of the fuels that are on the floor of the forest that increase fire intensity and make it more likely that the fire will go from the ground of the forest to the canopy and be out of control. Those funds were dramatically cut by the administration and largely restored in the appropriations process. We need more in that area. We need to do more on the front end, but it was a big step forward to do what was done in this bill.

A third issue affecting Oregon is small ports. The last fiscal year there was no set-aside for small ports. I have many small ports on the Pacific coast of Oregon, as I know many States have ports on either coast or the gulf coast. These small ports are very important to our economy, and they shouldn't be neglected. The set-aside is very important to make sure they have the chance to repair their barriers, their breakwaters, to dredge out the slips or to dredge the anchorage in general, and so this is very good.

What about the debris that has been floating over from the tsunami in Japan and then cleaned up on the Oregon coast? Yes, this bill says yes, the funds that are available can be used to reimburse the communities that had to do this on their own because we had not yet acted in this Chamber to provide them with resources. That too is addressing an evolving issue.

I want to speak particularly to the investment in education, the extra $1 billion for Head Start and the extra $1 billion that will go to support IDEA and title I funding, large formula allocations.

We have 200 school districts in Oregon. Those school districts are often way too small to have a grant writer to compete in some newfangled competition for X, Y, or Z. They need core funds to reduce the number of students in the classroom, to address the challenge of providing education for students with disabilities. This budget helps significantly in that direction.

I wish to say thank you again to the leadership that was displayed, the bipartisan leadership of the Senator from Alabama and the Senator from Maryland. Well done. I am honored to be part of this process of trying to shape our Senate spending plan, our congressional spending plan, to address emerging challenges in America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

BENGHAZI

Mr. ROBERTS. Earlier today Senator GRAHAM and Senator MCCAIN spoke to this issue. I could not speak at that time as I had a conflict, but my remarks are pertinent to the issue they spoke about.

It has been an agonizing 16 months. But this week, through the investigation efforts of the House Armed Services Committee and the Senate Intelligence Committee, we have learned that circumstances surrounding the terrorist attacks on our U.S. consulate in Benghazi and the murder of four Americans, as told by this investigation, simply are not factual.

A year of news reporting and these congressional findings confirms an egregious disconnect between what the administration has alleged and the facts of what happened. As we say in Kansas, simply put: It just doesn't add up.

We now know this tragedy did not have to happen and, most certainly, the hard-to-understand actions and behaviors of those involved have added unneeded hubris, scandal, and conduct difficult to comprehend. This is a mess that still has to be cleaned up. It demands clarity, honesty, and simply owning up to the truth.

I come to the floor to discuss this tragedy not so much as a Republican Senator from Kansas, but always a Marine. I fear our lack of truth and understanding has broken a bond that those who risked their lives for our Nation all share and believe in—the bond that if they come in harm's way, we have their backs, and we will be there for them. This is a speech I wish I never had to make. But I feel compelled to make my plea to this administration yet again—specifically to President Obama—to give the American people and the families whose lives were lost in Benghazi a full accounting. It is long overdue.

A month after the attacks I wrote the President, as a Marine, with the deepest concern regarding his personal handling, and that of his administration, of the Benghazi attacks and the damage it continues to do to that sacred bond our men and women in uniform have of sacrifice for each other. That extends to those who serve our country overseas in a civilian capacity as well.

I am once again asking this President, our Commander in Chief, to actively restore the trust and sincerity once made with that promise never to leave anybody behind. If he and others responsible for this tragedy do not restore this trust, I truly believe the future morale and effectiveness of our military services are at stake.

As I travel through Kansas and speak with my constituents, regardless of their background, they want to know what really happened in Benghazi and why. Why has it taken so long to get the answers?

Many asked me directly, when will the President be forthright with the families of those killed and injured in the attacks? When will the President stop covering up the bad decisions made on September 11, 2012? Most emphatically they say, please, please, do not forget about Benghazi.

However, the response has been a dogged all too familiar tactic of delay, nonresponse, and the hope that somehow tomorrow it will all go away. Well, this is not going away.

I applaud my colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee for the recent release of 450 pages documenting these classified hearings held over the

past year. I applaud my colleagues on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for their report released yesterday detailing the events surrounding the attacks. The headlines from this report now read: ''Benghazi could have been prevented.''

While the results of these investigations have brought more truth to light, they have also brought more questions to mind. As a Marine, I know there is no mission our Marines cannot accomplish or complete. If press reports are accurate, I do not understand why our Marine rapid response unit was delayed by an hour—required to change out of their uniforms into plain civilian clothing—and then, ultimately, simply turned away.

Our commanders have testified it was the State Department that declined the Marines in Benghazi, yet they have been reluctant to point the finger at the State Department. Somebody made this call. Someone gave this order. Facts are stubborn things, and as more relevant facts are now becoming public, the obvious questions increase.

In the Senate Intelligence Committee's report—and I urge every Member to read this report because it is a good report—it is made clear that individuals within the administration have continued to stonewall Congress from the truth. I am not going to go into every detail here on the floor—it is all here in this report—but enough is enough.

Congress has the constitutional duty to ensure the Executive Branch does not abuse its power. That power has been abused. No one who has played a role in this debacle has been held accountable—no one—let alone brought to justice, as promised by the President. In fact, just the opposite. We have released individuals who have returned to start working on the next terrorist attack.

Likewise, this report makes it clear U.S. personnel raised alarms for months before the attacks. Requests for additional security were made by the previous Ambassador as early as February 2012. Yet, the State Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Programs, Charlene Lamb, rejected the request because Libya was a ''political game,'' and the administration did not want to ''look bad,'' according to the Senate Intelligence Committee's report.

The absurdity and egregious behavior of putting politics before security is overwhelming. Lives were at stake. It has been confirmed that our top military leaders, General Ham, General Dempsey, and Secretary Panetta, knew immediately—immediately—this was a terrorist attack and not a protest. And so did the President.

We knew AQIM, AQAP, the Muhammad Jamal Network, and Ansar al-Shariah—founded by Sufian bin Qumu, a former detainee—were all involved. This just raises more questions. Why were there no contingency plans in place? We had actionable intelligence. The British left. The Red Cross left. There certainly were no flags flying in Benghazi by any western nation, and the consulate had already been attacked.

Why didn't we deploy immediately, with the assumption there would be follow-on attacks? Why were those who paid the ultimate sacrifice left to their own devices that day—on September 11—that anyone could anticipate would bring trouble?

Our generals have testified the United States was not even looking at Libya, but rather Tunisia, Egypt, and Sudan. Less than 1 year after Qadhafi, and no one was concerned about safety in Libya? Does anyone believe this assessment? Given the turmoil and danger, did the State Department really believe that we could normalize Libya? That the country was stable?

This has been an incredible example of condescending arrogance and elitism, putting politics and personal agenda ahead of protecting the lives of Americans. The insult is that 16 months later we still can't get the truth. We now know, without a shadow of doubt, there was actionable intelligence. Yet no action was taken. I personally, as a Senator and, yes, as a Marine, am fed up with the lack of accountability this administration has taken in response.

I am fed up with the stonewalling by several of those in the State Department who have ignored a request from the Intelligence Committee for testimony.

When then Secretary Clinton came before Congress to testify, she replied: ''What difference does it make?'' The difference is our Ambassador and three other patriots did not have to die. The families of Ambassador Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods, and Glen Doherty deserve better from this country. They deserve more from this President.

With that in mind, I want to make a simple and very respectful request of the President. I simply ask that he take the opportunity during his State of the Union speech on Tuesday, January 28, to give those families and all Americans the whole story.

Mr. President, I simply ask that you be forthright with the American people. Help us get beyond this tragedy. Help us restore confidence and faith for our personnel serving overseas and in harm's way, that the sacred bond of always having their back is not gone.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to speak with 40 young Marines, all second lieutenants, who are just about to finish The Basic School at Quantico, VA. They are going to be great officers. I hope someday some of them will be Senators and Congressmen. I looked each one of them in their eyes and let them know, because they needed to know, that a bipartisan majority in this Senate has not forgotten about that promise—the same promise that was made to me when I joined the Corps. I say to President Obama: I hope you can make that promise again soon, too.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Madam President, the omnibus funding bill before the Senate today is a remarkable accomplishment and a welcome reminder that Congress can function effectively when Members are willing to sit down and work through their differences. The large margin by which the omnibus passed in the House is a testament to the bipartisan nature of the agreement and to the determination, skill, and leadership of Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Congressman ROGERS.

With passage of this bill in the Senate, the threat of another government shutdown is averted and the crippling effects of the sequester will be reversed.

America's vets are well served by this agreement. As chairman of the Senate's Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies, I worked to provide the VA with robust funding to ensure our vets receive the benefits they have earned and deserved.

The bill provides $63.2 billion for the VA, $2.3 billion above last year. It fully funds a host of vital programs, including compensation, pensions and health care, and it targets funding for crucial initiatives for homeless vets, rural health care, medical research, suicide prevention, women vets, and Iraq and Afghanistan vets, to name just a few.

Of major importance, the agreement also includes a comprehensive plan to address the massive backlog of vets' disability claims. In 2013 the backlog of compensation claims for service-related disabilities soared to record levels. In March of 2013 the backlog of claims pending for more than 125 days had grown to over 630,000 claims—more than 70 percent of the total claims pending. As of this week there are 403,761 claims in the backlog.

The Department has made substantial progress over the past several months, but thousands of vets continue to face lengthy delays in having their disability claims processed. In response to this problem, I included in the omnibus a 10-point action plan to give the VA additional tools to address the claims backlog and to strengthen training, oversight and accountability. This includes important upgrades to computer hardware in VA regional offices and $100 million in overtime and training money to work through the backlog in processing vets' disability claims.

It is critical we do not sacrifice accuracy in the name of expediency, and my plan also includes quality review teams, spot audits, and additional training for claims processors.

Of special importance to South Dakota, I have worked hard to expand VA health care to rural vets. Nationwide, nearly 30 percent of America's vets live

in rural areas that are often far from major VA medical centers or clinics. The omnibus appropriations bill builds on the rural health initiative I launched in fiscal year 2009 to close gaps in VA medical care in rural and remote areas. The bill provides $250 million for rural health care, including telehealth and mobile clinics for vets in rural and highly rural areas, including Native American populations.

Our vets deserve the best and highest quality care from the VA. The fiscal year 2014 omnibus appropriations bill provides the VA with significant new tools and funding to carry out its mission, and I look forward to the bill's prompt passage.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I thank the Senator from South Dakota for all the great work he has done at the subcommittee level. He has an enormous responsibility in that subcommittee. It is all about military construction—over there and here.

Many don't realize our military bases are really towns, and they need roads and water supplies. If you talk to a garrison commander, such as those in Maryland, they are small cities. Fort Meade employs over 35,000 people in Maryland—that is a lot of people—from those who work in the commissary to some of our most sensitive national security projects.

So he has done a great job. But what he has really thrown his heart into is veterans. His son is a veteran. One of the things early in my chairmanship we discussed was this issue of the veterans' disability backlog. Senator JOHNSON led the way, along with Senator MARK KIRK, his ranking member, on extensive hearings and due diligence, where we don't throw money at the problem, but we really work on solving the problem. There are very specific line items here that should help with this review process. But, as Senator JOHNSON has said, also accuracy, because if they are not accurate then they present other problems, either for the veteran or for the taxpayer.

He has done a great job. In another way he chairs the Banking Committee as the authorizer, of which the Presiding Officer is well aware, and his wise counsel for many of the aspects we needed to deal with on financial services was most welcome.

I must say to the Senator he is a great Member. The way he and Senator KIRK worked was outstanding. Senator KIRK himself is a veteran, a Naval Reserve officer. They knew just how to tackle the problem, and tackle it they did. I think veterans all over should know we are going to meet their health care needs. We are going to deal with the disability backlog area. We are also going to make a downpayment on this working-age military COLA for both the disabled and the survivors. And we are going to say: Promises made, promises kept.

I thank the Senator and his counterpart Senator KIRK. We appreciate what they have done. I think it has been an enrichment to the overall bill to have done what has been done in the Military-VA.

Madam President, we are waiting for other Senators to come to the floor. I have to talk about my own subcommittee.

I chair the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee, and my ranking member is also the vice chairman of the full committee, Senator SHELBY. We worked very hard on this bill, also with our counterparts in the House, Chairman FRANK WOLF and Ranking Member CHAKA FATTAH. The CJS bill we agreed upon provides $51.6 billion in discretionary spending. It focused on community safety, on our jobs and our economy. We used those priorities to guide funding decisions, from Federal law enforcement to space exploration. What could keep America safe? What could make America great? We cannot have vital communities unless they are safe.

The CJS bill has money in here for key grants to help State and local police departments. The legislation we worked on adds money toward the COPS Program that will put cops on the beat.

We also want to deal with the prevention of violence as well as the prevention of crime. This bill includes money for the Violence Against Women Act, $29 million more than sequester. What it will mean is more help to local enforcement to prosecute, more money to help with prevention for those who are victims of domestic violence and to be able to provide lifesaving shelters and then transitional housing. We are very proud of that.

As we add more police to the streets and neighborhoods in our communities, we want to make sure the police are safe, and we were able to have funding in here to provide a grant program to buy bulletproof vests. We are often disturbed when we talk to our local police chiefs that the crooks and drug dealers and bums have better equipment, technology, better guns, more rapid guns, or they have bulletproof vests while our police officers are out there defending us without vests. We wanted to make sure our officers have what they need.

We also have money in here to deal with prevention. We have money for youth mentoring programs but also to tackle gang violence in our communities.

This is where bipartisanship really worked. Our colleague Senator KIRK of Illinois, who struggled with terrific gang problems in Chicago, acknowledges we have gang problems in every city. He worked very hard to present to the committee a gang violence program and we were able to put money in that so that there can be local solutions.

Acknowledging that indeed schools need to be safe, we also helped create a grant program, modest in funds, where local police departments working with the Department of Education and the parents can come up with ways to keep those schools safe.

This bill also has a strong focus on cyber security where we have money in here to fund the Department of Justice, to prevent attacks in case criminals, particularly organized crime, are behind the keyboard. Before it was Al Capone raiding banks. Now it is hackers, both in this country and around the world, stealing credit cards, stealing our identity. Over 46 million people were victimized. This provides money particularly to the FBI and the National Institutes of Standards to develop the tools and techniques and actually implement them to do it and to work with the private sector on advice and guidance on what steps they could take voluntarily to be able to protect themselves.

We also funded Federal law enforcement. In this legislation we have added more money for the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Agency, and the U.S. Marshals.

What is the U.S. Marshals? Is this the days of Wyatt Earp? Do they ride the range? Actually they ride our roads, making sure they are going after the most-wanted fugitives. When we have on TV the 10 most wanted, it is the marshals who are in hot pursuit, with the authority to go across State lines. They do it. They also have the legislative mandate to implement the sexual predator laws. They are the ones who are charged with actually finding, identifying, to make sure they are filing their registration, and keeping our children safe. Then they are charged with the responsibility of keeping our courthouses safe. You may recall a few years ago the terrible shootout in Atlanta. Many of our courthouses themselves could be in danger. Because of the violence when you have these types of prosecutions, they can also invite violence against the judges. These marshals do that job. We believe while the high profile agencies may be the FBI and DEA, and we recognize that, there is also the Marshals Service.

In the area of science, Senator SHELBY of Alabama, my ranking member, and I also funded America's space program. This total funding will be $17.6 billion. Working with Senator SHELBY, we wanted to have a balanced space program to assure America's premier leadership in human space exploration and in space science and also in aeronautics. We worked with the SLS rocket, which will take human beings beyond the Earth orbit. The bill has $1.6 billion for that development. But we also funded operations and research on the International Space Station.

The Presiding Officer might have read recently that NASA has extended the duration and operation of the space station. It costs a lot of money to build it and there was a lot of risk of human lives to go up there and assemble it. ''Gravity'' might win in the Academy

Awards, but we have real-life astronauts who keep that space station together, kept it operating, and now that we have been able to accomplish it, it is time to do the compelling research that could be done only by a lab in the sky in microgravity or no gravity at all, to be able to do this. We look forward to being able to conduct the research.

Also, because we are Americans and we believe in the private sector, we now will have commercially crewed vehicles going to the space station. It is going to be amazing.

We had the space shuttle. What a workhorse the space shuttle was. It took astronauts, researchers, up to the space station. That useful life came to an end. We depend on the Russians, with the Soyuz, to do that. We appreciate that, making the Soyuz available—I might add at a really hefty, hefty, hefty price. But we know we wanted to have our own way of getting up there. Thanks to the development of commercial crews—again the American way of competition for the best, most safe vehicle, at the best price—they are going to be able to do it.

I am very proud that a company based in Virginia but hiring Marylanders, Orbital, has a rocket being launched from Wallops Island that now takes cargo, an unmanned vehicle taking cargo—not risking the life of an astronaut, taking cargo to the station.

We also have funding for space science to understand and protect the planet. We think we have done a very good job in that.

Also in the area of science, yes, funding for the National Science Foundation and also in weather, what we have done in terms of weather. Most people think they get weather from the Weather Channel. I bet if they are from Boston, like the Presiding Officer, you are mesmerized by it. But the Weather Channel gets its information from the Weather Service that is operated by NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We want to make sure we have the best mathematical models and the best satellites working with international partners to make sure we make the best weather forecasts. It saves lives and it also saves money.

For every mile we can be accurate in the prediction of a hurricane, we save $1 million in evacuation costs. In Maryland, Ocean City, we are vulnerable. So every dollar we can save—and Key West—all of us, hurricanes, or a nor'easter—we will understand that. We have put money in there. And we have done other things to promote the economy. I am proud of what we did in Commerce, Justice to keep America safe, to do the jobs today and the jobs tomorrow.

I note the subcommittee chairman on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education is here.

I yield the floor and such time as he may use.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I come to the floor to speak in favor of the Omnibus appropriations bill we now have before us. First and foremost, it is noteworthy that this is a bill, not a continuing resolution. For the first time in years, Congress has returned to regular order in the appropriations process. Senior members of the Appropriations Committee from both parties have come together to negotiate their priorities, program by program.

As the chairman of the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, I view this as a huge step onto a better path. The Labor-H bill, as it is sometimes called, has been in continuing resolution every other year since 2009. This is an irresponsible way to allocate $160 billion in taxpayer funds, and I am pleased that we are putting a stop to that kind of destructive trend today.

For the past year I have had people come up to me and say: There is no way you are going to have an agreement on Labor-HHS. Labor-HHS will be left behind, and it will be folded into a continuing resolution.

I guess no one could imagine that Democrats and Republicans would be able to sit down and come to a fair agreement on health and education issues. I think that attitude sold our subcommittee short. I am proud to say we have worked out a fair agreement with my ranking member Senator JERRY MORAN from Kansas, as well as my colleagues on the House side, including Chairman JACK KINGSTON and ranking member Congressman ROSA DELAURO. No one got 100 percent of what they wanted in this bill, which is often a sign of a pretty good deal.

Despite the fact that I wanted to do more to alleviate the disaster cuts for 2013, I would like to speak about a few of the essential investments in this bill that I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting.

First, the bill advances my longstanding priority of shifting the American health care system—so-called—from a sick care system to a genuine health care system, emphasizing prevention, wellness, and public health. It provides a $1 billion increase for the National Institutes of Health, as well as major new funding for brain research and a new initiative to discover ways to prevent and cure Alzheimer's disease.

In addition, this bill allocates nearly $1 billion from the Prevention and the Public Health Fund, which I created in the Affordable Care Act, title IV, which I was in charge of drafting. There has been some confusion about this fund in news reports, so I will correct the record.

In the past years resources from the fund have been diverted to other health care purposes. This year, however, this omnibus allocates 100 percent of the resources from the fund to prevention and wellness activities. It has been reported that the omnibus cuts or eliminates the fund. I read that in the paper this morning. I read that the prevention and wellness fund was cut by $1 billion.

Well, that is just not so. That is a misinterpretation. Believe me, if they cut $1 billion from prevention and wellness, I would not be here supporting the bill. Section 219 of division H of this bill allocates the money, so that is what we did. Far from eliminating the money, we identify where that money is to go, including $160 million for immunization programs, $104 million for cancer screenings, and $105 million for smoking cessation programs. On October 1, another appropriation of $1 billion will be deposited in the fund under the Affordable Care Act, and, again, I intend to allocate the fund just as we did in this omnibus.

If there is any doubt in anyone's mind that the fund is alive and well and fulfilling the purpose for which it was intended, consider this: The American Public Health Association has praised this Omnibus bill specifically for allocating the prevention fund. They said:

> We are also pleased that the bill fully allocates available funds from the Prevention and Public Health Fund for the first time.

As the author of that fund, I consider the allocation of these resources to prevention and wellness as a major achievement in this bill.

This bill also includes significant new investments to support early learning initiatives. We included an increase of over $1 billion for Head Start, which will more than restore cuts from sequestration. Nearly half of that increase will be used to expand early Head Start for kids from birth through age 3. In addition, the bill provides $250 million which can be used to help States develop high-quality early learning programs for low- and middle-income 4-year-olds. Both of these investments improve access to high-quality early learning experiences for children from birth to kindergarten. I truly believe these investments lay the foundation for future prosperity by preparing America's next generation.

One of the reasons it is important to reassess programs every year is to respond to current events and changing needs. The Nation was devastated by the tragic shootings that occurred last year in Newtown, CT. This bill provides increased resources for providing the mental health and school safety activities we have been talking about for over a year. The bill includes $140 million—an increase of $29 million—for specific activities that support safe school environments. The bill also provides $1.13 billion—an increase of $213 million—for mental health programs, such as mental health first aid training grants, the National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative, suicide prevention, and the mental health block grant.

Other highlights of this bill: It supports the economic recovery by providing workers with job training and by protecting workers' rights. In education, it makes it possible for the

maximum Pell grant to rise by an estimated $85, to $5,730 this year. It allocates an additional $700 million for community health centers, which is so important to my State of Iowa and, quite frankly, to every State in this Nation. It provides higher funding for activities that support safe and healthy workplaces and, as I said, school environments.

Most in Washington know that the staff of the Appropriations Committee worked diligently on this bill all through the holidays. We all appreciate and commend their excellent work. I would like to thank these unsung heroes for all of the long days and nights and weekends they worked.

I first wish to thank my clerk, the head of my group on Labor-HHS, Adrienne Hallett, and her team: Mark Laisch, Lisa Bernhardt, Mike Gentile, Robin Juliano, Kelly Brown, and Teri Curtin. On the minority side, I thank Laura Frih-Dell, Jennifer Castagna, and Chol Pak.

I also thank Chuck Keifer and Gabriel Batkin—on the full committee—for their hard work and diligence and for sticking with us through this to make sure we got it done. On the minority side, I thank Bill Duhnke for all his hard work.

I also thank the two principals who are here today. First, I will thank my longtime friend, going back to our days in the House together, Senator DICK SHELBY from Alabama. These were long and tough negotiations, but the one thing I have always appreciated about my friend from Alabama is that he is fairminded and willing to negotiate. He understands it is a two-way highway around here. You give a little, you take a little, and we work these things out. Again, I thank my friend for hanging in there and getting this hammered out.

There are not enough accolades in my book or any book I know that has been written to say what a great job Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI did. She gave it her all and really worked hard with Senator SHELBY and her counterparts on the House side to bring this bill to fruition.

There were a lot of doubters who said: No, we won't get it done; they are not going to be able to hammer it out.

BARBARA MIKULSKI never gave up. She was willing to stay there for long hours days on end to get this job done. Again, I think a lot of us who served on the Appropriations Committee for a long time—30 years for me—I guess in all the time I was on appropriations, we had four chairmen. We had John Stennis from Mississippi when I first got here and, of course, Senator Byrd, Senator Ted Stevens from Alaska, and Senator Dan Inouye from Hawaii. We think of them as sort of the giants of the Senate, which is a well-earned accolade or praise, I might say. People probably wondered what would happen now that they are gone. We had the sad passing a year ago of Dan Inouye. Well, I can tell you, no longer are they wondering who is going to take over the Appropriations Committee. Senator MIKULSKI has stepped in and pulled us all together—I think on both sides of the aisle—and worked this out. Again, I give my highest compliments to Senator MIKULSKI for her hard work, her intellectual approach, and her rigor in working with others to make sure we got to this point.

Most in Washington, as I said, know that our staff works very hard, but there is just one other person I want to single out. He is not here. In fact, he is not even on the Senate side, but I worked with him for a long time, going back to when Congressman Obey chaired the House committee on Labor-HHS back in the early 1990s. He has been a longtime member of the House appropriations staff. David Reich is currently the minority clerk for Labor-HHS. He is retiring once this bill passes. David has spent nearly his entire career working on the issues in this bill. He has been on or around the Labor-HHS subcommittee since 1996. His collaborative nature, his insightful questions, and his thoughtful approach to the drafting of this bill will be sincerely missed. I wish David well and thank him for his dedicated public service to our country and especially to this committee.

In light of the investments I mentioned, plus many more that I simply don't have time to talk about, I urge all of my colleagues to support the Omnibus appropriations bill. Given the tight overall budget, these are all remarkable achievements.

I have always taken pride in the fact that the Labor-HHS bill, as it is called—Labor, Health and Human Services, Education bill—is a bill where we invest in America's human infrastructure, and that is what this bill does. We have had to make some tough choices, but this new bill lives up to that high calling of investing in America's human infrastructure.

Again, I thank my friend and colleague from Alabama. We were together on the Labor-HHS committee until he took the position as the ranking member on the full Appropriations Committee, but we always had good comity of working together, and I appreciate it very much.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, I would like to respond to some of the remarks by my colleague and friend from Iowa. I think he is right on point when he said this is the first time we have been able to bring the appropriations process—I hope—back to regular order, which is what we need. No one wants to shut the government down. My goodness, neither side wants to do that. It is no good, and the American people don't want it. This is a good bipartisan effort. Senator MIKULSKI and other members of the Appropriations Committee have worked together.

I have been at odds sometimes—and a lot of times together—with Senator HARKIN. I first met him 35 years ago when I first went to the House. He had been there a couple of years—a veteran. We have worked together on a lot of issues.

Senator HARKIN is absolutely right when he says we can't say enough about the leadership of the chairperson of this committee, Senator MIKULSKI. She has reached out to both sides. She wants the process to work, as do most of us, and this is an example of that.

I hope later this afternoon that we are going to get a good vote, just as the House did, on this bill. This a big step in how we should be running the government.

I yield the floor.

USE OF FUNDS FOR GUAM

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I rise today together with Senate Armed Services Chairman LEVIN and Senator MCCAIN to clarify the intent of section 8102 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act contained in the consolidated appropriations bill, 2014. This language should not be interpreted to supersede section 2822 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

I concur with the reporting requirements and limitations established by section 2822 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 and fully expect the Department of Defense to comply with them prior to obligating funds for projects in Guam.

We have also sent a letter to Secretary Hagel from me, Vice Chairman COCHRAN, and Chairman FRELINGHUYSEN and Ranking Member VISCLOSKY of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee directing the Department to comply with the requirements in section 2822 prior to obligating funds.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the joint letter sent to Secretary Hagel on this subject be printed in the RECORD.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator from Illinois for addressing this important issue. I appreciate both his assessment and his clarification of the relationship between the provision in the National Defense Authorization Act and the provision in the DOD Appropriations Act. Senator MCCAIN and I have spent a long time working on this issue, and we believe that the reporting requirements and limitations established by section 2822 are in the best interests of the Department of Defense and the country. I appreciate the willingness of the Senator from Illinois to work with us to ensure that the Department abides by this provision.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank Senate Armed Services Chairman LEVIN for working with me to clarify language in the consolidated appropriations bill of 2014 that directly contravenes section 2822 of the Fiscal Year 2014 National Defense Authorization Act. To date, Congress has not received sufficient cost-analysis supporting the Department of

Defense's proposed movement of troops from Okinawa to Guam. For this reason, in the authorization bill, the Armed Services Committees explicitly prohibited any premature investments in Guam until the Secretary of Defense provides Congress with, among other things, a report on military resources necessary to execute the U.S. force posture strategy in the Asia-Pacific region.

I also appreciate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman DURBIN for agreeing that the reporting requirements in section 2822 of the NDAA must be satisfied before the Department of Defense can obligate funds for investments in Guam if the report finds they are needed. In furtherance of these requirements, I fully expect the Senate Armed Services Committee will provide close and careful oversight over the use of any monies that may be appropriated for the transfer of forces covered in this section and obligated by the Department for that purpose and, specifically, hold hearings to determine the extent to which any plan to realign forces from Okinawa to Guam will sufficiently support our operational requirements in the Asia-Pacific region.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Chairman and Senator MCCAIN for their leadership on this issue.

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

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, DC, January 15, 2014.

Hon. CHUCK HAGEL,
Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense, The Pentagon, Washington, DC.

DEAR SECRETARY HAGEL: We are writing to clarify the intent of Section 8102 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Bill, 2014. This language should not be interpreted in any way to supersede Section 2822 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113–66).

We concur with the direction contained in the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 and fully expect that funds will only be obligated for projects in Guam once the Department complies with Section 2822.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

THAD COCHRAN,
Vice Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense.

RICHARD J. DURBIN,
Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense.

PETE VISCLOSKY,
Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense.

RODNEY FRELINGHUYSEN,
Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Defense.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President. The bill before us is an important compromise. Neither side got exactly what it wanted, but this legislation will provide much-needed certainty across the government. It keeps the government open for business and helps us turn a corner toward a more regular funding process. It represents much-needed relief from the cycle of crisis and shutdown which has dominated here for too long.

This bill will fund a strong military, cutting edge research projects, and investments in our Nation's families and young people.

For Michigan, the bill will provide much needed funding exciting new research at Michigan State University, for long overdue harbor dredging, to prevent Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes, for new transportation projects, and for small airports.

This bill isn't perfect. It shortchanges our financial regulators, zeroes out funds for some local communities with large amounts of Federal land, and leaves some other programs at lower levels than is required. Hopefully the PILT funding will be authorized in the farm bill.

This bill is a significant improvement from years of shutdown threats and continuing resolutions that have put our Nation's government on autopilot. This is the first time in 3 years that we will have completed all 12 appropriations bills to properly allocate funding for all Federal agencies.

For the military, the bill provides $487 billion in base DOD appropriations—the funding level established in the budget agreement—and $85 billion for overseas contingency operations. As a result, it appears that DOD's operations and maintenance funding will be reduced by about $9 billion this year—a substantial reduction, but less than we feared would be the case. While this is a tight budget, I am more concerned at this point about the much greater reductions in DOD funding that will be required in fiscal year 2015 and subsequent fiscal years.

I am pleased that the Defense appropriations bill is consistent with key actions that we took in the National Defense Authorization Act, including provisions on Guantanamo detainees, measures to address sexual assault in the military, and the implementation of the New START Treaty. I also commend the Appropriations Committee for amending the military retired pay COLA change included in the budget agreement to exempt medical retirees and survivor benefit plan annuitants. The Armed Services Committee will be holding hearings to review this issue.

While I have concerns about a few specific provisions, I believe that this is a good Defense appropriations bill and one that deserves our support.

For cutting-edge research, the bill restores $1 billion of much-needed funding for the National Institutes of Health that was cut last year due to sequestration. This funding is needed to avoid further loss of promising research and make the investments needed to ensure that NIH can continue to support the next generation of scientists and fund cutting-edge research.

For families and children, the bill will fully fund Head Start. Last year, 1,800 children across Michigan were forced out of early childhood programs due to sequestration, and the new funding in this bill is expected to restore and even grow this important early childhood program.

In addition to Head Start funding, the bill also includes a significant increase in funding to educate children with disabilities.

Now, I'd like to talk about a few specific projects that are especially important to Michigan.

First, the bill includes the full $55 million requested for the Department of Energy for fiscal year 2014 to help fund the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams, FRIB, at Michigan State University. FRIB will let scientists, for the first time, create rare isotopes like those produced in supernovae.

These isotopes will be studied, advancing our knowledge of the origins of elements and the universe, as well as furthering applied science fields like biomedicine, nuclear physics and nuclear chemistry.

The facility will attract top scientists from around the globe, and is a key piece in attracting and training the next generation of nuclear scientists. FRIB will help keep Michigan, and the United States, at the forefront of cutting edge science.

Second, the bill provides important funding for Great Lakes projects. I'm pleased that restoration and protection of our treasured Great Lakes will advance with the funding provided in the bill.

Appropriators fully responded to a request from the Senate Great Lakes Task Force, which I co-chair by including $300 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative which strategically targets funding at the most significant problems facing the Great Lakes.

In addition, the bill provides more than $30 million for the Corps of Engineers to fight Asian carp and other invasive species from getting into the Great Lakes. The bulk of that funding will be used for the electric dispersal barrier, which was designed to keep the carp from advancing through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. We need to recognize that this barrier is only a short-term fix, however, and focus on separating the two basins for a permanent solution. I'm pleased the omnibus includes $3 million for the Corps to refine its design of such a solution and I will press to speed its implementation.

I'm also glad the bill includes language that I requested that would authorize the Corps of Engineers to implement emergency measures to prevent invasive species from dispersing into the Great Lakes by way of any hydrologic connection to the Mississippi River basin.

I'm also pleased the bill increases funding by about $12 million from last year for dredging of Great Lakes harbors and channels, operation and maintenance of locks, and repair of breakwaters. The Great Lakes navigation system handles over 160 million tons of cargo, and it is critical this system operates effectively to support our economic growth and international competitiveness.

I will continue to work with my Senate colleagues to restore the payments in lieu of taxes, which are used for such critical needs as public schools, emergency response, and road maintenance.

The bill also restores funding for drinking and wastewater infrastructure by providing about $2.4 billion to states for investing in these vital water projects, which will both protect public health and our water resources.

Finally, this bill includes important provisions to help our State's transportation system.

I am pleased the bill again includes language allowing the M–1 Rail project in Detroit to use private funds as a match to federal dollars.

In addition, I am pleased that the bill provides funding that for the FAA to keep open contract control towers at the W.K. Kellogg Airport in Battle Creek, the Coleman A. Young Airport in Detroit, and the Sawyer International Airport in Marquette.

This bill is an important compromise, and I am glad that Democrats and Republicans, from the House and Senate, were able come together to craft this measure.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I first want to congratulate Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Vice Chairman SHELBY for their leadership in bringing these appropriations bills to the floor for final consideration. While I would have preferred these bills to have been brought to the floor individually so that they could be amended, this nevertheless is a noteworthy achievement.

The 2-year budget agreement negotiated by Senator MURRAY and Congressman RYAN provided the framework for the bill we are considering today, allowing the Appropriations Committees to begin our work of developing bills that will responsibly fund the government.

Since passage of the budget agreement, the Appropriations Committee members have worked tirelessly to craft a true compromise.

As the ranking member for the Transportation and Housing Subcommittee, I worked with Chairman MURRAY to negotiate a bipartisan Transportation and Housing bill. While this bill makes prudent spending reductions—it is $3.2 billion below the original Senate bill and nearly $1 billion below the fiscal year 2013 enacted level—it continues to invest in important transportation and housing programs. I would like to mention a few highlights:

First, the TIGER program, which supports transportation infrastructure and economic development in our local communities, is funded at $600 million. Given the current state of our Nation's highways and bridges with so many being structurally deficient, we included additional resources to help eliminate some of the backlog of vital construction projects.

Second, while the overall funding level for the FAA is reduced by $167 million from the fiscal year 2013 enacted level, we worked to provide sufficient funding to ensure air traffic controller and safety inspector staffing losses are made whole. The bill also fully funds the Contract Tower program to prevent administration officials from arbitrarily closing towers as they attempted to do last year.

Further, the bill includes program reforms for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, which will streamline program requirements, increase oversight, and reduce costs to the taxpayer.

I am proud that the THUD bill strikes the right balance between fiscal responsibility and meeting our Nation's housing and infrastructure needs.

The other divisions of the bill are equally important—from national security, to energy, to health and human services—and I would also like to acknowledge the work of the other subcommittee chairs and ranking members in completing action on their bills.

For our military and our Nation's security, I particularly appreciate that this bill includes $100 million for the procurement of the fifth DDG–51 from Bath Iron Works, which Senator KING and I advocated. This funding will allow the Navy to send a tenth DDG–51 to sea that is capable of performing many roles and missions in support of our national defense. Not only will it add stability to the workforce at Bath Iron Works in Maine, but it also will result in significant savings for the taxpayers. The multiyear, 10-ship procurement will save approximately $1.5 billion—that is the equivalent of an extra destroyer at no cost. I thank Chairwoman MIKULSKI, Vice Chairman SHELBY, Subcommittee Chairman DURBIN, and Subcommittee Ranking Member COCHRAN for this important funding.

I am also grateful to see the $11.5 million in military construction funding that will go toward the consolidation of structural shops and improve the efficiency of operations at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. While the Department of Defense has delayed or cancelled $4.1 billion in military construction projects during the next five budget years, this project was accelerated to 2014 due to efforts by members of the Maine and New Hampshire delegations to increase investments to address long overdue modernization needs at PNSY.

For our veterans, I am pleased this bill restores the full cost-of-living increase for disabled military retirees and for survivor benefits, rectifying provisions in the recently-passed budget agreement that unfairly singled out current retirees. Unfortunately, this will not protect all military retirees from a decreased cost-of-living adjustment on their pensions. We must continue to work on behalf of our retired servicemembers and their families to ensure that they receive the full benefits they have been promised and have earned by their service to this country. Congress should act quickly to pass legislation I have cosponsored that completely restores the COLA for all military retirees.

This bill also provides several million dollars in additional funding for medical research, including for Alzheimer's Disease research, treatment, and caregiver programs. This is an important initial step toward the goal of doubling funding for Alzheimer's research and eventually reaching the level of $2 billion over five years, as recommended by the Alzheimer's Advisory Council. We must continue our efforts in 2015 to increase Alzheimer's research given the tremendous human and economic price of this devastating disease. We are spending $142 billion annually in Medicare and Medicaid costs on caring for people with Alzheimer's.

I also want to thank Agriculture Subcommittee Chairman PRYOR and Ranking Member BLUNT for addressing the needs of our Nation's farmers and growers, providing critical support for research, and making important nutrition and food security investments during difficult economic times. In particular, I am pleased that the agreement expects USDA to amend its arbitrary decision to exclude the fresh white potato, the only fresh vegetable or fruit to be excluded, from the Women, Infants and Children, or WIC program. Fresh white potatoes are a healthy, affordable, and delicious food choice, and it only makes common sense to include this nutritious vegetable in the WIC package.

This bill also makes important commitments to our energy infrastructure. I would like to thank Subcommittee Chairwoman FEINSTEIN and Ranking Member ALEXANDER for recognizing the potential for creating jobs by providing robust funding for the Department of Energy wind program, which funds the offshore wind demonstration projects. Federal seed money is helping overcome barriers to the development and implementation of new and innovative technologies, such as deepwater offshore wind, which can position the U.S. as a global leader in this promising clean energy field.

To help address the high cost of residential energy, particularly for those living in northern, rural states such as Maine, funding is provided in this bill for the weatherization program. This program plays an important role in permanently reducing home energy costs for low-income families and seniors and training a skilled workforce.

Moreover, for our most vulnerable families and seniors, the increased

funding for LIHEAP will help ensure that recipients do not have to choose between paying their energy bills and paying for other necessities such as food or medicine. LIHEAP continues to be an indispensable lifeline for many Americans during these challenging economic times and exceptionally cold winter.

Helping to meet the water infrastructure needs of smaller States and regions is another vital piece of our national infrastructure. I am pleased this bill includes funding for the operation and maintenance of Army Corps projects at ''small, remote, or subsistence harbors.'' Ports and harbors are the economic lifeblood for many rural communities—a fact not fully accounted for under the Corps' budget metrics, which tend to favor larger ports.

The bill also continues to support our Nation's fisheries, which are so important to the economies of our coastal communities, particularly in Maine. In September 2012, the Commerce Department declared a disaster in the Northeast groundfish industry. A vital $75 million is included in this bill to help fishermen in Maine and in other areas of the country who have had their livelihoods affected by fisheries disasters in recent years. This funding could be used to provide both immediate economic relief to Maine and the region's struggling groundfish industry, and to make targeted investments that will allow the fleet to survive and become more sustainable in the years ahead.

The American people are weary of watching a Congress that can't work. We saw the result of this dysfunction when the government shut down in October. We simply must avoid another shutdown and put our Nation back on sound financial footing. That is why I urge my colleagues to support the compromises the Appropriations Committees worked so hard to achieve.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I come to the floor to discuss the consolidated appropriations bill of 2014, upon which we will soon be voting. While I am pleased that this bill will prevent another government shutdown and hopefully signal to the American people that we can actually work together, I will not be voting for this bill due to serious concerns surrounding specific policy riders and spending provisions. I am also seriously concerned about the process whereby we are passing a 1,582 page, $1.012 trillion spending bill that we received at 8 p.m. Monday night—giving us very limited time to time to carefully review or debate and no ability to amend.

Now, this is not a new occurrence in Congress. According to the Congressional Research Service, between 1977 and 2013, there were only 4 years when all appropriations were enacted on time—fiscal year 1977, fiscal year 1989, fiscal year 1995, and fiscal year 1997: ''[O]ver half of the regular appropriations bills for a fiscal year were enacted on time in only one instance (1978). In all other fiscal years, fewer than six regular appropriations acts were enacted on or before October 1. In addition, in 12 out of the 37 years during this period, none of these regular appropriations bills were enacted prior to the start of the fiscal year.'' This is unacceptable and must change.

With our country facing a rapidly growing $17.3 trillion debt, which amounts to more than $54,000 per citizen, it is time for Congress to go back to the ''regular order'' and consider each one of the 12 individual appropriations bills in turn to fund the activities of our government before the end of the fiscal year, with ample time for debate and amendments, instead of ramming through a massive 1,582-page Omnibus appropriation bills like the one before us today. The American taxpayer expects more and deserves better than what we are giving them in this bill.

The Omnibus includes appropriations policy riders and pork barrel projects that should raise red flags for all of my colleagues. For example, tucked away in the classified portion of this bill is a policy rider that has serious national security implications and is a prime example of the appropriators overstepping their bounds. This provision will halt the transfer of the U.S. drone counterterrorism operations from the CIA to the Department of Defense. In doing so, it summarily changes a very important policy that guides how we do certain counterterrorism operations abroad from a direction that the President has specifically prescribed. And how did most of us become aware of this major policy change? By reading this morning's Washington Post; that is how. This is outrageous, and it should not have happened. While there may be differing opinions on who should control drone counterterrorism operations, we should be able to debate these differences in the committees of jurisdiction and eventually on the Senate floor. The fact that a major national security policy decision is going to be authorized in this bill without debate or authorization is unacceptable and should not be the way we legislate on such important national security issues.

The $1 trillion Omnibus also includes a wasteful provision directing the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, to continue developing the duplicative Catfish Inspection Office—even though the FDA has a similar inspection office. According to the Government Accountability Office, GAO, this duplicative office will cost taxpayers roughly $15 million a year once up and running. Both the Office of Management and Budget, OMB, and GAO have recommended that Congress repeal the catfish program because it is ''wasteful and duplicative'' of FDA's seafood inspection services.

The fact remains that the Catfish Office won't improve food safety. Its true purpose is to ban catfish imports for several years while USDA bureaucrats iron out their procedures with foreign inspectors. A New York Times article from November 2013 explains how this program would disrupt our trade relations with Asian countries. Some nations, including Vietnam, have threatened WTO retaliation against our agriculture exports, like beef and soybeans.

During the Senate debate on the farm bill, I was joined by Senator SHAHEEN and 11 other Senators in offering an amendment to that bill that would have eliminated the Catfish Office, but the managers blocked a vote on our amendment. The House version of the farm bill includes an amendment to eliminate the USDA Catfish Office, but Senate conferees are, likewise, blocking a vote in conference. I urge the Senate conferees to the farm bill to drop their opposition and allow a vote in conference on this important provision. Appropriators should have not included this policy rider in the omnibus. Instead, we should move to eliminate the duplicative and wasteful USDA Catfish Office.

In addition, the Omnibus bill includes $120 million in unrequested funding for Guam in direct contravention of the bicameral decisions of the Armed Services Committees. There is absolutely no justification for this. That is why the Armed Services Committees have expressly prohibited such funding in the NDAA. To date, Congress has not received sufficient cost-analysis supporting the Department of Defense's proposed movement of troops from Okinawa to Guam. For this reason, in the authorization bill passed just last month, the Armed Services Committees explicitly prohibited any premature investments in Guam until the Secretary of Defense provides Congress with the strategic plan which includes, among other things, costs associated with the movement to Guam and a report on military resources necessary to execute the U.S. force posture strategy in the Asia-Pacific region.

While this language will stay in the Omnibus bill due to the inability to offer an amendment to strip it, I am thankful to Senate Armed Services Chairman LEVIN for working with me to clarify the language. I also appreciate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman DURBIN and Vice Chairman COCHRAN for agreeing that the reporting requirements in section 2822 of the NDAA must be satisfied before the Department of Defense can obligate funds for investments in Guam if the report finds they are needed. I fully expect the Senate Armed Services Committee will provide close and careful oversight, including hearings, over the use of any monies that may be appropriated for the transfer of forces covered in this section and obligated by the Department for that purpose.

Yet another example of the abuse of the appropriations process is the continued inclusion of a misguided policy rider that prohibits the Postal Service from moving to 5-day mail delivery, which would save the Postal Service $2

billion a year. This congressional mandate was initially put in place in 1984 and is the only roadblock keeping the Postal Service from transforming the way it delivers mail, while still being able to provide universal service. The Postal Service continues to lose billions of dollars each year; however, some in Congress have decided that they know better than the Postal Service leadership and continue to prohibit the Postal Service from modernizing and transforming the way it does business. Congress must accept the fact that the Postal Service's current way of doing business is no longer viable. The American public communicates and conducts business in a completely different way than they did even 5 years ago. We must allow the Postal Service to adapt to changing times in order to have a Postal Service in the future, and this includes 5-day mail delivery to save $2 billion a year.

In addition to these unacceptable policy riders, the bill also includes other examples of pork barrel spending for programs, some duplicative, such as $65 million for Pacific Coast salmon restoration for States including Nevada, a program that even President Obama has called duplicative and mocked in his 2011 State of the Union Address; $80 million in additional funding for Amtrak, which continues to operate in the red year after year; $15 million for an ''incentive program'' that directs DOD to overpay on contracts by an additional 5 percent if the contractor is a Native Hawaiian-owned company.

There is language that makes it easier for the DOD to enter into no-bid contracts for studies, analysis, and unsolicited proposals. The language in the bill makes it ripe for wasteful spending and earmarks for pet projects. For example, Department of Defense may eliminate competition and use a no-bid contract for a ''product of original thinking and was submitted in confidence by one source.'' With the Department facing cuts now and into the future, this type of vague language could lead to costly wasteful spending on programs that DOD neither needs or can afford.

There are $600,000 for a program at Mississippi State University to research how to grow trees faster for replanting after hurricanes.

There are numerous ''Buy America'' provisions that hurt competition and innovation, drive up the costs of procurement, and further increases the taxpayer burden; $10 million for the USDA High Energy Cost Grants Program that go to subsidize electricity bills in Alaska and Hawaii; $10 million for a DOD Youth Challenge Program that was neither requested by the President nor authorized to receive funding in the fiscal year 2014 NDAA; and $3.3 million increase in the STARBASE Program. According to the Internet, this ''nice-to-have'' but not ''necessary-to-have'' program ''focuses on elementary students, primarily fifth graders. The program's goal is to motivate these students to explore Science, Technology, Engineering and Math, STEM, as they continue their education. Military volunteers apply abstract principles to real-world situations by leading tours and giving lectures on the use of STEM in different settings and careers.'' With a war going on and budget crisis at our doorstep, this is how we elect to spend our increasingly scarce defense dollars? We should leave the education of our children to our teachers and parents and not our military.

There is a $7.7 million increase for the Civil Air Program, or CAP. CAP is a volunteer organization that provides aerospace education to young people, runs a junior cadet program, and assists when possible in providing emergency services. Its members are hardworking and we are grateful for their volunteerism. This year, as in the past, the Senate Armed Services Committee authorized CAP funding. However, CAP is auxiliary and thus should not be funded given the need for the military to tighten its purse strings and fund programs that are a priority to our national defense, not auxiliary.

The bill also includes $375 million for Army, Navy, and Air Force ''alternative energy research'' initiatives. As I have stated in the past, this type of research has yielded such shining examples as the Department of the Navy's purchase of 450,000 gallons of alternative fuels for $12 million—over 26 dollars per gallon.

There is over $460 million in funding for Defense Department to do research dealing with research for alzheimer, autism, prostate and ovarian cancer, HIV/AIDS and numerous other diseases and illnesses. While this type of research is important, it should not be funded by Department of Defense. It should, instead, be funded by the National Institutes of Health, the budget of which this bill more than doubles over last year's.

We cannot continue this process where massive, unamendable, thousand-plus page spending bills totaling trillions of dollars are voted on 2 days after being made available to Members of this body. No Senator could have read and fully understood the long-term impact the policy and spending provisions this bill will have on the future of this Nation. It is a shameful way to do business. The American taxpayers are tired of Washington and our uncontrollable spending habits as well as our inability to cut wasteful, underperforming, and duplicative programs. Furthermore, our refusal to reform our broken tax system and our unsustainable mandatory programs have contributed greatly not only to the current fiscal crisis in our country, but to Americans' unfavorable opinion of the institutions of our government. We must change course and have a fair and open process to fund the Federal Government, not a closed process. For all of these reasons, I will not be voting for this appropriations bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I appreciate the comments from my two dear friends, the Senator from Iowa and the Senator from Alabama. They have been friends of mine for decades, and we have traveled and conspired together—always conspiring for the good of the country, of course. We have shared our thoughts, our philosophy, and our plans, and because we have joined together, we have better legislation.

I want to add my voice to those who have spoken in support of the Omnibus appropriations bill. I spoke about it earlier this week, so I won't repeat others, but I want the American people to understand the importance of what we are doing.

Only Chairwoman MIKULSKI could have said it as well as she did. This compromised bill represents the end of—and hopefully for a long time—''shutdown, slowdown, slamdown politics.'' If I spoke for an hour, I would not say it as well as the senior Senator from Maryland did. It shows that the people here want to govern. When they have had enough of political stunts and are no longer intimidated by extremists, they can work together to get it done.

Chairwoman MIKULSKI, Ranking Member SHELBY, Chairman ROGERS, and Ranking Member LOWEY made it possible for the House and Senate Appropriations Committees to do what we all do if we are given the chance. Democrats and Republicans come together and we forge agreements.

Two days ago I spoke about the portions of this omnibus bill that fund the Department of State and foreign operations. But I also know—and I can say this as the most senior member of the Appropriations Committee—the bill also provides funding for many vital domestic programs that have suffered some very painful cuts in recent years. It provides increased funding for public health, including mental health. It is going to increase the National Institutes of Health budget by $1 billion.

In Vermont, local community health centers are essential for rural families. This bill includes nearly $700 million more for these health centers nationwide. I know how important they are. I remember during my first term in the Senate helping to start one of our first community health centers in the tiny county of Grand Isle, with a beautiful archipelago of violets in Northern Lake Champlain. We also have Head Start Programs. These are some of the hardest hit by sequestration and the bill will help rebuild these programs by investing nearly $1 billion.

The bill invests $194 million more in the Women, Infants, and Children Program, providing nearly 90,000 more mothers and children with nutrition assistance. Talk about something that has a rebounding effect in this country. We all know a hungry child going to school is not going to learn, and they

are not going to be as productive a member of society later on. None of us in this Chamber goes hungry. No Senator goes hungry except by choice, but a lot of children and a lot of infants go hungry. Now, 90,000 more can be given nutrition assistance.

Many Americans are struggling to pay for college, and this bill maintains funding for the Pell Grant Program and increases funding for TRIO and GEAR Up Programs that help low-income and first-generation students get a college education. Many of these programs reach Vermonters through the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation. I am pleased this bill includes investment in this and similar nonprofits around the country.

The omnibus includes funding for programs authorized by the Violence Against Women Act for grants to rural areas, for transitional housing, for sexual assault services, for legal assistance for victims, and support for Native American victims.

I remember how we joined together in a bipartisan way to pass the Violence Against Women Act, and when they wanted to diminish it in the House of Representatives, some very brave Democrats and Republicans stood and said: No, let's pass the bill the Senate passed. We added a number of things, including Native American victims—something that even some of the previous supporters of the bill were going to take out. We kept it in.

The bill raises the cap on the Crime Victims Fund by $15 million, which is a historic high. It means more money for victims assistance grants at the State and local levels. How I wish we had such money when I was a prosecutor so we could help victims of crime.

It also makes a lifesaving investment in the bill the former Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and I wrote, the bulletproof vest program, to protect police officers and other first responders. Every year we hear of police officers whose lives have been saved because of the bulletproof vest program.

We provide increases for homeless assistance grants and the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program. We preserve funding for Rural Economic Area Partnership Zones—something extremely important in the basically rural State of Vermont.

The omnibus also lifts the pay freeze impacting thousands of Federal workers in Vermont and millions across the country and all 50 of our States.

The bill makes strong investments to support our National Guard. I was the cochair of the National Guard Caucus, along with Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM, who will agree with me on how important that investment is. It overturns a provision in the Bipartisan Budget Act that would have reduced cost-of-living adjustments for medically retired servicemembers and survivor benefit plan recipients. It paves the way for Congress to repeal the reductions for all impacted military retirees.

This bill is not exactly what I might have written, what Chairwoman MIKULSKI would have written, what any one of us would have written if we could write it alone. But after years and years of gridlock on appropriations, we wrote a bill that can pass. So there are compromises. There are programs that are not funded at the levels many of us wanted, including some provisions important to Vermonters.

I am disappointed that because of limited budget caps we were unable to make larger investments in the Byrne JAG Program and the juvenile justice program, which continue to face steep cuts year after year.

I am disappointed the omnibus includes authorizing language we have been debating as part of the ongoing farm bill negotiation. This antifarmer policy rider will tie the hands of the Grain Inspection, Packers & Stockyards Administration and is an unfortunate case of legislating on behalf of powerful corporations while leaving our family farmers out in the cold.

But I would say that even on the things I would have wanted to include, and many of us would want to include, the alternative was another continuing resolution and more sequestration, which, without question, would have been far worse, especially for programs that I support and I believe the distinguished Presiding Officer supports and most of us support.

So we have taken an important step back from the destructive politics of the past few years. Let's hope it is only the first step. Let's hope we can go on from here to make progress on other important issues the American people sent us to address.

I do not see any Senators seeking recognition. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, as have so many of my colleagues, I rise to speak to this important Omnibus appropriations bill that we have before us today, and I too wish to thank the Senator from Alabama, whom I count as a friend, and the Senator from Baltimore and the great State of Maryland, more broadly, for all the great work they have done and their colleagues on the Appropriations Committee as well. We are showing the country we can work together. We are going to start the new year on a different note. I am excited to be a part of that effort. I will support the bill.

I come to the floor, as have a number of my colleagues, to speak about some of the business yet unfinished, to set the stage for more work we can do going forward. But before I do that, I wish to mention some of the specific good news in the bill.

I am looking at my good friend from Alabama. We have had a lot of fires in Colorado over these last number of years. This bill takes some important steps to help us combat the threat posed by what are now very fast-moving, indiscriminately burning, modern mega fires. We have had mega hurricanes and mega tornadoes. We have mega fires now in the great State of Colorado. We have seen those fires not just in my State but all over the West. In the Southeast we have seen increasing fires as well. So the budget includes about $3 billion for firefighting and wildfire prevention programs, which is essentially the same level we have seen in recent years.

I am a little disappointed that the bill doesn't include the bipartisan Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. This is a bill that I worked on with Senators WYDEN and CRAPO. It is, therefore, bipartisan. It would allow the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to access funding to support emergency wildfire suppression efforts. It is a lot cheaper to suppress fires at the beginning than to let them get out of control. It is also a lot cheaper to prevent fires from happening in the first place, and I will talk more about that. If we look at current projections, they only suggest that fires are going to increase in intensity and duration, and it underscores the need for us to get ahead of this growing threat to our communities—again, not just in Colorado but all over our country.

There are fiscally responsible reforms in this Wildfire Disaster Funding Act which would help us confront the skyrocketing threat that modern fires pose to our States' fiscal health as agencies work to protect life and property while being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. That is just one of the many reasons I am going to continue to lead the fight—it is a bipartisan fight, a bipartisan cause—to see if we can't get this approach in place. This is a plan that will truly help us with these fires that threaten our communities.

I am also proud that Colorado is leading the way in pioneering commonsense wildfire prevention strategies that cut through redtape and then leverage private sector know-how to create jobs while reducing the fuel loads in our forests. We don't have enough Federal employees. We don't have enough government moneys to do all we need to do in our forests. One of the ways we can do more of that with this private-public sector type of partnership is to reauthorize the Good Neighbor Authority.

The Good Neighbor Authority was a pilot project in Colorado initially, and it has been successful. We want to expand it and apply it in other locales and in other States, and we have succeeded in doing that. It will allow agencies to work collaboratively across arbitrary Federal boundaries to improve forest health and reduce wildfire risks.

This bill also reauthorizes the job-creating Stewardship Contracting Authority, which allows the Forest Service and the BLM to partner with local businesses to improve fire safety on our public lands. This has been a critical tool in Colorado, and it is important that we include it in this bill.

So where do I think we have some shortcomings? I mentioned a couple of successes and important provisions in the bill. The bill doesn't address several key needs in my State, including support for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program and Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program. It is known as PILT. I listened to the Committee on Appropriations chairwoman and I listened to the Senator from New Mexico TOM UDALL and others speak about PILT today. I wish to touch on both the EWP, Emergency Watershed Protection Program, and the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program. We had real devastation in my State last year during the fall with historic amounts of rainfall and then the floods that followed. We had enormous support from all over the country. We deeply appreciate that outpouring. It was the most destructive natural disaster in our State's history. Now the floodwaters have subsided, thankfully—some 3 months ago—but we are still learning the true extent of the damage. Families and towns are clearing debris from their neighborhoods and from their water sources. They are working to rebuild their communities house by house and business by business.

Yet, despite this widespread damage from the floods and the broad consensus that more help is needed, this budget does not fund the Emergency Watershed Protection Program. This is a very important and crucial flood recovery program, and it has been applied all over our country, I think in almost every State.

If we do not get support sooner rather than later, we could see additional flooding this spring. We have a spring thaw that happens all over our State. Streams will overrun their banks, particularly because we have so much debris still in many of those stream courses. So we need these resources. It is simply not acceptable that we would not have them in hand before the spring runoff.

The Federal Government's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the NRCS, estimates that we need at least $122 million to protect lives and property from future flood damage. That support, as I have said, is not included in the bill, but I am going to continue fighting to secure this critical aid for Colorado's flood-ravaged communities.

Finally, I want to turn to the Payment in Lieu of Taxes Program. As I mentioned earlier, many of my colleagues from both sides of the aisle have expressed their disappointment that the budget does not include PILT funding. It includes—when it works—funding for rural counties across the country. Fifty-five of our 64 counties in Colorado qualify for payment in lieu of taxes funding. Those counties qualify because there are Federal lands within those counties.

Those lands are an important part of the character and heritage of the West. But because Federal lands are not subject to local property taxes, they do not support essential services such as schools, roads, teacher hires, our firefighters, and our police.

I want to give you an example of what I am talking about.

Ouray County is in the southwestern portion of Colorado in the San Juan Mountains. It is home to about 4,400 people. Over half that county is public land, and half of the local school kids are already on free or reduced-price lunch programs. That county's budget is picked to the bone. Without $400,000 in PILT funds, Ouray County will not be able to maintain local roads or provide other basic services that residents there depend on.

Those funds may seem small by the standards here in Washington, DC, but they are indispensable for the rural communities in my home State of Colorado and across the West. That is why this week I introduced a bill that would fully fund PILT, and I am really pleased Senator HELLER from Nevada has joined me. That fully funded PILT approach would give our rural communities certainty when it comes to their budgets and their futures. This is a commonsense approach. Let us pass it without delay. I am going to continue to work with all of my colleagues who support the PILT Program to ensure that we do the right thing.

I want to take a minute to speak to my county commissioners all over Colorado from those 55 counties I mentioned. I know you are wondering how you are going to keep critical public services going over this next year. To you I want to make this pledge: I will fight doggedly, I will fight every way possible, to make sure you have those PILT funds to which you are entitled and you need to make sure your communities are secure, are safe, and are preparing for the future.

I want to conclude by saying, again, I intend to vote for this bill, in part because of the critical functions across our government that it supports and because, as the Senator from Alabama mentioned just a while ago, it avoids another costly and unnecessary government shutdown. But I do raise some concerns. I know we will tend to the unfinished business that I mentioned. I am going to continue working with everybody on both sides of the aisle. I am going to keep fighting for the great State of Colorado in the process. We will do our part to be a great State in the United States of America.

I appreciate the Presiding Officer's attention. I appreciate the Presiding Office's service.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, with the distinguished senior Senator from Alabama on the floor, I ask unanimous consent that the time until 4:45 p.m. be equally divided and controlled between Senators REED of Rhode Island and DURBIN; further, that the time from 4:45 p.m. until 5:15 p.m. be controlled by the Republican leader or designee; that at 5:15 p.m. there be 15 minutes equally divided between Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY or their designees; that at 5:30 p.m. today the mandatory quorum required under rule XXII be waived and the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to concur; that if cloture is invoked, the motion to concur with an amendment be withdrawn, all post-cloture time be yielded back, and the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to concur; that if the motion to concur is agreed to, the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 74; that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SHELBY. No objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair hears none.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. LEAHY. I tell the distinguished Presiding Officer, he can tell by all the various clauses of that why we Senators are merely constitutional impediments to our staff who write it up, and why I held it in my hand to read it and make sure it was done right.

With that, Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair notes the excellent work of the Senator from Vermont, and the clerk will please call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I never would have imagined that today the Senate would be meeting without one of our true heroes, a recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, Senator Danny Inouye of Hawaii. He and Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska guided the Subcommittee on Defense of the Senate Appropriations Committee for decades with a steady hand and a commitment to working on a bipartisan basis.

I have been fortunate in working on this appropriations bill to have as my ranking member Senator THAD COCHRAN of Mississippi. He has carried on that legacy of bipartisanship. He is my friend. We trust one another. That has made this job so much more complete and satisfying. We have conferenced a massive Defense appropriations bill on an expedited schedule and we encourage our colleagues to vote for it on final passage.

Virtually 60 percent of all of the domestic discretionary spending of the United States of America is included in this one appropriations bill. Now for

nearly 2 years the Department of Defense has been in a state of paralysis because of budget uncertainty caused by the Budget Control Act, sequestration, the threat that was never supposed to become a reality, and, sadly, the 16-day totally unnecessary government shutdown.

This bill is the first step in regaining stability and providing a solid foundation for our Department of Defense to plan for its future. It represents a return to regular order for both the Budget and Appropriations Committees and for Congress. Finally, we are going to exert our constitutional responsibilities over the power of the purse, to make certain that every Federal tax dollar is spent responsibly.

We are really indebted in particular to two of our colleagues. Chairwoman PATTY MURRAY of Washington, chair of the Senate Budget Committee, sat down with PAUL RYAN, the House Republican chair, and hammered out a budget agreement, the first in I believe 5 or 6 years. Then the assignment was sent to the Appropriations Committee chair, BARBARA MIKULSKI of Maryland. She was able to sit down with Chairman ROGERS from the House of Representatives. The two of them worked out an agreement on the actual spending that would follow this budget resolution. That was no small feat.

It is also a fiscally responsible bill. It provides $572 billion for the current fiscal year in this appropriation, meeting the spending caps that were established in the budget. It meets the spending target $25 billion before the President's request, by making 1,065 more strategic and thoughtful reductions—1,065 reductions in spending from the President's budget request.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff warned us and the Nation several years ago: If we do not get the people right, the rest will not matter when it comes to our national defense. This agreement implements the wisdom of General Dempsey. It provides necessary resources to the 3 million men and women who proudly serve America in the Department of Defense. Passage of this bill means that nearly 800,000 civilian employees at the Department of Defense finally will get the pay raise, at least some pay raise, which they certainly deserve, rather than face the threat of furloughs which they faced over and over.

Unfortunately, this is the first pay raise since fiscal year 2010, but it will make it a little bit easier for middle-class families who work for our government in defense of our Nation to make ends meet. The agreement also contains a pay raise for our military. We all heartily support it.

It funds operations of readiness at $11 billion higher than it would be under a full-year continuing resolution. It means our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines can get the training they need before deploying into harm's way. Training and readiness means survivability.

It provides a $1 billion increase in the National Guard and Reserve equipment account, includes $218 million for TRICARE to ensure servicemembers and their families will not pay higher out-of-pocket costs for medical care, $25 million to fully implement the implementation of Senator MURRAY's Special Victims Counsels, so that the victims of sexual assault in the military through this appropriation will have the advocates, have the counselors, and have the champions they need.

We have increased an already robust budget for suicide prevention by $20 million, to encourage the Department to expand community-based initiatives, offering greater support as well for the Guard and Reserve. We made sure that the medical care our servicemembers receive will still be the most advanced in the world. It adds $200 million to peer-reviewed medical research programs. No apologies.

Some Members may come to the floor and criticize the Department of Defense for being engaged in medical research. I can stand and defend every single line item. I will tell you, it will not only benefit our military and their families, it will benefit America and the world for this medical research to take place.

It has $125 million for traumatic brain injury and psychological health, $10 million for prosthetic research. I want to thank Congresswoman TAMMY DUCKWORTH of Illinois. She has joined me in this effort. She, more than any other Member of Congress, understands the critical importance to have the modern prosthetics and orthotics for those members of the military who suffer a loss of limb during their course of serving our country.

For embassy security, which is a topic we hear from the other side on almost a daily basis, we have added marine security guard detachments at 35 more State Department posts overseas, as well as Marine Corps response forces around the globe.

Finally, we add a technical correction. I want to make it clear, because this has been the subject of great debate on the floor of the Senate and the House, we added a technical correction to the COLA offset regarding military pensions to make it clear that Congress never, ever intended this to impact medically retired personnel or their survivors. I appreciate the leadership of three of my colleagues on this issue: Senator MURRAY, Senator PRYOR, and Senator SHAHEEN.

We protect the Defense industrial base. We increase science and technology funding for all the branches by $400 million. We add $175 million for the Rapid Innovation Program and $75 million for the Industrial Base Innovation Fund.

I had the good fortune of visiting Rhode Island during the course of this week. Make no mistake. The men and women who work in these facilities to build the most advanced, innovative, and technical defense equipment in the world constitute a precious national resource. We want to make sure we are committed to them so they will be ready to help us in the future to defend America.

There are two provisions in this bill I want to mention quickly that relate to Illinois. The first is related to the James Lovell Federal Health Care Center in North Chicago. It is a multiyear pilot program to try to do something which seems so obvious, to blend the medical facilities and hospital at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station with the North Chicago Veterans Hospital. It is one of the most challenging things I have ever seen in government. We are getting it done. This bill continues to invest in that concept. I want to thank Senator KIRK. He has been my partner in making sure that this happens from the start.

Second, the bill takes a major step forward in preserving and sustaining the skilled workforce at manufacturing arsenals in support of the Department of Defense. Coming out of two wars, we know the value of these workers. When we had to put shields on humvees to save the lives of our servicemembers, we turned to the Rock Island Arsenal. In dramatic fashion they responded with the very best equipment to save our men and women in uniform. We want to make sure they are ready for the next challenge, whatever it may be. So we have included $150 million in industrial mobilization capacity to stabilize their rates, to make sure they will continue to serve our military so well.

I see my colleague Senator REED has come to the floor. I know we have a limited amount of time. I want to make a point which I think he will appreciate. When it comes to major Defense programs, this bill contains $1.2 billion to fully fund two Virginia-class submarines under a multiyear contract.

I visited with the engineers, welders, electricians, and machinists. They have been worried about their jobs through the sequester, and further sequestration would have meant a major disruption.

The agreement also supports the strong view of Congress that we should not retire 9 ships with a century of useful life left in them.

We fully funded Navy Growlers, P–8s, and other aircraft, as well as added advanced procurement for additional Super Hornets.

In the Army, we protected procurement of Army Chinook, Apache and Black Hawk helicopters, as well as provided an additional 14 helicopters to the Army National Guard.

We also remain a steadfast partner with Israel. The bill fully funds U.S.-Israel cooperative missile defense programs. It adds an additional $173 million for the Arrow programs and David's Sling, and also fully funds Iron Dome procurement.

We also had to make a lot of tough decisions to reach our spending cap.

Some programs have significant cuts, and that is going to have an impact somewhere.

But what is the alternative to this bill? The only answer is a full-year continuing resolution. The Department of Defense has never operated under a full-year CR, and I hope it never does.

A full-year CR would mean untold billions of dollars would have to be realigned from literally thousands of programs. It would be a financial management nightmare. Programs might be forced to stop in their tracks because funds were not provided in the right lines, and the effects would ripple throughout the defense industry and American jobs.

This bill takes care of our highest priorities, but not everything can be a priority. I ask that Senators recognize that we had to make some hard choices, that we managed to do more with less, and that the alternatives are much worse.

I inherited an awesome responsibility from Senator Inouye. I also inherited his tremendous staff.

They have worked especially hard this year over the holidays with no fanfare and at great personal sacrifice to ensure that we could get to this day. So I would like to take a moment to thank them.

On the Democratic staff: Betsy Schmid, Colleen Gaydos, David Gillies, Katy Hagan, Kate Käufer, Erik Raven, Jennifer Santos, Teri Spoutz, Andy Vanlandingham, and Maria Veklich.

On the Republican staff, I would like to thank: Stewart Holmes, Alycia Farrell, Brian Potts and Jacqui Russell.

This defense bill provides for the national defense in a responsible, thoughtful way.

It reverses the harshest impacts of sequestration, and provides additional funds to ensure that our troops get the training and equipment they need.

It also looks toward the future, boosting research in medical care, science and technology, and manufacturing innovation.

I hope all of my colleagues who support a strong military and a strong national defense will support this good bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, first let me thank the Senator from Illinois for his great leadership on the Appropriations Defense Subcommittee and for joining me in Rhode Island to see those great workers at Electric Boat and many other defense industries in Rhode Island.

I too want to commend Chairwoman BARBARA MIKULSKI and Chairwoman PATTY MURRAY. We would not be here today without their extraordinary efforts, Herculean efforts by two extraordinary individuals. I also want to thank my colleague from the great State of Alaska, LISA MURKOWSKI, for her work. She is an extraordinary colleague, collaborator. We have worked together to make this Interior subcommittee bill a very good one.

Chairman KEN CALVERT of the House, ranking member JIM MORAN, both superb participants and collaborators in this effort. JIM is retiring. I want to thank him for his distinguished service to Virginia and to the Nation.

I am very pleased in particular in this Interior subcommittee bill that we could make a strong investment in clean water and drinking water through the revolving fund or, as it is known, the SRF fund. This is not only about the environment and public health, it is about jobs. In fact, adopting our provisions in contrast to the House's lower numbers will keep approximately 97,000 more Americans on the job this year. That, I think, is significant. It is not just about the environment, it is also about keeping people at work.

We have also ensured that we can staff all of our agencies, including the EPA, so they do not have to face furloughs, so they can have continuity of operations, so they can do their jobs more efficiently and more effectively.

For the Department of the Interior, the bill provides solid funding for resource agencies, including the National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as the U.S. Geological Survey. The bill also includes $306 million for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

With respect to our cultural agencies, we have also been able to restore sequester cuts to the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, and we increased funding of the Smithsonian, which will help them complete the National Museum of African American History and Culture for its opening in 2015.

One challenge in the Interior bill is the firefighting costs. These are costs that cannot be avoided and they continue to increase. We have fully funded these costs and we have done that by increasing resources significantly. But we have to be aware, if these costs continue to grow, it will be something that is very difficult to sustain. So we have to apply our efforts going forward to see if we can, through suppression efforts, through other efforts, begin to control the cost of firefighting. This is something, particularly for our Western colleagues, that is absolutely essential. We responded to this need completely and thoroughly.

I want to also commend my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for the other aspects of the bill, Senators HARKIN, FEINSTEIN, MURRAY, and DURBIN. Their subcommittees produced great results. The Low Income Heating Assistance Program, LIHEAP, the Weatherization Program has been adequately funded, funding for Job Corps, TIGER grant funding, and Chairman MIKULSKI particularly effectively added $75 million for fisheries disasters, which the Presiding Officer from Massachusetts and myself are very keenly aware of and very appreciative of.

Funding for the Securities and Exchange Commission, funding for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. This is going to help make sure the Dodd-Frank legislation that we passed is actually implemented and the markets are operating efficiently. This is critical to our economic viability and our economic progress.

As Senator DURBIN mentioned, I am extremely pleased that two *Virginia*-class submarines were included in this appropriations bill. They are built in Groton. They all begin in Quonset Point, RI, but they are built in Groton finally and often in Newport News. This is a program vital to our national security, vital to employment. About 2,800 people in Rhode Island will benefit from these important programs.

I think we have to do more to invest in our people, invest in our economy, infrastructure, et cetera, but this bill goes a very long way.

Let me also pay tribute to people who really deserve, as they say, a shoutout. That is the staff members who did this work: Rachael Taylor, Ryan Hunt, Virginia James, Rita Culp, and Tiffany Taylor on my side. Senator MURKOWSKI's extraordinary staff: Leif Fonnesbeck, Brent Wiles, and Emy Lesofski. They did extraordinary work.

Before I leave the floor. Let me conclude one point: We will come together this evening on a strong bipartisan basis to pass this appropriations bill. But we still have remaining work to do on the unemployment insurance bill. I hope in the intervening days that we can find a path forward to pass an unemployment insurance bill on a bipartisan basis because if we do not, there are 1.5 million Americans without benefits, 70,000 more a week lose their benefits, and our economy is losing out, because it is approximately $600 million a week that is being sapped from the economy, as estimated by Professor Lawrence Katz at Harvard if we do not act.

Now is the time not only to put these appropriations to work, but also to put our UI programs to work, so that not only can we help Americans, but we can also help our economy. I want to thank in this regard, with respect to the UI efforts, Senator HELLER and Senator COLLINS. They are extraordinarily thoughtful Members, who are committed, as I am, to helping their constituents and doing it in a wise and prudent way.

With that, let me recognize the chairwoman who has come to the floor and say, thank you, chairwoman, for an extraordinary bit of work. Not surprising coming from a giant like yourself. Thank you.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the Senator from Rhode Island for his comments. I appreciate them. They were well said. But the compliments should be reversed. This is a committee effort. What I am so excited about for this bill is that it is bipartisan, bicameral. It

was agreed upon in the House by an overwhelming vote of 359 to 67.

I look forward to this same type of vote in the Senate, but we did it because we listened to each other, we functioned with maximum respect, and saw where we could compromise without capitulating on principle.

I note that other Senators will be coming shortly.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CRUZ. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CRUZ. I rise to speak of pragmatism and irresponsibility.

Four years ago, when this body was debating the law known as ObamaCare, reasonable minds perhaps could have differed as to whether that law might work. The essence of pragmatism is looking to the facts as they are today and responding.

Today reasonable minds can no longer differ in terms of whether ObamaCare is working.

Today it is abundantly clear that millions of Americans are being harmed right now by this failed law.

Today it is the essence of pragmatism to acknowledge the facts of the future of ObamaCare and for Congress to step up and act to stop the harm that has been caused by this body.

Irresponsibility, on the other hand, is seeing undeniable harm, undeniable facts, and saying, nonetheless, we will do nothing.

What are the facts from the American people?

The facts that we now know today are that already at least 4.7 million Americans have received cancellation notices, have had their health care plans cancelled because of ObamaCare.

This was, of course, after President Obama repeatedly looked in the TV cameras, spoke to the American people, and made the promise: If you like your health care plan, you can keep it, period.

We now know that promise was false, and for over 4.7 million people painfully false in their lives.

Pragmatism is responding to the facts and doing something about it. Unfortunately, what have the Senate majority leader and the Senate Democrats done to protect Americans from ObamaCare? Nothing.

These facts are known and Senate Democrats have done nothing. At least 4.7 million Americans lost their health insurance because of this body. The omnibus bill that this body is galloping to approve does nothing for the 4.7 million Americans who have had their health insurance canceled.

It is not only health insurance plans. What else are the facts that we know now?

As Time magazine observed: ''Keeping your doctor under ObamaCare is no easy feat.''

President Obama looked at the American people and said: If you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor, period.

We now know that promise too was deliberately, repeatedly, false. Millions of Americans are facing the very real prospect of losing their doctor.

A good friend of mine, a cancer survivor, is facing the very real prospect—because Texas Oncology has suggested it does not intend to participate—of losing his cancer doctor, not being able to go to the doctors who saved his life. This is the father of two young children facing the terrifying reality of losing his doctor because of the conduct of the Congress.

In response to millions of Americans losing their doctors, what have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done? Nothing. The essence of irresponsibility is seeing a harm, seeing the facts, and refusing to act.

What else do we know? We know ObamaCare is killing jobs all across the country. Indeed, ObamaCare is the biggest job killer in this Nation.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has said:

> Of small businesses that will be impacted by the employer mandate, one-half of small businesses say they will either cut hours to reduce full-time employees or replace full-time employees with part-time workers to avoid the mandate. 24 percent say they will reduce hiring to under 50 employees.

The President has recently been talking about income inequality. This exacerbates income inequality. It is why the rich have gotten richer under President Obama. But the people who are struggling—young people, Hispanics, single moms, people like my dad, who 56 years ago washed dishes for 50 cents an hour as a teenage immigrant—those are the people getting their hours reduced because of ObamaCare; those are the people getting laid off because of ObamaCare.

Income inequality is increasing. What have the Senate majority leader or Senate Democrats done to protect Americans from ObamaCare? The answer is simple: Nothing. In response to the millions of Americans being forced into part-time work, losing their jobs, nothing from Senate Democrats.

What else do we know? The New York Times front-page headline explained ''New Health Law Frustrates Many in Middle Class.''

I recognize that not everyone is inclined to listen to a Republican from Texas. So let me instead quote that famed rightwing rag, The New York Times, discussing ObamaCare.

> Ginger Chapman and her husband, Doug, are sitting on the health care cliff. The cheapest insurance plan they can find through the new federal marketplace in New Hampshire will cost their family of four about $1,000 a month, 12 percent of their annual income . . .

Mr. Chapman is a retired fireman who works on a friend's farm and he and his wife have two sons. Mrs. Chapman had this to say about the cost of that insurance:

> That's an insane amount of money. How are you supposed to pay that?

In response to the middle class, frustrated at getting hit with skyrocketing premiums, what have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done? The answer is the same: Nothing.

But going beyond that, it is not just the middle class that is getting hurt. If we were to look at one demographic group that is getting hammered the worst by ObamaCare, it is young people. ObamaCare is a law designed to be a massive wealth transfer from young people to older wealthier Americans.

Forty percent of young Americans today believe ObamaCare will bring worse care, 51 percent believe it will bring higher costs, and 57 percent of young people disapprove of ObamaCare. And what is the source of this information? Another famed rightwing institution—Harvard, a Harvard Institute of Politics poll.

Young people in particular are getting hammered by ObamaCare, and what have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done to listen to the young people who are losing their jobs, who are forced into part-time work, who are facing skyrocketing premiums? The answer is simple: Nothing.

Looking beyond that, Forbes reported that ObamaCare is to increase individual market premiums by an average of 41 percent—41 percent. That is real money from hard-working people who are being hurt because of the failures of this body. And what have Senate Democrats done in response? Nothing.

Looking beyond that, in my home State of Texas, the average premium increase for Texans will be 26 percent in the individual market. But let's take a 27-year-old Texas man. The average premium increase will be 70 percent; for a 27-year-old Texas woman, 22 percent. These are young people who are struggling, who are starting to build a family, and their premiums are going up because of ObamaCare. What have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done to listen to young people who are being hurt? The answer is simple: Nothing.

Let's look beyond that, though. Let's look beyond Texas and let's talk about State by State some of the very real harm. Let's take a State picked at random—the State of Nevada. If we look at the State of Nevada, 24,600 policies have been canceled in Nevada; in the individual market, a 179-percent premium increase.

One might hope that these 24,600 people who had their health insurance canceled would have Senators representing them. One might hope these people paying 179-percent premium increases would have Senators representing them standing up and saying: Let's act right now. But what have the Senate majority leader and Senate Democrats done to respond to the people of Nevada? The answer is absolutely nothing.

Let's look at some other States. The State of California. In California, that bright blue State on our west coast, 1.1 million policies have been canceled; a 27-percent increase on average premiums. What have Senate Democrats done to respond to Californians suffering because of ObamaCare? The answer is simple: Nothing.

Let's take another State: Arkansas. Arkansas people are hurting because of ObamaCare. The State is not tracking cancellations, but in the individual market in Arkansas a 138-percent increase in premiums.

For the millionaires, many of whom populate this Chamber, 138 percent may not be that much. But if you are struggling in Arkansas, you need help. You need relief. And what have Senate Democrats done for the people hurting in Arkansas because of ObamaCare? The answer is nothing.

Let's look at another State: Louisiana, 92,790 policies canceled because of ObamaCare; a 53-percent increase in average premiums because of ObamaCare in the individual market.

I will note, one Senator from Louisiana has fought hard for those 92,790 people in Louisiana who have had their health insurance canceled, and another Senator in this Chamber has fought hard to ensure the response is not to relieve them from ObamaCare. What have Senate Democrats done in response to the people in Louisiana who are hurting? The answer is simple and it is tragic: Nothing.

Let us look at another State: New Mexico, 26,000 policies canceled; 142-percent increase in the individual market. What have Senate Democrats done to listen to the citizens of New Mexico being hurt because of ObamaCare? The answer is nothing.

Let's take one more State: The State of North Carolina, 183,800 policies canceled.

I want my colleagues to think of the single mom raising three kids who receives a notification in the mail that her policy has been canceled not because of anything she has done but because of Congress's law that is not working.

A 136-percent increase. I want my colleagues to think of the immigrant struggling hard—like my dad was when he was washing dishes—who discovers his premium has gone up 136 percent. What have Senate Democrats done to respond to the people of North Carolina who are being hurt because of ObamaCare? The answer, tragically, is nothing.

Four years ago, reasonable minds might have differed, but today these are the facts. And the facts are Senate Democrats are not listening to the American people. They are not responding to the harm they have caused. I am going to suggest that is the essence of irresponsibility.

I have filed two amendments. One amendment to the omnibus bill would simply provide that ObamaCare would be defunded so long as it is the case that ObamaCare is causing Americans to lose the health insurance policies they wish to keep, increasing their premiums, and preventing them from seeing the doctors they want to see.

All of those, by the way, were promises President Obama and Senate Democrats made to the American people that ObamaCare wouldn't do, and it is exactly what they are doing.

This amendment, if Senate Democrats disagree that they have done nothing, presents the opportunity for them to do something. Right now they can step in and say: It is the essence of pragmatism to recognize this isn't working, people are hurting, so let's start over.

So, accordingly, I am going to ask the first of two unanimous consent requests:

I ask unanimous consent that my amendment No. 2685, to prohibit the funding of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act so long as the Act is harming the healthcare of Americans, be called up and agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). Is there objection?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, I want to turn to a second amendment I have introduced. This second amendment provides real relief to the millions of Americans who are being hurt because of ObamaCare, but it also corrects something this body did just recently that was wrong. Recently, this body acted to decrease the pensions of millions of veterans—millions of men and women who have served our Nation, who have fought for our Nation, and who have bled for our Nation. This body decreased their pensions irresponsibly. So this second amendment I would introduce defunds ObamaCare because millions of Americans are hurting, and it uses the savings from defunding ObamaCare to restore the pensions to the hard-working men and women of the military, which never should have been taken away in the first place.

This is an opportunity for all 100 Senators to demonstrate we stand together with the working men and women in the military and with all Americans who are struggling to make ends meet, struggling to achieve a better life.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that my amendment No. 2686, to prohibit funding of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and to fulfill our Nation's promise to our military retirees, be called up and agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Ms. MIKULSKI. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. CRUZ. Madam President, last year Members of this body could say they didn't know. They didn't know people's plans would be canceled. They didn't know premiums would skyrocket. They didn't know people would be shut off from seeing their doctors. Now they know. Now they know. And the response of the majority leader and Senate Democrats, tragically, is to do nothing.

This body faces a choice—a choice between pragmatism and irresponsibility. Once this body makes this choice, ultimately, in November, the American people will have a choice as well. At the end of the day, every elected official should not ignore the facts but should listen to the American people. We need to make DC listen.

The majority leader and Senate Democrats right now are not listening to the American people. Instead, they have chosen a course of conduct of doing nothing, that is not responsible, and I hope that, in time, they reconsider.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

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

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

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, we have had a spirited debate today for very important reasons, and I will conclude my remarks on this bill by observing that, with very few exceptions, we have heard nothing but positive comments from our colleagues today here in the Senate.

We have also heard what an important step this will be to reestablish the regular order of the Senate appropriations process. In the appropriations world, regular order means receiving the President's budget, holding hearings, marking up bills, and bringing them to the floor of the Senate with an open amendment process, which both sides of the aisle need and want.

The passage of this omnibus bill will be a giant step, I believe, in that direction, which is in the best interests, in the long run, of each individual Senator as well as this entire institution.

I would be remiss if I did not once again recognize the chair of the Appropriations Committee Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, my colleague, and the leadership that she demonstrated in creating an environment in which a compromise could be reached here. Anyone who has attempted to bring a single bill to the floor of the Senate understands what a difficult undertaking that can be. This particular legislation contains 12 separate appropriations bills.

I also recognize the efforts of the respective ranking members of each subcommittee. The Christmas holiday, as we all know, is usually an opportunity to refocus their attention on their families and their home States. This past year, however, we asked them to once again go the extra mile, to skip their

holidays, to make this bill a reality. Because of that and their work, they have done that—without hesitation.

As has already been mentioned by a number of my colleagues, no bill ever reaches the floor of the Senate without the effort of many different staff members. In this instance it took the effort of literally dozens of staff from both sides of the aisle to bring this together. I personally thank them all for their incredible dedication and professionalism and literally unceasing effort over the past several weeks.

I urge my colleagues once again to support this important legislation, to fund the government and move this body one step closer to being the place we would all like it to be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, we are coming to the end of a long day and a really long journey. This journey began last year when this committee was dealing with a crisis situation in December 2012 when our beloved and esteemed chairman Senator Dan Inouye passed away. Simultaneously, we were dealing with the emergency legislation to fund Hurricane Sandy relief. At that time I was asked by my colleagues, based on our seniority system, to become the chair of this committee. It was my goal in taking over the committee that I wanted to continue the great tradition of Senator Byrd, of Senator Ted Stevens, of Senator Danny Inouye, of Senator THAD COCHRAN, that we would work on a bipartisan basis in the interests of the United States of America. Although we come from different places, different States, and have even different priorities, we are one country. It requires us to make sure we do our job.

An Appropriations Committee is one of two committees that are constitutionally referenced. When our Founders wrote the Constitution, they said that there should be a committee that has an annual Appropriations Committee for public review and public vote, and there should be a finance committee to raise the revenue. They didn't call it the finance committee, but a revenue committee to raise the money to pay the bills.

This bill meets its constitutional responsibility. This is the bill that funds the Federal Government for fiscal year 2014. We are a little late, but we have gotten the job done, and we have done that job with due diligence, starting with President Obama giving the Congress his budget.

Remember, the President proposes, the Congress disposes. We took the President's budget request, and we held our due diligence hearings. However, we faced a real problem. The Budget Committee, which sets the overall cap on discretionary spending, had not passed that. Many said you must have a budget. Thanks to the leadership of Senator MURRAY, through hard work, we voted on a marathon budget bill that overwhelmingly passed in March. I was so optimistic. I thought: Great, the Budget Committee is done. They have an April 15 deadline. They are going to go right over to the House and begin negotiations, and we will get our allocation with our cap. Remember, we have a cap on discretionary spending. We cannot be wild spenders.

However, it was not meant to be. There are those in the Congress, in the Senate, who did not allow the Budget Committee to meet. Some 22 times Senator MURRAY asked to go to conference. We were delayed. We missed our October 1 deadline. We did not bring up our individual bills. But we did have all our bills marked up in full committee in full view by August 1. That is what we operated on.

Then in the fall, when we did get our budget, we did get our discretionary spending and a very stringent deadline. On December 20 we began to move to work with the House to come up with an agreement.

We did. We worked across the aisle, and I thank the Senator from Alabama, my vice chairman, for helping me create the environment. Our mutual respect for each other enabled us to work in a mutual way to move our bill forward.

We reached across the dome to the House Members. We have worked together, and we have finished the bill. We brought to the floor what I think people could vote for. Yesterday it passed the House with 359 votes, with only 67 votes against it. I hope we have a successful margin today. These efforts show that we Democrats and Republicans can work together for the good of the country; that we can avoid drama politics with cliffhangers and fiscal cliffs; we can avoid shutdowns; we can avoid government on autopilot.

Most of all, those are process arguments. I did not come to be a member of the appropriations committee to be a process guru. Process gets you to the objective you seek, and the objective that I seek is to make sure that the United States of America is the best country in the world; that we lead the world in demonstrating American exceptionalism; that the greatest deliberative body continues to deliberate rather than delay; that the greatest country in the world, through American exceptionalism, knows how to resolve conflict, which we were able to do.

We compromised without any side capitulating on principles—give and take on money, give and take on policy. But that is what America is, give and take.

We were able to do that. At the same time, when I say the greatest country in the world, we ensured national security. We met compelling human need. We continued the opportunity ladder that enabled my family to rise as an immigrant family, and the family of the Presiding Officer to rise as an immigrant family. The Senator from Texas, he speaks so eloquently, often, and frequently about his father. We need an opportunity ladder in this country, and we have it in this bill.

We also wanted to make sure that we have jobs today and are looking for those investments in research and development for jobs tomorrow. But we will never forget our veterans. We have money in this bill for adequate funding for veterans health care, fixing the disability backlog. I know earlier in this debate the COLA for disabled military retirees and survivors of working age was raised. We have fixed that, waiting for a comprehensive solution later on in the year.

I think we have a bill that meets the test of working to ensure America's exceptionalism, protecting our national security, continuing that great opportunity ladder that made the United States of America great. At the same time, we made those public investments; we were a frugal committee that kept an eye on public debt.

I urge my colleagues to pass this bill.

There have been many accolades for me today. I thank you for them. This is a committee. This bill is not about a ''me.'' Behind a ''me'' there is a whole lot of ''we.'' Working on a bipartisan basis, I thank my vice chairman, the Senator from Alabama, Mr. SHELBY, for being a gentleman of the old school, meaning courteous and civil. He was insistent, he was persistent on those priorities that he represented, and also on keeping that frugal eye that he is known for. But we were able to work together to create a climate in our committee where there was confidence that everybody could be at the table and everybody could have their say.

I thank his staff for their professionalism: Bill Duhnke, Dana Wade, Chris Ford, Jane Lee, and Shelby Begany.

My own staff were no slouches either, and I thank Chuck Kieffer, Gabrielle Batkin, Melissa Zimmerman, Brigid Houton, Vince Morris, Kali Matalon, and Eve Goldsher who helped.

But also, all of us had fantastic subcommittee staff, and that staff has backed those subcommittee chairmen. They worked every single day since December 20, with the exception of Christmas Eve and Christmas day.

Now we are at the end of this journey. As we conclude and vote on the omnibus, the consolidated appropriations bill, I hope the overwhelming majority of the Senate votes yes. Then, later on this month we will hear President Obama's State of the Union. He will give us his budget. We are going to start all over again with the same atmosphere of respect, openness, and due diligence.

Madam President, I know there are just minutes left before the vote. If there is no objection, I yield back the time and urge the Senate vote.

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 motion to

concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3547, Space Launch Liability Indemnification Extension Act and the Omnibus Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

Harry Reid, Barbara A. Mikulski, Benjamin L. Cardin, Christopher A. Coons, Patrick J. Leahy, Brian Schatz, Jack Reed, Tom Udall, Jeanne Shaheen, Tim Kaine, Patty Murray, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Mark Udall, Tom Harkin, Mark Begich, Mary L. Landrieu.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent the mandatory quorum call has been waived. The question is, Is it the sense of Senate that debate on the motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3547 shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 72, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 12 Leg.]

YEAS—72

Alexander	Franken	Moran
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Baldwin	Hagan	Murphy
Baucus	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Hatch	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Blunt	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Boozman	Isakson	Sanders
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Burr	King	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kirk	Shelby
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Landrieu	Tester
Casey	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Coats	Levin	Udall (NM)
Cochran	Manchin	Vitter
Collins	Markey	Warner
Coons	McCaskill	Warren
Donnelly	Menendez	Whitehouse
Durbin	Merkley	Wicker
Feinstein	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—26

Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Corker	Heller	Risch
Cornyn	Inhofe	Roberts
Crapo	Johanns	Rubio
Cruz	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Enzi	Lee	Sessions
Fischer	McCain	Thune
Flake	McConnell	Toomey
Graham	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Chambliss	Coburn

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 72, the nays are 26. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

Cloture having been invoked, the motion to refer falls as being inconsistent with cloture.

Under the previous order, the motion to concur with an amendment is withdrawn. All postcloture time is yielded back.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to concur.

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second? There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 72, nays 26, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 13 Leg.]

YEAS—72

Alexander	Gillibrand	Moran
Ayotte	Graham	Murkowski
Baldwin	Hagan	Murphy
Baucus	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Hatch	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Blunt	Hirono	Reid
Booker	Hoeven	Rockefeller
Boozman	Isakson	Sanders
Boxer	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Brown	Kaine	Schumer
Cantwell	King	Shaheen
Cardin	Kirk	Shelby
Carper	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Casey	Landrieu	Tester
Coats	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Cochran	Levin	Udall (NM)
Collins	Manchin	Vitter
Coons	Markey	Warner
Donnelly	McCaskill	Warren
Durbin	Menendez	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Merkley	Wicker
Franken	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—26

Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Burr	Heller	Risch
Corker	Inhofe	Roberts
Cornyn	Johanns	Rubio
Crapo	Johnson (WI)	Scott
Cruz	Lee	Sessions
Enzi	McCain	Thune
Fischer	McConnell	Toomey
Flake	Paul	

NOT VOTING—2

Chambliss	Coburn

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion to concur in the House amendment to the Senate amendment to H.R. 3547 is agreed to.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I move to reconsider the vote and I move to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR A CORRECTION IN THE ENROLLMENT OF H.R. 3547

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report H. Con. Res. 74 by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 74) providing for a correction in the enrollment of H.R. 3547.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the concurrent resolution is agreed to and the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

FUNCTIONING OF THE SENATE

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I would like to continue the discussion about the description of the Senate as a deliberative body and continue to echo the call for the distinguished minority leader for a return to a functional Senate. I have spoken on this issue before. I think it is best to go back to the Constitution and the people who wrote the Constitution for an understanding of what was intended when the Senate was set up. So I do not intend to dwell on the use of the so-called nuclear option related to the filibuster.

The reason I am not going to spend my time on the nuclear option today as in previous speeches is the majority leader claims the Senate's dysfunction is related to some unprecedented use of filibusters. I think that has been thoroughly debunked. This claim is directly refuted by the very source he has pointed to, the Congressional Research Service.

More importantly, it has been debunked by fact checkers in important media sources in America. Yet, as we know, the Senate is dysfunctional beyond a doubt. To get to the bottom of how and, more importantly, why the Senate is not functioning, we must have a clear understanding of just how the Senate is supposed to function. As I just said, we should turn to the Constitution.

For an understanding of what the Constitution means, there is no better source for this than going back to the Federalist Papers. I have referenced the Federalist Papers before on this subject, but it is worth the detail about what the Framers of the Constitution had in mind when the Senate was created.

Federalist Paper 62, which is usually attributed to the Father of the Constitution, James Madison, begins to lay out the rationale for how the Senate is to operate. He mentioned that the number of Members and the length of terms are different between the House and Senate. Then he said this—but before I quote, I hope you understand that when something was written in 1787 and 1788, they use a little different form of English than what we use. But it is pretty clear what they intended to say about explaining the difference between the House and the Senate. So here begins my quote of James Madison:

> In order to form an accurate judgment on both of these points, it will be proper to inquire into the purposes which are to be answered by a Senate; and in order to ascertain these, it will be necessary to review the inconveniences which a Republic must suffer from the want of such an institution.

End of that quote, but I will have several other quotes from the Federalist Papers. In this specific quote, in

other words, Madison is going to tell us the purpose of the Senate, starting with the problems a Republic would face without a Senate and how the Senate is designed to correct those problems. As we hear from Madison about how our legislative process is supposed to work, I would encourage my colleagues to think about major legislation that has been considered in the Senate in recent years.

In fact, arguably the most major bill that has passed in recent years, President Obama's health care law, serves as one example. When that law was considered, one party held all political branches of government: the Presidency, the House of Representatives, and even had a supermajority in the Senate. That means they could run the Senate like the House, without the need to compromise with any in the minority.

At that particular time, my party was then and still is in the minority. We are now dealing with daily problems caused by the way the health care law was written, which is something to keep in mind as Madison describes in these coming quotes. The problems the Senate was designed to prevent, here is the first problem Madison discusses. It is a fairly long quote from the Federalist. First he says:

First. It is a misfortune incident to republican government, though in less degree than to other governments, that those who administer it may forget their obligations to their constituents, and prove unfaithful to their important trust. In this point of view, a senate, as a second branch of the legislative assembly, distinct from, and dividing the power with, a first, must be in all cases a salutary check on the government. It doubles the security to the people, by requiring the concurrence of two distinct bodies in schemes of usurpation or perfidy, where the ambition or corruption of one would otherwise be sufficient. This is a precaution founded on such clear principles, and now so well understood in the United States, that it would be more than superfluous to enlarge on it.

Then Madison goes on:

I will barely remark, that as the improbability of sinister combinations will be in proportion to the dissimilarity in the genius of the two bodies, it must be politic to distinguish them from each other by every circumstance which will consist with a due harmony in all proper measures, and with the genuine principles of republican government.

I see it this way: In other words, Madison is saying having a second Chamber of Congress designed to operate differently from the House makes it less likely that a partisan agenda that does not reflect the views of Americans will pass. That is not a function the Senate currently performs, as it has been run on a purely partisan term since 2007.

For example, we will recall that the President's health care proposal did not enjoy widespread public support. Yet it passed the Senate along strictly partisan lines with little input sought or accepted from the minority party. In fact, before a final bill could be passed reconciling the House and Senate bills, a special election was held in the liberal State of Massachusetts, resulting in an election of an opponent of the health care reform proposal.

Instead of moderating the proposal based upon public will and doing it maybe just a little bit so it could attract even one Republican vote, the House passed a draft Senate bill, then they used a budget tool called reconciliation to ram another bill through the Senate with a simply majority to change items in the first bill.

That is not how Madison intended a bicameral Congress to work. The next point Madison makes:

Secondly. The necessity of a senate is not less indicated by the propensity of all single and numerous assemblies to yield to the impulse of sudden and violent passions, and to be seduced by factious leaders into intemperate and pernicious resolutions. Examples on this subject might be cited without number; and from proceedings within the United States, as well as from the history of other nations. But a position that will not be contradicted, need not be proved. All that need be remarked is, that a body which is to correct this infirmity ought itself to be free from it, and consequently ought to be less numerous. It ought, moreover, to possess great firmness, and consequently ought to hold its authority by a tenure of considerable duration.

That describes what he thought the Senate should be, what the Senate is. But my point is, the Senate is not functioning that way. In other words, if we have just one legislative Chamber with a large number of Members, it is likely to make laws hastily based on a partisan agenda without thinking through all the long-term consequences. A hastily passed partisan agenda that ignores the long-term consequences, does that not remind you of the health care law? Remember how then-Speaker PELOSI said the House had to pass a bill to find out what was in it?

They were in such a rush they could not be bothered to read it.

The Senate is intended, as Madison just said, as I quoted, to be smaller, to be more deliberate, and to be less partisan. Imagine if the Senate had been allowed to operate in a deliberative fashion and craft a truly bipartisan health care proposal. If that had happened, we certainly could have come up with something more workable than the current law.

Madison continues his explanation of the rationale for the Senate:

Thirdly. Another defect to be supplied by a senate lies in a want of due acquaintance with the objects and principles of legislation. It is not possible that an assembly of men called for the most part from pursuits of a private nature, continued in appointment for a short time, and led by no permanent motive to devote the intervals of public occupation to a study of the laws, the affairs, and the comprehensive interests of their country, should, if left wholly to themselves, escape a variety of important errors in the exercise of their legislative trust. It may be affirmed, on the best grounds, that no small share of the present embarrassments of America is to be charged on the blunders of our governments; and that these have proceeded from the heads rather than the hearts of most of the authors of them. What indeed are all the repealing, explaining, and amending laws, which fill and disgrace our voluminous codes, but so many monuments of deficient wisdom; so many impeachments exhibited by each succeeding against each preceding session; so many admonitions to the people, of the value of those aids which may be expected from a well-constituted Senate?

A good government implies two things: first, fidelity to the object of government, which is the happiness of the people; secondly, a knowledge of the means by which that object can best be attained. Some governments are deficient in both these qualities; most governments are deficit in the first. I scruple not to assert, that in American governments too little attention has been paid to the last. The federal Constitution avoids this error; and what merits particular notice, it provides for the last in a mode which increases the security for the first.

That is a long quote. But Madison is essentially saying that the House is to be composed of a representative slice of American citizens while the Senate is supposed to be composed of individuals who have more experience and approach public policy more thoughtfully. I am sure many people might question whether individuals in the House or even in this Senate match those descriptions today that Madison lays out.

But it is true that the rules of the House allow for new ideas to be quickly translated into legislation.

By contrast, the process in the Senate has historically been slower and more deliberative to refine those ideas into law that can stand the test of time. Note that Madison complains about all the ''repealing, explaining, and amending laws'' that have had to be passed by the unicameral legislatures of that time—of the early days of our Republic.

Our early experiences with passing bills quickly, without thinking things through, led to the understanding that we should take our time and get it right in the first place.

Getting back to Madison and those quotes I gave, that is what the Senate is supposed to do. Failure of the Senate to take the time, examine, and take time to revise legislation is quite obvious. It results in bad laws that don't work.

We now have a situation with the health care law where the President claims the authority to unilaterally suspend or reinterpret parts of the law that are clearly unworkable.

That is very similar to the embarrassing situation Madison refers to, to have a constant stream of ''repealing, explaining, and amending laws,'' except the President is doing all of the repealing, all of the explaining, and all of the amending, unilaterally.

Our constitutional system is not designed to pass a lot of legislation quickly, and that can be frustrating, particularly to any majority party anxious to enact its agenda.

Still, our deliberative process is a design and not a flaw. Based on experience, the Framers of our Constitution

determined that it was better to get it right the first time than to subject the American people to the upheavals of laws that need to be constantly amended or repealed. The House was designed to act quickly. The Senate was designed to be a deliberative body, implying a slower approach to legislating.

The fundamental problem is that the current majority leader is trying to run the Senate like the House, and the Senate was not designed to be operated in that way. Sure—with the majority then and now the majority, the same majority when they had 60 votes—it was possible to ram legislation through the Senate without any deliberation, but that is no longer the reality.

When the majority leader brings a bill to the floor, routinely blocking amendments and then rapidly moves to end consideration of the bill, that means the Senate is presented with a measure as a fait accompli and has to take it or, the opposite, leave it.

In other words, the majority leadership wants their agenda approved, no questions asked, or nothing at all.

The fact is, if the majority leader allowed the Senate to deliberate, we could get a lot more done than we have been doing. Sure, we might not get as many laws passed as some people might like. The full Senate, through its deliberation, may alter legislation somewhat from how the majority leadership would prefer. Still, we would be able to accomplish some important legislation. But, no, that is not acceptable, we are told. One week ago today there was a strong debate on that very issue. For all the talk about getting things done, the majority leadership has demonstrated repeatedly with cloture motion after cloture motion that it would rather grind this body to a halt than allow the slightest alteration of their agenda.

The latest message from the majority leadership is that they will respect the rights of Senators to offer an amendment only if they have certain assurances about the final outcome. The senior Senator from New York implied that is the way it used to be done.

Well, I want to assure that Senator that in the 33 years I have served in the Senate, it has never been done that way. I have managed a lot of bills over the years, and if I had tried to impose that requirement, I would have been laughed at, to say the least.

Since when did duly elected Senators have to negotiate for the right to represent their constituents? An open amendment process should be the default situation, not something that is granted at the sufferance of the majority party leadership.

We must get back then to what we call in the Senate regular order. I would say do things the way Madison intended. That means an open amendment process without preconditions or special limitations on what amendments will be allowed.

Cloture shouldn't even be contemplated until after a substantial number of amendments have been processed. That was the standard practice when the Senate got things done, when we accomplished things.

Again, Madison describes a Senate that is to represent all Americans, not only one party. It was designed to be more thoughtful and deliberative and, whether we like it or not, slower than the House of Representatives.

The Senate's purpose is to make sure that Congress passes fewer but better laws. We saw what happened when the Senate was controlled entirely by one party while the voices of the minority party and the citizens they represented were ignored. We got a deeply flawed health care law and the American people are paying the price. Yet the majority leader insists on running the Senate as if he still has 60 votes, doesn't have to compromise, and even refuses to compromise. That is not how the authors of our Constitution intended the Senate to work and, of course, it isn't working.

The Senate is facing a crisis, and the only way to solve it is to restore the Senate as a deliberative body envisioned by the authors of the Constitution and express it in an explanatory way in the Federalist Papers.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

SENATE FUNCTIONING

Mrs. BOXER. I appreciate the fact that Senator GRASSLEY has given us his view of how the Senate ought to work. When the Senator says more deliberative and knowing how many filibusters have been supported on that side, that is what it says to me. As someone who didn't want to change the filibuster rules because I thought maybe we would come to some agreement, and we wouldn't be facing historic numbers of filibusters, let me say what the majority leader did was the right thing. It was the right thing.

I have been in Washington a long time. I came to the House in 1983. The Senate worked well. It isn't working well.

What the majority leader said is how can we have a President, be he or she Republican or Democratic, how can we have that President function without a team in place, a team, their team. One person can't run a country; they need a team. One Senator can't run our offices; we need a team.

My God, what if we were told that we couldn't put our team together unless we had a vote that wasn't a majority vote, it had to be a supermajority? We would never get anything done. We would be running in circles. It would be very difficult.

It sounds to me as if my friend wants to go back to the bad old days where we would have all of these nominees objected to, stalled. It took 154 days to get the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

My view, having been here, loved this institution, loved my work, and enjoyed my colleagues on both sides of the aisle, the Senate has changed because the parties have moved so far apart. Let's call it what it is. In my eyes Republicans have moved so far to the right that, unlike years ago when I came, it is very difficult to get anything done legislatively.

That is why today is one of those bright, rare moments. My hat is off to Senator MIKULSKI, Senator SHELBY, and their House counterparts. We actually got something done. Half of the Republicans joined all of the Democrats to pass an Omnibus appropriations bill. This is a good thing for America. No side got everything it wanted, we know that. Do you know what the American people received? They got compromise, they got security, and they got stability. In the near future we are not going to have shutdowns, shouting matches, and debates through the night on whether we should have a government.

We need more legislating such as this. That is why I so look forward to getting the Water Resources Development Act done. This is so important to so many of our States. We need to do flood control. We need to do adaptation. We need to make sure there is recreation on our wetlands and so on. We need dredging in our ports. Those are the economic engines of our Nation.

We have a bill we passed. Over in the House they have a bill. We are now in the middle of trying to conference the differences, and I am very hopeful we are going to get it done. Senator VITTER and I are working together to get it done. It is a little slower than we would like in terms of progress, but I am convinced we are going to have a bill before this body. We need to take care of the people's business.

Guess what. The President of the United States has a right to get his team in place. It is as simple as it is.

The people know it. I go home and the people say: Hooray, thank God you people are doing something. You are getting people confirmed.

Then we have the courts. We have courts where the judgeships are vacant. Justice delayed is justice denied. We need those judges in their places. The Senator from Iowa, I remember, made a big, eloquent speech about how we wanted to ''pack'' the courts. Anyone who knows anything about history knows pack the courts means wanting to add more judges and put your people in it. It doesn't mean filling vacancies. I think he got off that. But that was something to listen to.

We need to take care of the people's business and not play politics depending on who is in the White House. Unemployment insurance was a perfect example of this.

Under George W. Bush, between putting in place the unemployment insurance and extending it, we did it five times, no offsets. Now all of a sudden the Republicans—people are struggling. I am stunned that we couldn't come together and extend unemployment insurance for the 1.5 million people right

now and the 250,000 Californians included in that 1.5 million who have run out of hope.

The Republicans said: Pay for it, even though the deficit has been cut in half. They have suddenly noticed the deficit. After George Bush it was $1.4 trillion. They put two wars on the credit card, and they put a huge tax cut for millionaires on the credit card. Oh, no problem. Now they have discovered the deficit even though it has been cut in half by this President. Oh, we have to pay for it.

OK, we said, we have to pay for it, we will pay for it. We gave them an offset that we took out of PAUL RYAN's budget. It wasn't good enough for them. Then they said: We want amendments. We have to have amendments, just give us some amendments. I will give you some unemployment insurance for these struggling people.

Then HARRY REID: Twenty amendments, OK; 5 a side and 5 side-by-sides, 20 amendments.

Oh, no, that wasn't good enough.

It is childish. People are struggling. They are deciding whether they can put heat on in their house. They are wondering whether they can pay the rent, whether they are going to lose their homes, whether they are going to have to beg other family members for their help. This is outrageous. Outrageous.

Income inequality is outrageous.

Does the Presiding Officer know that 400 families are worth more in wealth than 150 million Americans? Let me say that again: Four hundred families in America are worth more than half the United States of America. And when there were tax cuts for those people, I never heard one word from one Republican about a pay-for. The deficit soared. They all voted to go to war. No problem. But we want to help these families who are desperate—middle-class families, people who have paid into the workers unemployment insurance fund, people who are looking for work because they can't get that extended unemployment unless they can prove that—and no. Nobody is home over there.

I appreciate that some of my colleagues made a speech about poverty. Great. How about doing something about it? How about doing something about it, and not just speechifying? Where are they in raising the minimum wage? I don't know, maybe they will come with us. I don't see it. I really don't see it. I hope so. I pray so. I do. So far, I don't see it.

In the last Presidential election of 2012, the Republican leader said his top priority was defeating President Obama. That is what the Republican leader said—not working for the people of this country, not passing legislation to make their life better, not moving forward and making sure the air we breathe is clean, the water we drink is safe, not making sure our kids have a good education and workers get job training—no. Top priority: Defeating President Obama. President Obama won; so why don't you wake up and smell the roses and understand we need to work together. You have to accept reality.

Look. I have had my candidates in the past win and lose. I have been here through tough elections. We lost the Senate, then we won the Senate. We lost the House, then we won the House. We won the Presidency, then we lost it. Guess what. I had to understand that when it comes to legislating, we put that aside. We fight hard during an election, but once it is over you don't carry that over. You work together.

But too many on the other side are politically motivated. All they want to do is hurt our President, day in and day out criticizing him endlessly, not working with him. He has offered that olive branch over and over, whether it is on economic recovery, jobs, health care, the environment, income inequality—even foreign policy—day after day.

Here is the thing you never hear from the other side, so I am going to talk about it tonight. When President Obama took office, the economy was losing over 700,000 jobs a month. Now we have added 8 million private-sector jobs in the past 45 months. How does that compare to George W. Bush? After 8 years in office, President Bush's record was that we lost 665,000 private-sector jobs. So far we have added 8 million private-sector jobs in the past 45 months.

When President Obama took office—we remember those days, frightening days with the stock market collapsing. Now the stock market has gone up 10,000 points. That is unbelievable. The GDP—gross domestic product—was contracting at a rate of 8.3 percent in the fourth quarter of 2008 as we said goodbye to George W. Bush. Now we just learned that the GDP grew by 4.1 percent in the third quarter. Is this President satisfied? Are we? No. But have we turned it around? Yes. Does the President ever get one ounce of credit for any of this? No. No.

How about looking at our deficit. Let's look at that, something the Republicans claim is a very central part of it. This is it—a $1.4 trillion deficit down now to 680, going down to 560, and falling at the fastest rate in many, many years, just as health care costs are not rising the way they used to. Do you think we would hear one word about it from the other side? No. No.

Even on foreign policy, even on foreign policy, politics used to stop at the water's edge. Senator GRASSLEY has a historic perspective. I do too. Politics used to stop at the water's edge when it came to foreign policy. No more. No more.

But you would never know the deficit has been cut in half, and you would never know that 8 million private-sector jobs have been created if you listen to my friends on the other side because they can't give any credit to President Obama. But history will. History will.

The last thing I am going to talk about is health care. I listened to my colleague Senator CRUZ go after this President and the Democrats on health care. So let us look at a few things.

First fact: Even though we had a horrible roll-out of the health care site—not in California but the Federal site, healthcare.gov—and a couple of States had a horrible roll-out, let's put that aside. This is what we know.

There are more now, but I didn't have a chance to make a new chart. We are getting to 10 million Americans, but over 9 million Americans have new, secure health insurance; 3 million young adults have stayed on their parents insurance policies; 3.9 million are on Medicaid; and there are 2.1 million exchange plans, the private plans.

Let me show this another way on the private plans—the 2.1 million. Now we think it is more. It is a little bit more. Here we are. Very, very tough roll-out. Nothing worked. Now it is working, and it is spiking, and it is only going to get better.

But you wouldn't know that because Senator CRUZ keeps saying over and over: What have the Democrats in the Senate done to protect the people from ObamaCare? I have to protect the people from him because if he had his way, he would repeal ObamaCare. I ask you: What is going to happen to those young people if Senator CRUZ has his way and we repeal ObamaCare? What happens to the 3 million young adults? They are back on their own. They have no insurance. They are back at the emergency room. What happens to those on expanded Medicaid? Forget it. What happens to the exchanges? They would be gone.

So while Senator CRUZ says we have done nothing to protect the people, the opposite is true. We stand in support of the people—the people's right to get affordable health care. Do we have the perfect answer on every front? No. Do we have to make corrections? Of course.

We had a meeting with the President yesterday. He is reaching out his hand to the Republicans and Democrats. If we can fix this in any way and make it work better, we will.

Let's look at some of our other charts as far as what our Republican colleagues want to do when they say repeal ObamaCare. I am telling you, 400,000 Californians have enrolled, and now it is 500,000. It is 500,000 Californians who have enrolled in an exchange plan through—coveredCA.com. This is working in my State. It is working.

I am not going to allow Senator CRUZ to take the benefits away from my people who are writing me letters—and I have some of them here, and I will read a little bit of those stories.

John Nunnemacher is a 43-year-old freelance graphic artist from San Jose, and the last time he had health insurance was 15 years ago, when his employer paid for coverage. But as of January 1, John is covered by a plan he can finally afford. This is what he told the San Jose Mercury News:

> I hoped this day would come. I worried that it wouldn't. And I'm very glad that it finally has.

So he is happy, and I am not going to let Senator CRUZ take away his insurance. Let's be clear. Let's be clear. He waited for a long time, and I am not going back. We can't go back to those days when there was no insurance for our young people. We can't go back to the days when being a woman was a preexisting condition, and you got charged double that of a man. We can't go back to the days where kids were thrown off their parents' policies. We just can't go back.

Amy Torregrossa, 27, is from San Francisco. She had been without insurance since July, when coverage through her partner's company ended because he changed jobs. She has a congenital heart defect and a history of high blood pressure. She no longer runs because she says ''if I twist my ankle or get hit by a car . . . any doctor visit is so expensive.''

She signed up on Covered California for a silver plan costing $310 a month. She made sure her cardiologist was in the insurer's network and plans to schedule a checkup for early this year.

Amy, I am not going to let anyone take this away from you. I am not.

Michelle Strong, 57, is a self-employed product designer. For many years she could not afford any insurance at all because of a false-positive—a false positive—test for lupus, which incorrectly flagged her as having a preexisting condition. For the past 15 years she could only afford catastrophic insurance. Now, thanks to a tax credit, she will pay $55 a month, with no deductible, and a $3 copay. Here is what she said:

> It just blows my mind that I can get health insurance at this price. I can finally afford checkups, tests, and age-related visits.

Michelle, I am not going to let anyone take your insurance away from you. You deserve it.

Elaine Post, 64, from West Hills, CA. She told CNN:

> When I first got laid off, I tried to get private insurance through the big companies. They all rejected me . . . wanted to charge me really, really high premiums for not very good insurance.

Now Elaine has coverage through a bronze plan through Covered California that costs $461 a month.

Elaine, you are going to keep your insurance and we are going to protect you.

Judith Silverstein, 49, is a Californian who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2007. Her family helps her pay the $750 monthly cost of her existing plan—which she only had because of Federal law requiring that insurers who provide employer-based insurance continue to offer coverage if the employer goes out of business, as hers did; otherwise, she would be uninsured because of her MS. ''I researched the options,'' she says. ''Nobody's going to sell you insurance in the individual market if you have MS.'' But next year she will get a subsidy that will get her a silver level plan for $50 a month.

Last summer Ellen Holzman and Meredith Vezina, a married couple in San Diego County, got kicked off their long-term Kaiser health plan, for which they had been paying more than $1,300 a month. When they applied for a plan with a new insurer, they couldn't get coverage because Ellen disclosed that she might have carpal tunnel syndrome. Through Covered California, they found a plan through Sharp Healthcare that will cover them both with a subsidy for a total premium of $142 a month. Holzman says, ''If not for the Affordable Care Act, our ability to get insurance would be very limited, if we could get it at all.''

Jason Noble, 44, who has his own property management firm in Southern California, found a gold plan that will cover his wife and their three children for a little less than $1,300 a month. That is slightly more than they would be paying this year for the plan they had in 2013, but the benefits are much greater, including pediatric dental coverage. Their family deductible will fall from $3,400 to zero. Last year, the family had a health scare that ran them $1,800 in out-of-pocket expenses, but next year, a similar event would cost them nothing. ''It's definitely a good deal,'' Noble says.

Barbara Neff of Santa Monica, who had been stuck in a bad plan because of a preexisting condition, said she is relieved that under Obamacare, she will get life-saving preventive care at no cost. Neff said, ''I have been paying for my mammograms out of pocket, and that's $400 to $450 per year,'' Neff says. ''That type of care is 100 percent covered under this new policy.''

Rakesh Rikhi of San Jose, CA, paid $950 a month last year to insure himself, his wife and two children with Kaiser. Through Covered California, he will be able to get a similar Kaiser plan that saves his family $400 a month.

Tim Wilsbach, a 40-year-old TV editor who lives in Culver City with his family, had been paying for a bare bones policy with an $11,000 deductible for himself and his 4-year-old son, and another policy with a $5,000 deductible for his wife. Wilsbach checked out his options on the Covered California website, and was pleased to find a plan for the whole family that offers broader coverage, a much lower $4,000 deductible and a more affordable monthly premium. ''Our premium went down, not quite 100 bucks, and just looking through what the plan covers versus what used to be covered, yeah, I'm quite happy about it,'' Wilsbach said.

Allan Pacela, from Santa Maria, CA, is a retired engineer on Medicare. His wife was insured through Cigna, under a group plan offered by her husband's engineers' society, and because of preexisting conditions, could not leave the plan even though premiums had gone up to $20,000 per year, because no other plan would take her. This year, her insurer canceled her entire plan, leaving her with no insurance. ''So we turned to Obamacare,'' Allan told his local paper. ''She found it simple and easy to sign up through an agent in a 10-minute phone call. She obtained their best plan, providing much, much better coverage than in the past. . . . My wife would not have insurance coverage at all as of January 1, if not for Obamacare. And, here's the kicker—we now are saving $8,000 per year, for a very much better plan.''

Megan Foster, from Kern County, CA, said, ''My mom is finally able to get health insurance after being denied for so long because of her Crohn's disease and epilepsy, and it's for an affordable price. She works full time but her job doesn't offer benefits and she can't work without her medicine. It's not a perfect solution, but I am happy that my mom doesn't have to choose any more between medicine or groceries.''

Lori Greenstein Bremner is a cancer survivor, a single mother and a self-employed real estate agent in Sonoma, CA. Before the Affordable Care Act, she struggled to obtain and afford health insurance because of her pre-existing condition. Now Lori says, ''In January, for the first time since my diagnosis 36 years ago, I will have an individual health plan that offers quality coverage for me and my family. I will save $628 every month on premiums. Best of all—I wasn't even asked if I've ever had cancer.''

Mr. President, I just want to say that when you listen to the naysayers and the bad news bears and everyone who comes here and starts criticizing, you should get to the bottom of it. Look at this 9 million number, headed toward 10 million, and understand what is happening in our Nation. People are getting health coverage.

Here is the deal. The way we did it, ObamaCare, is just like it was in Massachusetts when Governor Romney put it through. That is where the ideas came from. We did not do another plan. We did that type of plan, and it is working in Massachusetts where I believe 95 percent of the people are covered.

Now, I will close with a couple of other protections that are in effect, so that you can see why, when TED CRUZ and my other Republican colleagues and friends come to the floor who want to repeal ObamaCare, I'm saying: No way. You want to work with us to make it better? Absolutely. But I am not going to let my constituents lose their insurance. You want to tell your constituents they can lose their insurance, that is your business, but don't mess with California.

Look here: Already in effect, 3 million young adults insured through their parents' plans; 71 million Americans are getting free preventive care, such as checkups and birth control and immunizations.

You want to take that away from Texans, be my guest. You are not going to do it because we are not going to let you do it.

Health reforms in effect: 17 million kids with preexisting conditions, such as asthma and diabetes, cannot be denied coverage. Insurers cannot cancel

your health insurance because you get sick. No lifetime limits on coverage. No annual limits on coverage.

You can't deny coverage or charge more for preexisting conditions. You can't charge women more than men. You can't put annual limits on a plan.

Women. Women. Two-thirds of women are on the minimum wage. Two-thirds of minimum wage workers are women. So if you don't support raising the minimum wage, you are taking on the women, and that is a fact. They are not students. They are not youngsters.

Look. Women now can get contraception so they can plan their families. Well-women visits, STD screening, breastfeeding support, domestic violence screening, gestational diabetes screening, HIV screening, HPV testing, this is all happening because of ObamaCare.

So I say to anyone within the sound of my voice—if I haven't put you to sleep—when anyone gets on the floor and starts complaining about ObamaCare and wanting to repeal it, just say to them: Why do you want to hurt the people of this country who have waited so long to get health insurance, who have suffered so much, who have gone bankrupt because somebody had the misfortune of getting cancer? Why do you want to go back to those days? That is not good for America. Just because it was President Obama who signed the bill?

The Affordable Care Act is now called ObamaCare. What a wonderful thing for this President. Anyone who stands and says they want to take away these benefits is hurting the American people and I am going to collect these stories and I am going to come to the floor and read them. This is about real people getting secure insurance for the first time in their lives, and it is affordable. No one is going to turn back the clock. We can't go back to those days.

So we have to deal with making this health care bill work the best it can. We have to work on income inequality. We have to come back and still work for unemployment insurance extension for the 1.5 million Americans who desperately need help. We have to work on making sure there is a bright future for our families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

PENSACOLA NAVAL AIR STATION

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I am going to get to another issue in a moment, but there is a special anniversary in Florida I wish to commemorate, and it is Naval Air Station Pensacola which is now celebrating its centennial anniversary. NAS Pensacola, as it is more commonly known, is a Florida institution and is known as the Cradle of Naval Aviation.

The first naval airplane flight from Pensacola took place on February 2, 1914. Over 325,000 alums have gone on to bravely serve with honor in our wars, and they have also delighted crowds across the country as part of the Blue Angels. They have made their mark on the Florida Panhandle and on our Nation's defense in the process.

In fact, one of our colleagues, JOHN MCCAIN, trained there. He of course went on to serve our country heroically and admirably and then has also served us in the Senate. Others who have passed through there include many NASA astronauts. Alan Shepard, Neil Armstrong, among others, began their aviation careers at NAS Pensacola, and of course eventually went on to become astronauts and made an immeasurable impact on American and world history.

NAS Pensacola is also the final resting place for thousands of fallen warriors at the Barrancas National Cemetery, a place which truly humbles visitors and reminds us to be thankful that America has been blessed with so many courageous patriots throughout our history.

Today there are over 17,000 service men and women who continue their service to America at NAS Pensacola, and there are an additional 7,000 civilians who support the base's operations. They are part of a real community, where parents are raising their kids, and where many veterans who once served there decide to make it their permanent home. We are proud of this in the Florida Panhandle. It makes our State a better place.

So as the celebrations get underway this weekend, I join our State and our entire Nation in celebrating 100 years of military excellence at NAS Pensacola. We truly give thanks to all the brave men and women who have made this military installation the crown jewel of our national defense and contributed to America's exceptional history.

OBAMACARE TAXPAYER BAILOUT PREVENTION ACT

I also wish to take a moment to talk about an emerging problem with the health care law which has only begun to filter out in the news cycle but bears watching in the days and weeks to come.

As we all know, a key part of the health care law is the exchanges, which are theoretically supposed to be competitive private marketplaces where individuals can go online either through their State exchange or the Federal exchange and buy health insurance at a competitive price, and they can choose between different plans. That is the idea behind a health exchange.

In and of itself, the idea of an exchange is not a bad one, if appropriately administered and it doesn't come accompanied with all the other things the health care law came accompanied with. But there is a problem with the way the exchanges are now designed which has not yet received the attention it deserves but, I promise, we are going to be hearing a lot about in the days to come.

The technical term is risk corridors. What it basically means is companies that participate in an exchange or a marketplace of insurance are told there is a reinsurance plan in place which will protect them in case of loss or catastrophic loss.

For example, let's say you are an insurance provider and go into a marketplace, and then it turns out the demographics of the groups that signed up for your plans didn't turn out the right way or there was an enormous spike in health care costs, whatever it may be, and you suffered dramatic losses. A risk corridor is in place to protect you.

The reason is, No. 1, a safety net per se for the industry on a short-term basis. The reason that is important is because we want patients' bills to be paid and their providers' bills to be paid. The problem is applying that to the health care exchange is going to prove extraordinarily problematic.

What has happened over the last few weeks, as we predicted would happen, is not enough young people are signing up through the exchanges. In order for health insurance to work, you have to have enough younger and healthier people on it. If you have a health insurance plan largely composed of people guaranteed to get sick, economically it doesn't work. There is no dispute about that.

In fact, by the administration's own statistics, they say at least 38 percent of the enrollees in the exchanges had to be under the age of 34 in order for the exchanges to work in an actuarially sound way.

So based on the assumption that was going to happen, insurance companies bid on these exchanges, offered a product and have begun to sign up people. The problem is so far that figure is not being met.

The numbers are just starting to come in. We don't know the full picture yet, but the trends are troubling.

No. 1, not enough people are signing up. The target goal is a total of about 7 million people or more by a deadline which has now been extended to March 31. The number is less than 2.2 million. There are still 8 weeks left or so, so we will see what happens, but the trends are not positive.

Here is an even more troubling trend: Only 30 percent of national enrollees are from that demographic I described. Only 30 percent are under the age of 34. In Florida, it is only 25 percent.

Here is the fundamental problem we have right now with the exchanges, beyond all the other ones we have already discussed ad nauseam: Not enough people are signing up and not enough people under the age of 34 are signing up.

The result is that the way this is trending now, the exchanges are becoming more like a high-risk pool and less like a true competitive exchange. Here is why that is problematic: If companies lose money, as they are going to if we look at these figures and as the companies themselves anticipate—in fact, in some of the early disclosures these companies are making,

we are starting to see the forecast of losses.

If these trends continue and companies lose money because not enough people under the age of 34 signed up for them and not enough people signed up, under the ObamaCare law they will be entitled to a payout from the high-risk pool. This is a program in place for the first 3 years of these exchanges.

What that means is a taxpayer-funded bailout of ObamaCare. For taxpayers of the United States, this means your money is going to go from your pocket into the pocket of these private companies.

What the private companies will tell us is: Look. We bid on this product when you said the rules were going to be this. But since then you changed the rules even more, and so what was already bad has gotten worse.

There is not enough awareness about this, but we are going to be hearing about it in the weeks to come. As we get closer to the reality that billions of dollars in taxpayers' money is going to be used to bail out these exchanges, there is going to be growing outrage around the country and people are going to want answers. I hope my colleagues are starting to think about what we need to do.

That is why I filed a bill in November called the ObamaCare Taxpayer Bailout Prevention Act. What it would do is eliminate this provision which allows for the tax-funded bailouts of these exchanges.

As we get closer to this problem, the numbers are as bad or worse than we anticipated. So in the months to come, here is what we can expect to see:

First, we can expect to see that companies are now going to say: We need our money. Under the law, we were promised this high-risk bailout. We signed up for it under that assumption. Now we need taxpayer money.

I predict the second thing we are going to see is as companies begin to prepare their filings for next year, some companies are going to decide that they are not participating in ObamaCare exchanges next year at all, which means less choice and less competition and, therefore, higher premiums. Other companies are going to say: We will participate but only at these premiums; and they are going to be significantly higher than the ones we have seen this year, meaning it will be even less affordable, meaning even less people under the age of 34 will sign up, meaning even more money will have to go from the taxpayer to bail out these exchanges.

We are still in mid-January and these numbers could change, but nobody realistically expects them to. In fact, I have yet to hear from anyone knowledgeable about this subject who has said to me: Oh, don't worry. In the next 8 weeks, another 5 million to 6 million will sign up and we are going to get to over 30 percent of national enrollees. We are going to get to over 38 percent of the people signing up being in the demographic of 34 or under.

So it is only mid-January. But I come to the floor to sound the alarm that this is coming so people across this country know we are weeks and months away from transferring potentially billions of dollars from taxpayers to private companies to bail out these exchanges. I promise you, this will not be the last time we hear about this.

I encourage my colleagues, as they go home on this recess and talk to people, get informed about this subject because we are going to be hearing a lot about it in the weeks and months to come. This is a very serious threat—to the law itself, by the way. This is unsustainable.

At a time that we have a $17 trillion debt, when so many Americans are struggling to find employment which pays them enough to live off of, when so many Americans have seen the jobs they once had disappear and cannot find a job to replace it, when so many Americans are struggling with a growing cost of living in every aspect of their lives—childcare, student loans, utility bills, you name it—to be told that at a time when all of these challenges are happening in the personal economies of so many people that billions of dollars of taxpayer money is going to go to bail out this law, there is going to be collective outrage across the political spectrum in this country and rightfully so.

Here is the last point I would make: If this law has to be bailed out, it is one more reason why it doesn't work. These exchanges are supposed to be private competitive marketplaces, where companies could actuarially and soundly price a product and sell it at an affordable rate. That is not where they are headed. We are headed toward a day soon, as early as next year—and we will see the filings this year—when companies are going to decide either not to participate or to participate but only if they can charge substantially higher premiums with higher copayments and higher deductibles; and, on top of that, the only way they will participate is if they are promised this bailout.

We are going to hear a lot about this in the weeks to come, and I encourage my colleagues—irrespective of how you feel about this law, I cannot imagine any of us believing we are at a time in our Nation's history, given the challenges we face now, where we should be bailing out this plan with taxpayer money being transferred to private companies to keep them in business.

That is where we are headed and we better be able to do something about it soon, because people are not going to stand for it.

I yield the floor.

THANKING MEMBERS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I take a moment to thank all the members of that committee for their hard work over the last year. At a time when there is obviously an enormous amount of divisiveness and partisanship here in the Senate, I am happy to report that by and large there has been a great deal of bipartisan effort being made in the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and I think very productive work as well.

(The remarks of Mr. SANDERS and Mr. BLUMENTHAL pertaining to the introduction of S. 1950 are located in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

THANKS TO PATRICK KILCUR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I spend long periods of time on the floor compared to most Senators. That is my job. In doing so, I get to know people more than probably a lot of people. Over these many years, I have talked about a Senate family, and it really is a Senate family and, for me, it really is my family. I know I am being way too protective, and a lot of people say it isn't my business, but that is how I feel. When people leave, I really feel badly because you get to know people and you feel comfortable with the people you know.

The reason I mention this today is because one of the people I have learned to really admire and appreciate and joke with and have a good time with is one of the Republican staff members who is leaving. His name is Patrick Kilcur. I have no idea whether I pronounced his name right, K-I-L-C-U-R. I really don't know the name very well, but I have known him for a long time. We call him Patrick. He is a Republican floor assistant. If I have an issue and there is not a Democratic floor person around, I go to him, and he always gives me the answer that is honest and truthful. That is how we are so well served by these people who fill these spots in this wonderful, historic Chamber.

Patrick came to the Senate from Pennsylvania. He is from Pennsylvania. He worked for a famous Pennsylvania Senator, Arlen Specter. He spent time working with him and worked his way here to the cloakroom and became a floor assistant as he is now. He is going to leave to go to work with one of my dear personal friends—Chris Dodd.

I asked Patrick to come spend a few minutes with me this week before he left and we had a nice visit. I talked about my relationship with Chris Dodd. I said what a good opportunity to be working for one of the great orators we have had during the time I have been in the Senate and one of the nicest people a person could get to know—Chris Dodd.

So Patrick will be missed here. I will miss him. I wish him the very best. He is always—I have to be very careful; I don't want to bring him any bad luck. He is engaged now. He is going to have a job. He can afford it. So I really wish him well. I will miss him, but I will say this: At least he has a first name. The people he works with, they don't even call him by his first name. They call him Duncan.

So, anyway, enough of that. I really will miss you. You have had such a

positive effect here. You are always happy, in spite of the pressure placed on you from people in the well: How should I vote? How much longer? Trying to get people here to go late—how much longer is it going to be? So thank you very much. You have been great, and I look forward to visiting with you and, hopefully, you and Dodd will let me watch one of those movies some time, because Chris Dodd is the leader of the Motion Picture Association of America.

THANKING THE PAGES

Mr. President, another short thing I wish to say. Over the years I have come to admire so very much our pages. They sacrifice to come here. It is not easy for them to come here and go to school for a semester, but they do. This school they go to is no soft school. It is hard. They start school at 6 a.m.—I think it is 6 o'clock—and they go for a couple of hours. I know they are supposed to get up around 5. It is such a good environment. We have gone out of our way to have a pleasant place for them to live, the so-called dorm. They have monitors who watch them so very closely. Their parents don't have to worry about them. It is a good experience. They see what happens on a daily basis in the bowels of government, the Senate, and they all go different ways. They are all juniors in high school. They will go back to their high school and then go on to college, but in their entire life they will never forget their experience here.

I went just for a few days when I was a junior in high school—maybe I was a senior; it was right after my junior year—to Boys State, and I made friends during the five days we spent there, and they are my friends even today, after all those many years ago, and that is the relationship these pages have developed.

So I say to them, thank you very much for the work you do.

I was walking out, as I do, this back door the last night or two, and I see one of the pages. They have a door open, and I see this list of stuff on the wall. So I say: What is that? What they have to know, among other things—each of us can be pretty—what is the right word—demanding, although I don't know if that is the right word. Senator MCCONNELL and I have these podiums here all the time, but we are the only two. So when a Senator comes to speak, they need a podium. But they have to get the right podium and the pages have to know, when a Senator wants to speak, what podium to get. Is it going to be a low one, middle-sized, half middle-sized, or a big one? Anyway, they have to know that. They have a big chart up there to make sure they don't make mistakes.

They make sure we have water. I don't like warm water. I don't like cold water. I don't like ice. The pages have learned we all have our demands for water—sparkling, half sparkling, half regular, half tap. Anyway, I am so grateful they took the time to leave their homes to come here to go to school, to be students in the Senate.

FLOOD INSURANCE

Mr. President, finally, we are going to have a vote when we come back on flood insurance. Senators MENENDEZ, LANDRIEU, and ISAKSON have worked on this for a long time. Senator LANDRIEU has been—what is the right word—persistent, and that is an understatement. She has been on this as she can get on something and never get off of it. We have come, over the last several months, within just inches, we thought, of being able to have an agreement and move it to the floor. But she and Senator ISAKSON have worked hard to get a unanimous consent request to bring it to the floor, and they are always just a little bit short. So I am filing cloture in just a few minutes on a motion to proceed on this matter, and that will be the vote when we get back. If they are able to work out an agreement, then we can always modify having that vote and move forward. As I understand it, there are five or ten amendments they want to have to that bill, and we have all agreed that is OK. So I hope we can do that when we come back, and I thank those Senators for their good work.

Mr. President, could I ask what the pending business is before the Senate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The pending business is the motion to proceed to S. 1926.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I have a cloture motion at the desk relative to that measure.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 294, S. 1926, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Robert Menendez, Mary L. Landrieu, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Joe Manchin III, Tom Udall, Patrick J. Leahy, Bill Nelson, Christopher A. Coons, Christopher Murphy, Mark R. Warner, Kay R. Hagan, Amy Klobuchar, Tim Kaine, Thomas R. Carper, Dianne Feinstein.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum required under Rule XXII also be waived; and the vote on the motion to invoke cloture occur at 5:30 p.m. on January 27.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators allowed to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

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

TRIBUTE TO PATRICK KILCUR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to say a fond farewell to Patrick Kilcur, a Republican floor assistant who has decided to move on after 7 very eventful years here in the Senate. Patrick has been a real asset to the conference but also just a great guy to have around. And that is something that has been true for everybody from the pages to the Senators. Anytime morale stated to flag in the late hours around here, Patrick was usually the one who gave everybody a lift. He has got a great spirit and a great sense of humor, qualities that we are always in great need of on the floor, especially late at night or during the various crises we have had to deal with over the past several years. And he has just been a very thoughtful member of the team. On a trip to China a few years back, Patrick returned not just with some new custom shirts but with a panda hat for all the Senate pages. He has always been quick to offer guidance to the pages and to thank them. And he always made time when the end of their terms arrived to take them out to lunch and send them off the right way. Patrick is a proud native of West Chester, PA. He first came here as a floor monitor for Senator Specter in 2006 and moved to the cloakroom 2 years later. He became floor assistant in 2012. We will miss his ready smile and his knowledge of the floor. I know the pages will miss him too. On a happy note, we are glad that Patrick found his future wife Julie here in the Senate. Patrick and Julie just got engaged last month, and we wish them all the very best in their future life together. So to Patrick, I say thank you on behalf of the entire Senate. Best wishes in all your future endeavors.

ELECTIONS IN BELARUS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 3 years ago, the country of Belarus held a presidential election that marked—instead of finally joining the rest of democratic Europe—a brutal crackdown on freedom of expression and basic democratic principles. There was a glimmer of hope that perhaps this would finally be an opportunity for the Belarusian people to freely choose their own president in an honest and open election. No longer would the Belarusian people have to endure under the ''Last Dictator of Europe,'' strongman Alexander Lukashenko.

Tragically, those hopes were quickly dashed when Lukashenko simply claimed another term as president amid elections described by international monitors as seriously flawed.

On election night, December 19, 2010, hundreds of Belarusian citizens were beaten and arrested by KGB henchman—that is right, Belarus still has a KGB security service—for having the

nerve to run in the election or peaceably demonstrate for an honest accounting of the election results. It was the worst crackdown in decades—although certainly not the first under Lukashenko's iron first in which he uses a combination of repression, intimidation, and torture to cling to power.

I have come to the Senate floor a number of times during the past 3 years to talk about the tragic events in Belarus, where the Lukashenko regime has imprisoned and mistreated numerous political and human rights activists. Let me add with great irony and sadness—that Russia is presently trying to strongarm our friends in Ukraine to join a Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan trade bloc instead of letting it sign an association agreement with the European Union. Sign up with the last dictatorship of Europe or the European Union—not much of a choice if you ask me.

I have been glad to see that with a push from the international community, some of Belarus's political prisoners have been released, including most of the 2010 presidential candidates who had the temerity to run for office.

Some of you may have seen an op-ed in the Washington Post last month, written by one such presidential candidate from the 2010 election in Belarus, Andrei Sannikov. Mr. Sannikov was sentenced to 5 years in jail for having the nerve to run against Lukashenko. At his trial, Sannikov said prison guards threatened to harm his wife and small son in an effort to secure a confession. Lukashenko's henchmen even threatened to take custody of his son, who was then 3 years old. Yet, he has not stopped working for a democratic Belarus. In his December 27 op-ed, he argues,

> . . . it is important to remember that Ukraine's northern neighbor Belarus, [is] a country that lies geographically in the heart of Europe but politically is more akin to a Soviet backwater. The majority of its citizens want to be free, but they are repressed by a brutal dictator .It is not a question of if but when Belarusians will rid themselves of Europe's last dictatorship and join the community of European democracies.

He reminds us that there is still work to be done.

Take for example, president candidate Mikalai Statkevich. Statkevich, who was sentenced to six years in a medium-security prison following the 2010 election, remains in jail. He can barely receive medical assistance or meet with his family or lawyers. He is constantly harassed and pushed to sign bogus confessions for crimes he never committed.

Or for example, Ales Byalyatski, a prominent human rights activist still in jail. He is Vice-Chairman of the International Federation for Human Rights and President of the Human Rights Center Viasna, an organization that offers financial and legal assistance to political prisoners and their families. I don't think Ales or his wife, Natalia, who has visited with my office, ever thought their family would be among the ones they typically helped.

Moreover, the Lukashenko government targeted not only various political and human rights activists after the December 2010 election and protests, but it did so even before anything had happened, arresting for example, Eduard Lobau who had been a member of the youth democracy movement. Lobau was arrested and assaulted for peaceably protesting in the days leading up to the election.

Considering what they have fought for and what they have been through, it is no wonder that Statkevich, Belyatsky, and Lobau had been shortlisted for the Sakharov Prize by the European Parliament, as well as receiving a wide variety of international attention. While the Sakharov prize ultimately went to Malala Yousafzai, a worthy recipient, we cannot forget these three men and the others who rot in Belarusian KGB jails on dubious and trumped up charges. Their families, too, are continuously denied basic legal rights.

In 2012, I joined with my colleagues in the Senate to introduce Senate Resolution 105, which passed unanimously, condemning the sham elections and calling on the Belarusian regime to release all political prisoners. The resolution also called for new elections in Belarus that meet international standards, supported the tightening of sanctions against the Belarusian state oil and petrochemical company, and urged the International Ice Hockey Federation to suspend the 2014 Ice Hockey Championship in Minsk until all Belarusian political prisoners are released.

Sadly, our calls have gone unheeded by the International Ice Hockey Federation, which still plans to hold its 2014 championship in Minsk while political prisoners languish in KGB prisons. I simply cannot understand how the International Ice Hockey Federation can give hockey-loving strongman Lukashenko such a propaganda hook amid his country's human rights travesty.

I visited Belarus just weeks following the sham elections. I met with the family members of many of these jailed activists. The stories of missing or harassed loved ones, including children, were heartbreaking.

But the perseverance we have seen from civil society groups and human rights defenders in Belarus has been deeply inspiring. Despite intimidation and threat, these activists continue to fight for their freedoms. They did so through parliamentary elections during September 2012, also decried by international observers, and they do so through the many anniversaries of the election and ensuing protests. And they persevered most recently, when Lukashenko signed a law that requires future parliamentary elections to be held in single rounds and bans any calls to boycott elections.

I can only hope their efforts come to fruition in 2015 when Belarus is slated to host its next presidential election.

Until then, I will continue to stand in the Senate to call on Lukashenko to release the remaining political prisoners and stand with the people of Belarus in their quest for democracy and justice.

RECOGNIZING GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am not anyone would call a ''blue blood''—at least not in the conventional sense of that term. My ancestors did not come over on the Mayflower. My mom was an immigrant; she came to this country from Lithuania when she was 2 years old. But I do have some blue blood in my veins—Hoya blue—for Georgetown University.

With help of affordable loans from the United States Government, this immigrant's son from East St. Louis, IL was able to earn two degrees from Georgetown University—an undergraduate degree from the Walsh School of Foreign Service and a law degree from the Georgetown Law Center.

In addition, it was a college internship while I was a Georgetown undergraduate 50 years ago that first brought me to the United States Senate. I had the amazing good luck to land an internship with Senator Paul Douglas of Illinois—one of the great ones. He had a brilliant mind and enormous moral and political courage. Had I not gone to Georgetown, it is likely that I never would have met Paul Douglas and I would not be here today. Had I not gone to Georgetown, I never would have met some of my greatest teachers.

I owe Georgetown a great deal, so I would like to take a moment to say thank you as this great university prepares to celebrate an historic milestone. Next week—on January 23—Georgetown University will celebrate its 225th anniversary.

January 23, 1789. That was 6 weeks before the United States Constitution took effect and 6 weeks before the first United States Congress was seated.

Georgetown was founded by John Carroll, America's first Catholic bishop. It was America's first Catholic and first Jesuit college. In his proposal for the new university, Father John Carroll wrote that in keeping with ''the liberal Principle of our Constitution, the [school] will be open to Students of Every Religious Profession.''

That steadfast commitment to religious liberty remains a hallmark of Georgetown University. Today, only about 40 percent of Georgetown students identify as Roman Catholic. The other 60 percent are Protestants, Jews, Muslims, Bahà'i, Buddhist, Hindu, Mormon and members of other faith traditions.

On November 22, 1791, Georgetown enrolled its first student, William Gaston, from North Carolina. Due to illness shortly thereafter, William Gaston was also Georgetown's first dropout.

But he turned out well. He eventually graduated from Princeton University and returned to North Carolina, where he was elected to the State Senate . . . the state House of Commons . . . and the United States House of Representatives, making him the first Georgetown student to serve in Congress.

Many other Georgetown graduates have gone on to serve in elected office. Among them are are former President Bill Clinton, Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, several members of this Congress, including the President Pro Tem of this Senate, Senator PATRICK LEAHY.

My State of Illinois may hold the current record for statewide office holders whose views of public service Georgetown helped to shape. Not only are my Senate partner, Senator MARK KIRK and I both Georgetown graduates but so are our Governor Pat Quinn, our Lieutenant Governor, Sheila Simon, and our state Attorney General, Lisa Madigan.

In the years following the Civil War, Father Patrick Healy helped transform Georgetown into a modern university. So profound was his influence that Father Healy is often called Georgetown's ''second founder.''

Father Healy's accomplishments are all the more extraordinary when you consider that the laws of Georgia, the State in which he was born, made it a crime even to teach him to read. You see, Father Patrick Healy was born a slave. His father was a wealthy Irish American cotton farmer and his mother was mixed race—half white and half African American. His parents joined in a common-law marriage and gave all of their children excellent educations in Northern and European schools.

Father Healy's mixed-race background was not widely known until the 1960s, when he was recognized as the first American of African ancestry to earn a PhD, the first to become a Jesuit priest, and the first to be president of a predominantly white college.

Georgetown University today is one of the top research universities in the world. The university today has around 7,500 undergraduate and over 9,500 postgraduate students from every State and territory in the United States and more than 130 foreign nations. In 2001, Georgetown gained its first lay president, John DeGioia, a philosopher by training and a champion of civil discourse, for whom I have great respect.

Education at Georgetown is rooted in the Jesuit tradition: ''for the glory of God and the well-being of humankind.''

I am continually impressed by the commitment of Georgetown students to causes of social and economic justice.

Georgetown has the second most politically active student body in the United States according to the Princeton Review. Georgetown is also one of the top-10 yearly producers of Peace Corps volunteers. Georgetown students founded one of the first chapters of STAND, the student-led movement to end mass atrocities in Darfur and elsewhere. And Georgetown faculty, administrators and—especially—students remain fearless and dedicated champions of a cause that is very close to my heart, the DREAM Act.

I could not speak about my alma mater without bragging a little about its athletic teams and programs. The men's basketball team is particularly noteworthy. In 1984, it was the NCAA championship under Coach John Thompson. All told, the Georgetown men's basketball team is tied for the most Big East conference tournament titles with 7, and has made 27 NCAA tournament.

U.S. News & World Report lists Georgetown's athletics program among the 20 best in the Nation. Perhaps even more impressive, Georgetown's student athletes have a 94 percent graduation success rate.

I did not start out at Georgetown. I spent my freshman year at another Jesuit university, St. Louis University, just across the Mississippi River from my home town of East St. Louis, IL.

Partway through my first year, I decided that I wanted to go away for school. So, I went to the university guidance office, looked through some pamphlets and chose two. I had never been to either place.

I told my mom that I wanted to go away for school and I had narrowed it down to two choices. I said the first is a school in California called Stanford. Mom said, ''No, if you go to California you'll never come home.''

I said the other is a school in Washington called Georgetown University.'' She thought for a minute and then said, ''OK. Your brother goes to Washington frequently for his work. He can keep an eye on you.'' That is how I ended up attending one of the best universities in America and the world.

My mom is gone now. But on the eve of Georgetown University's 225th anniversary, I want to thank her for steering me to a truly great university. I want to thank all of the professors who taught me—brilliant, brave men like Professor Jan Karski.

Finally, I want to commend President Jack DeGioia and all of the Georgetown administrators, faculty, alumni, supporters, and students for continuing to uphold Georgetown's mission of academic excellent and service to God and humankind.

SURGEON GENERAL'S REPORT ON SMOKING AND HEALTH

Mr. REED. Mr. President, this week is the 50th anniversary of the Surgeon General's landmark report on smoking and health. I join with some of my colleagues who have taken the floor this week to commemorate this anniversary.

Surgeon General Dr. Luther Terry's report was groundbreaking. For the first time, the government warned that ''smoking is a health hazard of sufficient importance in the United States''. This fundamentally changed how our country thought about smoking and was the basis for many of the successful tobacco control efforts of the past 50 years.

Indeed, according to CDC data, in 1965 the year after the Surgeon General's report—approximately 42 percent of American adults smoked cigarettes. By 2011, that rate had dropped by more than half to 19 percent. Hopefully this trend will continue, leading to better health for millions of Americans.

Throughout my time in Congress, I have worked on initiatives to discourage our children from becoming smokers, supported measures to ban smoking in schools, and worked to enhance the FDA's ability to regulate the sale and distribution of cigarettes and smokeless tobacco.

We have come a long way since I proposed legislation in the late nineties to deny tobacco companies tax deductions for advertising to children. I was an original cosponsor of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, which became law in 2009 and incorporated the goals in my bill to keep the tobacco industry from targeting children as new customers. This law provides the FDA with the explicit authority to protect the public from deceptive cigarette advertisements, prevent the targeting of minors, and remove certain harmful ingredients from cigarettes.

This was an important effort. But we also must continue to address new tobacco-related concerns as they arise. For instance, I was pleased to join several of my colleagues last year in urging the FDA to issue deeming regulations asserting its regulatory authority over e-cigarettes and other tobacco products, and it is my hope that it will do so soon.

We have made great strides during the last 50 years in reducing smoking rates and preventing tobacco-related illnesses, but we can and must do more. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to continue these efforts, which I believe are critically important to our Nation's long-term health.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 ANDREW LANGSTON MCADAMS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I rise today to express our Nation's deepest thanks and gratitude to a Wyoming solider and his family. On January 10, 2014, CWO3 Andrew McAdams of Cheyenne, WY, was killed in the line of duty in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Along with his fellow MC–12 crew members, Chief Warrant Officer 3 McAdams died from injuries he sustained while conducting surveillance operations in eastern Afghanistan.

Chief McAdams deployed with Wyoming Army National Guard Detachment 53. He was attached to B Company, 306th Aerial Exploitation Battalion, Task Force ODIN-Afghanistan. Before graduating from Cheyenne East High School, he joined the Army National Guard and graduated from the U.S. Army Warrant Officer Candidate School at Fort Rucker, AL. Andrew's friends have described him as a kind man with an infectious sense of humor. Those who served with Chief McAdams recall his passion for aviation. It is that passion for flight which led him to serve Wyoming and our Nation.

Mr. President, it is because of individuals like Andrew McAdams who wear the uniform that we continue to live safe and free. Our men and women who answer the call to service deserve respect and recognition for the enormous burden that they take upon themselves to protect our Nation. They put everything on the line every day. Because of them and their families, our Nation remains free and strong in the face of danger.

In the book of John, Jesus said that ''greater love has no man than this, that he lay his life down for his friend.'' Andrew gave his life, that last full measure of devotion, so we can live in a free nation. He gave his life defending his country and its people, and we honor him for this selfless sacrifice.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 McAdams is survived by his wife Carol and baby daughter, his mother Katherine and father Brien, sister Laretta and brother-in-law Erick. Andrew is also survived by his brothers and sisters in arms of the U.S. Army. As we say goodbye to a husband, a father, a son, a brother, and an American soldier, our Nation pays its deepest respect to Chief McAdams for his courage, his love of country, and his sacrifice, so that we may remain free. He was a hero in life, and he remains a hero in memory. All of Wyoming, and indeed the entire Nation, is proud of him. May God bless him and his family, and welcome him with open arms.

REMEMBERING WILFRED BILLEY

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. President, last month the flags of the Navajo Nation flew at half mast, in honor of Wilfred E. Billey. Mr. Billey was one of the legendary Navajo Code Talkers. He died at the age of 90 on December 12. His passing is an occasion to reflect on a truly heroic life, and on the vital contribution of the Navajo Code Talkers to America's victory in World War II.

Wilfred Billey was born on December 28, 1922, in Sanostee, NM. He was raised by his grandparents. In the summers, he herded sheep and farmed in the Chuska Mountains. In 1941, Wilfred was attending Navajo Methodist Mission School in Farmington when a Marine recruiter visited the school. Still a teenager, Wilfred would travel half way around the world with the all-Navajo U.S. Marine Corps Platoon 297.

The Navajo Code Talkers turned their language into an unbreakable code. They would use the language of the Navajo people as a weapon to defend our freedoms. In battle after battle, in ferocious combat, they used that code time and again to help secure Allied victory. Their service was all the more remarkable in that they fought so bravely for freedom in a world that did not always accord freedom to them.

Wilfrid's journey would take him throughout the Pacific theater. He would witness some of the bloodiest, most brutal fighting of World War II at Tarawa, Saipan, and Okinawa. The code he spoke, however, would save countless American lives, and help lead to allied victory.

Despite this work, this brave Marine never forgot those whom he believed to be the real heroes. His daughter, Barbara, in an interview with the Indian Country Today Media Network, recalled her father's humility. ''I'm not a hero,'' he said. ''The heroes are the ones we left behind.''

While most Americans would learn about the battles at sea and on land, the story of the Navajo Code Talkers was kept a secret, until the true purpose of their service was revealed over 20 years later.

In 2001, Congress honored Wilfred Billey and his fellow Navajo Code Talkers with public recognition and Congressional medals. Wilfred helped draft the words inscribed on the medals: ''The Navajo language was used to defeat the enemy.''

Wilfred Billey defended our Nation during time of war and peril abroad, and he continued to serve by working to lead the youth of the Navajo Nation. He returned to New Mexico and obtained bachelor's and master's degrees, and embarked on a career as an educator. Wilfred worked for four decades in education, including at the Navajo Methodist Mission School, and as principal at Shiprock High School. When he retired, he continued to ranch and farm, and to advocate for and inspire others in his community.

In Wilfred Billey's long and remarkable life, he exhibited impressive humility and unwavering service to his people, his community, and his country. If we look for exemplars of courage and commitment, we need look no further than Wilfred Billey and his band of brothers among the Navajo Code Talkers and the U.S. Marines. We are all forever in their debt.

My wife, Jill, and I extend our sincere sympathy to Wilfred's family. He will be missed by those who knew him, and he will be forever remembered by a grateful nation.

CONGRATULATING GREG MADDUX

Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate one of Nevada's own and four time Cy Young award winner Greg Maddux for being selected to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Greg ''Mad Dog'' Maddux excelled at the major league level, not only with refined skills and superior pitching mechanics, but also a mental approach to the game that was unmatched. His pitching philosophy has made him one of the greatest pitchers of the ''liveball'' era.

A 1984 graduate of Valley High School in Las Vegas, Greg Maddux excelled on the mound as a right-handed pitcher before being drafted by the Chicago Cubs in the second round of the 1984 Major League Baseball draft. Mad Dog then spent the next 23 seasons accruing 355 wins, 3,371 strikeouts, and an unrivaled record of 18 Golden Gloves for the likes of the Chicago Cubs, San Diego Padres, Los Angeles Dodgers, and the Atlanta Braves, a feat that still remains unmatched. Mad Dog's prolific major league career also led him to be the only player in history to record 17 straight, 15-win seasons. It is no doubt that these numbers and records led to his near unanimous vote for entry to the Hall of Fame.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Greg Maddux for a distinguished playing career. It is my hope that he will serve as an example of what great things Nevadans can accomplish when they work with commitment and determination.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING JOSÉ MONTOYA

• Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the life of José Montoya, a husband, father, professor, activist, artist, and poet. José Montoya passed away on September 25, 2013. He was 81 years old.

José Montoya was born in Escobosa, NM and grew up in the farm towns of California's Central Valley. He served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War before earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the California College of the Arts and a Master of Fine Arts from California State University, Sacramento.

Cognizant of the plight of farm workers because of his own experience picking grapes as a boy in the fields of Delano and Fowler, José Montoya became an advocate for the rights of farmworkers. In 1969, Mr. Montoya cofounded the Rebel Chicano Art Front—later known as the Royal Chicano Air Force—a highly influential collaboration of artists who worked alongside Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta to generate public awareness of the struggles of migrant farmworkers.

Mr. Montoya also touched the lives of thousands of students during his 27-year tenure as a professor of art, photography, and education at California State University, Sacramento, where he created the Barrio Art Program. Designed to provide students with hands-on experience working with communities in the arts, this program continues to serve as a model for arts-based service learning programs at

other universities. In addition to his contributions as an artist, activist, and educator, Montoya was an accomplished poet who was selected as the city of Sacramento's Poet Laureate in 2002.

José Montoya's legacy was eloquently summarized by his son Richard in an op-ed written for The Sacramento Bee: ''José Montoya was a cultural front liner and first responder. A doer. A creator who brought levity, defiance and satirical wit to the bloody fields of the San Joaquin as well as to the frigid halls of academe, all the way to the State Capitol and beyond.''

He is survived by his wife, Juanita Jue, along with eight children, 19 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter. My heart goes out to his family and loved ones, and my thoughts and prayers are with them. We are indebted to him for his dedication to social justice and his immeasurable contributions to the community and our society.●

TRIBUTE TO AARON A. BAER

● Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I wish to offer my best wishes to a dear friend, the Honorable Aaron A. Baer, who will celebrate his 100th birthday on Saturday, January 25. Judge Baer, known to his family as the ''centennial cowboy,'' was born in Baltimore on January 25,1914, on High Street in what is now Little Italy. His father came to the United States from Russia, landing in Baltimore's Fell's Point in approximately 1890. His father became a tailor and worked in a factory making clothing. Judge Baer graduated from Forrest Park High School in 1933. He attended the University of Baltimore Law School and graduated in 1937. He supported himself and paid for law school by repairing and replacing tar roofs.

Judge Baer passed the bar in 1937 and practiced real estate law for several years. He then became an assistant Baltimore City solicitor, an assistant attorney general, and a State senator for the 5th District in 1959. He was appointed to the Municipal Court of Baltimore City in 1961 by then-Governor J. Millard Tawes. In 1971 he was appointed to the newly created District Court of Maryland by then-Governor Marvin Mandel. He retired as a district court judge in 1981.

Judge Baer married Judy Weinberg in 1941 and has two children. His first child is Susan Reichmister, who is married to Dr. Jerome Reichmister. They happen to be neighbors as well as friends. They have two children: Beth, who is married to Bart Casper, and Jodi, who is married to Craig Kessler. Judge Baer has four great-grandchildren: Nicole, Sloane, Mitchell, and Blair. His second child is the Honorable Barbara Baer Waxman, who is administrative judge of the District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City. She is married to Dr. Carl. Waxman. No list of family members would be complete without mentioning Judge Baer's ''grand-dog,'' Shayna Waxman. Judge Baer and his beloved wife Judy were married for 66 years before she passed away shortly after their 66th wedding anniversary in 2007.

My father Meyer, whose parents were also Russian immigrants, also served on the bench. He and Judge Baer were close friends, which is how I came to know Judge Baer. It has been a great privilege to know Judge Baer, to receive his counsel, and to count him not just as a close friend of my father's but as my close friend too, and not just Judge Baer but the rest of his wonderful family, whom I have just mentioned.

Judge Baer has lived an exemplary life devoted to public service, the community, and to his family. Judge Baer lives independently and spends each winter in Florida. He was an avid horseback rider for over 60 years—hence, the cowboy nickname—and only stopped riding this past July.

It is an understatement to say that Judge Baer has lived an extraordinary life. He grew up without an indoor bathroom or electric lights. He drove one of the first cars and owned one of the first motorcycles, the venerable Indian Scout. Now, he uses a computer and a cell phone. I am sure all of my colleagues here in the Senate will join me in congratulating Judge Baer on his 100th birthday and sending along our best wishes as he begins his second century.●

REMEMBERING BERNIE ANDERSON

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to remember the life of my colleague, assemblyman Bernie Anderson, who passed on January 10, 2014. Serving with him as a fellow freshman in the Nevada Assembly was a privilege, and I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to know and work alongside such a dedicated public servant. As a longtime teacher, assemblyman, and member of the Nevada National Guard, Bernie honorably served the Silver State for decades. I am proud to join the citizens of Washoe County and the State of Nevada to remember his legacy of service to his community.

A native Nevadan, Bernie was a graduate of Bishop Manogue High School and University of Nevada, Reno alumni. From 1991 to 2010, Bernie served in the Nevada Assembly, representing Washoe County. During his time in the legislature, he served as chairman of the Judiciary Committee, where he displayed a passion for the committee's work and often served as a mentor to his colleagues, offering invaluable advice and support.

Bernie was also a teacher in Sparks, where he taught government and history in the city's schools for 32 years. As a longtime educator and avid reader, Bernie dedicated his life and career to education. In October 1985, he received the Teacher of the Month award from the Reno/Sparks Chamber of Commerce. Educators work tirelessly to ensure our Nation's students are prepared to compete in the 21st century, and I am grateful for Bernie's dedication on behalf of Nevada's youth.

Not only did he serve the citizens of Nevada as a legislator and a schoolteacher, Bernie was also a member of the Nevada National Guard. In 2007, he was honored with the Charles Dick Medal of Merit in recognition of his contributions to the National Guard. On behalf of all Nevadans, I thank Bernie for his many years of faithful, selfless service.

Today, I extend my deepest sympathies to Bernie's wife Clyda, their children, and family and friends. I would ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the life of a dedicated public servant who served the Silver State proudly. Nevada will miss him.●

RECOGNIZING CHRISTMAS CAN CURE

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, today I wish to join the New Hampshire chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, MOAA, in recognizing the work of Christmas Can Cure, a New Hampshire organization committed to helping disabled veterans and their families, especially around the holidays. On January 25, 2014, Christmas Can Cure will receive the Granite State Warriors Award, given by the MOAA to New Hampshire organizations making the most significant contributions to the Armed Forces of the United States.

Founded in 2008 by the Carrier family in their Jackson, NH, home, Christmas Can Cure was born from the simple desire to invite returning warriors and their families to experience a white Christmas in New Hampshire. As they further developed their idea, the Carrier family realized that they could give back to wounded warriors and their families by relieving the financial and emotional stress of planning a family vacation for the holidays. The mission of Christmas Can Cure is not only to arrange a fun and memorable vacation, but also to provide servicemembers and their families the opportunity to relax and reconnect.

The organization has enjoyed great success, and has joined with the Wounded Warrior Project to reach veterans around the country. The Carrier family has also recently partnered with the Lee family, owners of Eureka Resort, affording Christmas Can Cure an additional holiday destination in Park City, UT. It is clear that this already well-established organization is continuing to gain momentum and broaden its impact on the lives of veterans and their families across the Nation.

On behalf of the people of New Hampshire, I thank the Carrier family and others who have donated their time and efforts to Christmas Can Cure. The selflessness and patriotism of their mission is a true example of what makes ours such a great State, and I look forward to hearing more stories of

lives that have been touched by the great work of this Granite State organization.●

RECOGNIZING VETERANS COUNT

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I rise today to join the New Hampshire chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, MOAA, in recognizing the critical work of Veterans Count, a New Hampshire organization that has proven a critical ally in ongoing efforts to support servicemembers, veterans, and their families. On January 25, 2014, Veterans Count will receive the Granite State Warriors Award, given by the MOAA to New Hampshire organizations making the most significant contributions to the Armed Forces of the United States. A program of Easter Seals, Veterans Count helps servicemembers and their families throughout the deployment cycle and beyond.

The hallmark of Veterans Count's approach to providing support is their partnership with the Deployment Cycle Support Program, DCSP, which has assisted thousands of servicemembers and their families since its inception in 2007. The program was built on the understanding that the strains of a military deployment are shared and can both precede and outlast the deployment itself. Thanks to the work and collaboration of New Hampshire groups like Veterans Count, the DCSP has provided extraordinary support to veterans and their families.

Veterans Count also deserves recognition for their work addressing mental health and suicide awareness. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wounded our warriors in ways that were not previously well understood and although mental health and suicide prevention efforts are ongoing, we must do more to help those soldiers and veterans in need. Veterans Count is at the forefront of these efforts and, in 2012 alone, the group intervened successfully in 29 suicide risk situations. Moreover, since the program's inception, none of its participants have committed suicide. Veterans Count's success in suicide prevention is due in large part to their work helping veterans secure permanent employment and easy access to mental health care.

I look forward to hearing more success stories as a result of Veterans Count's determined efforts, and I am pleased to congratulate them on a well-deserved award from the Military Officers Association of America.●

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 which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 1931. A bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 1950. A bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–4343. A communication from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Releasing Information; General Provisions; Accounting and Reporting Requirements; Reports of Accounts and Exposures'' (RIN3052–AC76) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 9, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4344. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tolfenpyrad; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9904–70) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 9, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4345. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Appraisals for Higher-Priced Mortgage Loans'' (RIN1557–AD70) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4346. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the continuation of a national emergency declared in Executive Order 13222 with respect to the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4347. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security Annual Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4348. A communication from the Secretary of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Commerce's 2014 Report on Foreign Policy-Based Export Controls; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4349. A communication from the President of the Federal Financing Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Bank's Annual Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–4350. A communication from the Associate General Counsel for General Law, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Director, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on January 10, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4351. A communication from the Administrator, General Services Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to mileage reimbursement rates for Federal employees who use privately owned vehicles while on official travel; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4352. A communication from the Acting Administrator of the Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report from the Office of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4353. A communication from the Chairman and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report from the Office of the Inspector General for the period from April 1, 2013 through September 30, 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4354. A communication from the Chairwoman of the Federal Trade Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4355. A communication from the Chairman, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's fiscal year 2013 Performance and Accountability Report; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4356. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–232, ''Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4357. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–233, ''YMCA Community Investment Initiative Real Property Tax Exemption Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4358. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–234, ''Transportation Infrastructure Mitigation Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4359. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–235, ''Transportation Infrastructure Improvements GARVEE Bond Financing Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4360. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–236, ''Department of Health

Grant-Making Authority for Clinical Nutritional Home Services Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4361. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–237, ''Critical Infrastructure Freedom of Information Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4362. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–238, ''Party Officer Elections Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4363. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–239, ''Department of Corrections Central Cellblock Management Clarification Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4364. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–240, ''Board of Elections Nominating Petition Circulator Affidavit Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4365. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–241, ''Board of Ethics and Government Accountability Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4366. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–242, ''Parent and Student Empowerment Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4367. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–247, ''Controlled Substance, Alcohol Testing, Criminal Background Check and Background Investigation Temporary Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4368. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–248, ''Distillery Pub Licensure Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4369. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–249, ''Campaign Finance Reform and Transparency Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4370. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–250, ''Prohibition on Government Employee Engagement in Political Activity Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4371. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–251, ''Manufacturers' Sunday Sale Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4372. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–252, ''Manufacturer Tasting Permit Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4373. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–253, ''Funeral and Memorial Service Leave Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4374. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–254, ''Focused Student Achievement Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4375. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–255, ''Tax Clarity Equity Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4376. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–256, ''Historic Music Cultural Institutions Expansion Tax Abatement Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4377. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–257, ''Fair Student Funding and School-Based Budgeting Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4378. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–258, ''Closing of a Portion of a Public Alley in Square 858, S.O. 12–03336, Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4379. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–259, ''Earned Sick and Safe Leave Amendment Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–4380. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–260, ''Tax Exemption for Teacher Awards Temporary Act of 2013''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. BAUCUS, from the Committee on Finance:

Report to accompany S. 1871, An original bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate formula and to improve beneficiary access under the Medicare program, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–135).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. WYDEN for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

*Ellen Dudley Williams, of Maryland, to be Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, Department of Energy.

*Christopher Smith, of Texas, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Fossil Energy).

*Elizabeth M. Robinson, of Washington, to be Under Secretary of Energy.

*Franklin M. Orr, Jr., of California, to be Under Secretary for Science, Department of Energy.

*Neil Gregory Kornze, of Nevada, to be Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

*Esther Puakela Kia'aina, of Hawaii, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

*Marc A. Kastner, of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Science, Department of Energy.

*Jonathan Elkind, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (International Affairs).

*Steven Croley, of Michigan, to be General Counsel of the Department of Energy.

*Michael L. Connor, of New Mexico, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior.

*Tommy Port Beaudreau, of Alaska, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Interior.

By Mr. LEAHY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Carolyn B. McHugh, of Utah, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

Jeffrey Alker Meyer, of Connecticut, to be United States District Judge for the District of Connecticut.

Timothy L. Brooks, of Arkansas, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Arkansas.

James Donato, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Beth Labson Freeman, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Pedro A. Delgado Hernandez, of Puerto Rico, to be United States District Judge for the District of Puerto Rico.

Pamela L. Reeves, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Tennessee.

James Maxwell Moody, Jr., of Arkansas, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas.

Vince Girdhari Chhabria, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of California.

Peter Joseph Kadzik, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

John B. Owens, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Michelle T. Friedland, of California, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit.

Nancy L. Moritz, of Kansas, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

David Jeremiah Barron, of Massachusetts, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

Matthew Frederick Leitman, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Judith Ellen Levy, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Laurie J. Michelson, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Linda Vivienne Parker, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Christopher Reid Cooper, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

M. Douglas Harpool, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri.

Gerald Austin McHugh, Jr., of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Edward G. Smith, of Pennsylvania, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

Sheryl H. Lipman, of Tennessee, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Tennessee.

Stanley Allen Bastian, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington.

Manish S. Shah, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Illinois.

Daniel D. Crabtree, of Kansas, to be United States District Judge for the District of Kansas.

Cynthia Ann Bashant, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of California.

Jon David Levy, of Maine, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maine.

Theodore David Chuang, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

George Jarrod Hazel, of Maryland, to be United States District Judge for the District of Maryland.

By Mr. SANDERS for the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

*Sloan D. Gibson, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

*Linda A. Schwartz, of Connecticut, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Policy and Planning).

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN for the Select Committee on Intelligence.

*Daniel Bennett Smith, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Intelligence and Research).

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 1935. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to restore access to diabetic testing supplies for Medicare beneficiaries; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. INHOFE):

S. 1936. A bill to improve the response to missing children and victims of child sex trafficking; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCHUMER:

S. 1937. A bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to require States to develop contingency plans to address unexpected emergencies or natural disasters that may threaten to disrupt the administration of an election for Federal office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. PRYOR (for himself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. WYDEN):

S. 1938. A bill to amend the Department of Energy Organization Act to replace the current requirement for a biennial energy policy plan with a Quadrennial Energy Review, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. KING):

S. 1939. A bill to repeal the War Powers Resolution and to provide for proper war powers consultation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Mr. LEAHY):

S. 1940. A bill to provide reimbursement under the Medicaid program to individuals and entities that provide voluntary nonemergency medical transportation to Medicaid beneficiaries for expenses related to noload travel; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MANCHIN (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. JOHANNS):

S. 1941. A bill to establish requirements for the adoption of any new or revised requirement providing for the screening, testing, or treatment of an airman or an air traffic controller for a sleep disorder, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. KIRK, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 1942. A bill to ensure that the United States promotes women's meaningful inclusion and participation in mediation and negotiation processes undertaken in order to prevent, mitigate, and resolve violent conflict and implements the United States National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. HIRONO):

S. 1943. A bill to incentivize State support for postsecondary education and to promote increased access and affordability for higher education for students, including Dreamer students; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 1944. A bill to amend XVIII of the Social Security Act to distribute additional information to Medicare beneficiaries to prevent health care fraud, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. COONS):

S. 1945. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1946. A bill to amend the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 to modify the authorization of appropriations; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. CHAMBLISS):

S. 1947. A bill to rename the Government Printing Office the Government Publishing Office, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, and Mr. BAUCUS):

S. 1948. A bill to promote the academic achievement of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children with the establishment of a Native American language grant program; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S. 1949. A bill to designate and expand wilderness areas in Olympic National Forest in the State of Washington, and to designate certain rivers in Olympic National Forest and Olympic National Park as wild and scenic rivers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1950. A bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1951. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to make responsible parties liable for certain costs relating to the release of pollutants or contaminants; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Ms. BALDWIN:

S. 1952. A bill to provide support to develop career and technical education programs of study and facilities in the areas of renewable energy; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 1953. A bill to amend certain provisions of the Inspector General Act of 1978 and the Inspector General Improvement Act of 2008, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. MORAN (for himself, Mr. TESTER, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 1954. A bill to provide for the extension of the enforcement instruction on supervision requirements for outpatient therapeutic services in critical access and small rural hospitals through 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself and Mr. LEE):

S. 1955. A bill to protect the right of law-abiding citizens to transport knives interstate, notwithstanding a patchwork of local and State prohibitions; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. UDALL of Colorado):

S. 1956. A bill to direct the Secretary of Defense to review the discharge characterization of former members of the Armed Forces who were discharged by reason of the sexual orientation of the member, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. WARNER, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. KING, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. COATS, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. KIRK):

S. 1957. A bill to establish the American Infrastructure Fund, to provide bond guarantees and make loans to States, local governments, and infrastructure providers for investments in certain infrastructure projects, and to provide equity investments in such projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 1958. A bill to amend the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 to raise the per-incident cap on removal actions; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BURR, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LEE, Mr. COATS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S.J. Res. 30. A joint resolution to disapprove a rule of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to greenhouse gas emissions from electric utility generating units;

to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. Res. 333. A resolution strongly recommending that the United States renegotiate the return of the Iraqi Jewish Archive to Iraq; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. VITTER (for himself and Mr. JOHANNS):

S. Res. 334. A resolution recognizing the goals of Catholic Schools Week and honoring the valuable contributions of Catholic schools in the United States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCOTT, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. Res. 335. A resolution designating January 2014 as ''National Mentoring Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, and Mr. TESTER):

S. Res. 336. A resolution designating the first week of April 2014 as ''National Asbestos Awareness Week''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 178

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 178, a bill to provide for alternative financing arrangements for the provision of certain services and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure at land border ports of entry, and for other purposes.

S. 214

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 214, a bill to prohibit brand name drug companies from compensating generic drug companies to delay the entry of a generic drug into the market.

S. 226

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 226, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide leave because of the death of a son or daughter.

S. 534

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 534, a bill to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes.

S. 623

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 623, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure the continued access of Medicare beneficiaries to diagnostic imaging services.

S. 629

At the request of Mr. PRYOR, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) 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. 666

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 666, a bill to prohibit attendance of an animal fighting venture, and for other purposes.

S. 709

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 709, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to increase diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, leading to better care and outcomes for Americans living with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

S. 742

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 742, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes.

S. 919

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 919, a bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, and for other purposes.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1174, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers.

S. 1181

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1181, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt certain stock of real estate investment trusts from the tax on foreign investments in United States real property interests, and for other purposes.

S. 1208

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1208, a bill to require meaningful disclosures of the terms of rental-purchase agreements, including disclosures of all costs to consumers under such agreements, to provide certain substantive rights to consumers under such agreements, and for other purposes.

S. 1236

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1236, a bill to repeal the Defense of Marriage Act and ensure respect for State regulation of marriage.

S. 1417

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the names of the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. ALEXANDER) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) 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. 1431

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1431, a bill to permanently extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

S. 1726

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1726, a bill to prevent a taxpayer bailout of health insurance issuers.

S. 1798

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1798, a bill to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not counted as full-time employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 1862

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1862, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Monuments Men, in recognition of their heroic role in the preservation, protection, and restitution of monuments, works of art, and artifacts of cultural importance during and following World War II.

S. 1875

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1875, a bill to provide for wildfire suppression operations, and for other purposes.

S. 1902

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1902, a bill to require notification of individuals of breaches of personally identifiable information through Exchanges under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 1909

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1909, a bill to expand opportunity through greater choice in education, and for other purposes.

S. 1911

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1911, a bill to reform and strengthen the workforce investment system of the Nation to put Americans back to work and make the United States more competitive in the 21st century, and for other purposes.

S. 1913

At the request of Mr. UDALL of Colorado, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1913, a bill to make permanent the Payments in Lieu of Taxes program.

S. 1921

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1921, a bill to require a Federal agency to include language in certain educational and advertising materials indicating that such materials are produced and disseminated at taxpayer expense.

S. 1926

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) and the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) were added as cosponsors of S. 1926, a bill to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 and to reform the National Association of Registered Agents and Brokers, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 13

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 13, a concurrent resolution commending the Boys & Girls Clubs of America for its role in improving outcomes for millions of young people and thousands of communities.

S. CON. RES. 26

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 26, a concurrent resolution recognizing the need to improve physical access to many federally funded facilities for all people of the United States, particularly people with disabilities.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. KING):

S. 1939. A bill to repeal the War Powers Resolution and to provide for proper war powers consultation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased today to join my colleague, the junior Senator from Virginia, as we introduce the War Powers Consultation Act of 2014.

This legislation is the final product of the National War Powers Commission, which was a bipartisan effort coled by former Secretary of State Jim Baker and former Secretary of State Warren Christopher. The commission was set up by the Miller Center at the University of Virginia to devise a modern and workable war powers consultation mechanism for the executive and legislative branches. It included some of our Nation's most distinguished and respected thinkers and practitioners of national security policy and law. In 2008, after more than a year of hard work, the commission released the final product—an actual legislative proposal to repeal and replace the War Powers Resolution of 1973, which no American President has ever accepted as constitutional.

As does my colleague, I view our introduction of this legislation today as the start of an important congressional and national debate, not the final word in that debate. We wish to pick up where the National War Powers Commission left off 6 years ago, and we do so fully understanding and hopeful that this legislation should be considered and debated and amended and improved through regular order.

My colleague from Virginia has done a great job on this legislation, and I am proud to join him. I wish to expand a bit on why updating the War Powers Resolution is such a worthwhile endeavor for the Senate to consider right now.

The Constitution gives the power to declare war to the Congress, but Congress has not formally declared war since June of 1942 even though our Nation has been involved in dozens of military actions of one scale or another since that time. There is a reason for this. The nature of war is changing. It is increasingly unlikely that the combat operations our Nation will be involved in will resemble those of World War II, where the standing armies and navies of nation states squared off against those of rival nation states on clearly defined fields of battle. Rather, the conflicts in which increasingly we find ourselves and for which we must prepare will be murkier, harder to reconcile with the traditional notions of warfare; they may be more limited in their objectives, their scope, and their duration; and they likely will not conclude with a formal surrender ceremony on the deck of a battleship.

The challenge for all of us serving in Congress is this: How do we reconcile the changing nature of war with Congress's proper role in the declaration of war? It is not exactly a new question, but it is a profound one, for unless we in Congress are prepared to cede our constitutional authority over matters of war to the executive, we need a more workable arrangement for consultation and decisionmaking between the executive and legislative branches.

We have seen several manifestations of this challenge in recent years. In 2011 President Obama committed U.S. military forces to combat operations in Libya to protect civilian populations from imminent slaughter by a brutal, anti-American tyrant. I, for one, believe he was right to do so. But 6 months later, when our armed services were still involved in kinetic actions in Libya—not just supporting our NATO allies but conducting air-to-ground operations and targeted strikes from armed, unmanned aerial vehicles—the administration claimed, as other administrations would, that it had no obligations to Congress under the War Powers Resolution because our Armed Forces were not involved in combat operations. That struck many Members of Congress, including me, as fundamentally at odds with reality, and unfortunately it pushed more Members of Congress into opposition against the mission itself.

More recently, we saw the opposite problem manifested with regard to Syria. Perhaps due to the backlash in Congress that the administration's handling of the Libya conflict engendered, President Obama decided to seek congressional authorization for limited airstrikes against the Assad regime after it slaughtered more than 1,400 of its own citizens with chemical weapons last August. An operation that likely would have lasted a few days and thus been fully consistent with the President's authority under the existing War Powers Resolution had he decided to act decisively and take limited military action instead devolved into a stinging legislative repudiation of executive action. The tragic result was that the Assad regime was spared any meaningful consequences for its use of a weapon of mass destruction against innocent men, women, and children, and, as with Libya, the forces that want to turn America away from the world were not checked but empowered.

Some of us may see the problem in these two instances as a failure of Presidential leadership, and I would agree, but I also believe the examples of Libya and Syria represent the broader problem we as a nation face: What is the proper war power authority of the executive and legislative branches when it comes to limited conflicts, which are increasingly the kinds of conflicts with which we are faced?

It is essential for the Congress and the President to work together to define a new war powers consultative agreement that reflects the nature of conflict in the 21st century and is in line with our Constitution. Our Nation does not have 535 commanders in chief. We have one—the President—and that role as established by our Constitution

must be respected. Our Nation is poorly served when Members of Congress try to micromanage the Commander in Chief in matters of war.

At the same time, now more than ever, we need to create a broader and more durable national consensus on foreign policy and national security, especially when it comes to matters of war and armed conflict. We need to find ways to make internationalist policies more politically sustainable.

After the September 11 attack, we embarked on an expansive foreign policy. Spending on defense and foreign assistance went up, and energy shifted to the executive. Now things are changing. Americans want to pull back from the world. Our foreign assistance and defense budgets are declining. The desire to curb Presidential power across the board is growing, and the political momentum is shifting toward the Congress. America has gone through this kind of political rebalancing before, and much of the time we have gotten it wrong. That is how we got isolationism and disarmament after World War I, that is how we got a hollow army after Vietnam, and that is how we weakened our national security after the Cold War in the misplaced hope of cashing in on a peace dividend. We can't afford to repeat these mistakes.

A new war powers resolution—one that is recognized as both constitutional and workable in practice—can be an important contribution to this effort. It can more effectively invest in the Congress the critical decisions that impact our national security. It can help build a more durable consensus in favor of the kinds of policies we need to sustain our global leadership and protect our Nation. In short, the legislation we are introducing today can restore a better balance to the way national security decisionmaking should work in a great democracy such as ours.

Let me say again. Neither the Senator from Virginia nor I believe the legislation we are introducing today answers all of the monumental and difficult questions surrounding the issue of war powers. We believe this is a matter of transcendent importance to our Nation, and we as a deliberative body of our government should debate this issue, and we look forward to that debate. This legislation should be seen as a way of starting that discussion both here in the Congress and across our Nation. We owe that to ourselves and our constituents. Most of all, we owe that to the brave men and women who serve our Nation in uniform and are called to risk their lives in harm's way for the sake of our Nation's national defense.

Before I yield to my tardy colleague from Virginia, I wish to mention again another reason why I think this legislation should be the beginning of a serious debate which we should bring to some conclusion. The fact is that no President of the United States has recognized the constitutionality of the War Powers Act. That is a problem in itself. That is a perversion, frankly, of the Constitution of the United States of America. That is one reason, but the most important reason is that I believe we are living in incredibly dangerous times. When we look across the Middle East, when we look at Asia and the rise in the tensions in that part of the world and we look at the conflicts that are becoming regional—and whose fault they are is a subject for another debate and discussion, but the fact is that we are in the path of some kind of conflict in which—whether the United States of America wants to or not—we may have to be involved in some ways.

We still have vital national security interests in the Middle East. It is evolving into a chaotic situation, and one can look from the Mediterranean all the way to the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf of Aqaba, and throughout the region. So I believe the likelihood of us being involved in some way or another in some conflict is greater than it has been since the end of the Cold War, and I believe the American people deserve legislation and a clear definition of the responsibilities of the Congress of the United States and that of the President of the United States.

Again, I thank my colleague from Virginia, whose idea this is, who took a great proposal that was developed at the University of Virginia and was kind enough to involve me in this effort. I thank him for it. I thank him for his very hard work on it, despite the fact that, as the Chair will recognize, he was late for this discussion.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Arizona for pointing out to all in the Chamber my tardiness, and I should not have been tardy because I do not like to follow the Senator from Arizona. I would rather begin before him. But I want to thank him for his work with me, together, on this important issue and amplify on a few of the comments he has made.

Today, together, as cosponsors we are introducing the War Powers Consultation Act of 2014, which would repeal the 1973 War Powers Resolution and replace it. I could not have a better cosponsor than Senator MCCAIN and appreciate all the work he and his staff have done over the last months with us.

I gave a floor speech about this issue in this Chamber in July of 2013, almost to the day, 40 years after the Senate passed the War Powers Resolution of 1973. Many of you remember the context of that passage. When it was passed in the summer of 1973, it was in the midst of the end of the Vietnam war. President Nixon had expanded the Vietnam war into Cambodia and Laos without explicit congressional approval, and the Congress reacted very negatively and passed this act to try to curtail executive powers in terms of the initiation of military hostilities.

It was a very controversial bill. When it was passed, President Nixon vetoed it. Congress overrode the veto at the end of 1973. But as Senator MCCAIN indicated, no President has conceded the constitutionality of the 1973 act, and most constitutional scholars who have written about the question have found at least a few of what they believe would be fatal infirmities in that 1973 resolution.

It was a hyperpartisan time, maybe not unlike some aspects of the present, and in trying to find that right balance in this critical question of when the Nation goes to war or initiates military action, Congress and the President did not reach an accord.

I came to the Senate with a number of passions and things I hoped to do. But I think I came with only one obsession, and this is that obsession. Virginia is a State that is most connected to the military of any State in the country. Our map is a map of American military history—from Yorktown, where the Revolutionary War ended, to Appomattox, where the Civil War ended, to the Pentagon, where 9/11 happened. That is who we are. One in nine Virginians is a veteran. If you add our Active Duty, our Guard and Reserve, our military families, our DOD civilians, our DOD contractors, you are basically talking about one in three Virginians. These issues of war and peace matter so deeply to us, as they do all Americans.

The particular passion I had in coming to this body around war powers was because of kind of a disturbing thought, which is, if the President and Congress do not work together and find consensus in matters around war, we might be asking our men and women to fight and potentially give their lives without a clear political consensus and agreement behind the mission.

I do not think there is anything more important that the Senate and the Congress can do than to be on board on decisions about whether we initiate military action, because if we do not, we are asking young men and women to fight and potentially give their lives, with us not having done the hard work of creating the political consensus to support them. That is why I have worked hard to bring this to the attention of this body with Senator MCCAIN.

The Constitution actually sets up a fairly clear framework. The President is the Commander in Chief, not 535 commanders-in-chief, as Senator MCCAIN indicated. But Congress is the body that has the power both to declare war and then to fund military action. In dividing the responsibilities in this way, the Framers were pretty clear. James Madison, who worked on the Constitution, especially the Bill of Rights, wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson and said:

> The constitution supposes, what the History of all Governments demonstrates, that the Executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It

has accordingly with studied care vested the question of war in the Legislature.

Despite that original constitutional understanding, our history has not matched the notion that Congress would always be the initiator of military action. Congress has only declared war five times in the history of the United States, while Presidents have initiated military action prior to any congressional approval more than 120 times.

In some of these instances where the President has initiated war, Congress has come back and either subsequently ratified Presidential action—sometimes by a formal approval or sometimes by informal approval such as budgetary allocation—but in other instances, including recently, Presidents have acted and committed American military forces to military action without any congressional approval. The Senator from Arizona mentioned the most recent one. President Obama committed military force to NATO, action against Libya in 2011, without any congressional approval, and he was formally censured by the House of Representatives for doing so.

The current context that requires a reanalysis of this thorny question, after 40 years of the War Powers Resolution, was well stated by the Senator from Arizona. Wars are different. They start differently. They are not necessarily nation state against nation state. They could be limited in time or, as of now, we are still pursuing a military force that was authorized on September 18, 2001, 12 or 13 years later. Wars are of different duration, different scope, different geography. Nation states are no longer the only entities that are engaged in war.

These new developments that are challenging—what do we do about drones in countries far afield from where battles were originally waged—raise the issue of the need to go back into this War Powers Resolution and update it for the current times.

As the Senator from Arizona mentioned, this has been a question that Members of Congress have grappled with and thought about, as have diplomats and scholars and administration officials and Members of Congress for some time.

In 2007, the Miller Center for the study of the presidency at the University of Virginia convened a National War Powers Commission under the chairmanships of two esteemable and bipartisan leaders—former Secretaries of State Warren Christopher and James Baker. The remaining members of the Commission were a complete A list of thinkers in this area—Slade Gorton, Abner Mikva, Ed Meese, Lee Hamilton. The Commission's historian was no less than Doris Kearns Goodwin, who looked at the entire scope of this problem in American history and what the role of Congress and the President should be.

The Commission issued a unanimous report, proposing an act to replace the War Powers Act of 1973, briefed Congress and incoming President Obama on the particular act in 2007 and 2008, but at that time, the time was not yet ripe for consideration of this bill.

But now that we are 40 years into an unworkable War Powers Resolution and now, as the Senator indicated, we have had a string of Presidents—both Democratic Presidents and Republican Presidents—who have maintained that the act is unconstitutional and now that we have had a 40-year history of Congress often exceeding to the claim of unconstitutionality by not following the War Powers Resolution itself, we do think it is time to revisit.

Let me just state two fundamental, substantive issues that this bill presents in the War Powers Consultation Act of 2014.

First, there is a set of definitions. What is war? The bill defines significant military action as any action where involvement of U.S. troops would be expected to be in combat for at least a week or longer. Under those circumstances, the provisions of the act would be triggered.

There are some exceptions in the act. The act would not cover defined covert action operations. But once a combat operation was expected to last for more than 7 days, the act would be triggered.

The act basically sets up two important substantive improvements on the War Powers Resolution.

First, a permanent consultation committee is established in Congress, with the majority and minority leaders of both Houses and the chairs and ranking members of the four key committees in both Houses that deal with war issues—Intel, Armed Services, Foreign Relations, and Appropriations.

That permanent consultation committee is a venue for discussion between the executive and legislative branches—permanent and continuous—over matters in the world that may require the use of American military force.

Because the question comes up often: What did the President do to consult with Congress? Is it enough to call a few leaders or call a few committee chairs? This act would normalize and regularize what consultation with Congress means by establishing a permanent consultation committee and requiring ongoing dialogue between the Executive and that committee.

The second requirement of this bill is that once military action is commenced that would take more than 7 days, there is a requirement for a vote in both Houses of Congress. The consultation committee itself would put a resolution on the table in both Houses to approve or disapprove of military action. It would be a privileged motion with expedited requirements for debate, amendment, and vote, and that would ensure that we do not reach a situation where action is being taken at the instance of one branch with the other branch not in agreement, because to do that would put our men and women who are fighting and in harm's way at the risk of sacrificing their lives when we in the political leadership have not done the job of reaching a consensus behind the mission.

To conclude, I will acknowledge what the Senator from Arizona said. This is a very thorny and difficult question that has created challenges and differences of interpretation since the Constitution was written in 1787. Despite the fact that the Framers who wrote the Constitution actually had a pretty clear idea about how it should operate, it has never operated that way.

Forty years of a failed War Powers Resolution in today's dangerous world suggests that it is time now to get back in and to do some careful deliberation to update and normalize the appropriate level of consultation between a President and the legislature.

The recent events as cited by the Senator—whatever you think about the merits or the equities, whether it is Libya, whether it is Syria, whether it is the discussions we are having now with respect to Iran or any other of a number of potential spots around the world that could lead to conflict—suggest that while decisions about war and initiation of military action will never be easy, they get harder if we do not have an agreed-upon process for coming to understand each other's points of view and then acting in the best interest of the Nation to forge a consensus.

With that, I appreciate the opportunity to stand with my colleague, after a number of months of discussion, to introduce this bill, and I look forward to the opportunity to carry this dialogue forward with my colleagues in this body.

Thank you very much.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. COONS):

S. 1945. A bill to amend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to revise the criteria for determining which States and political subdivisions are subject to section 4 of the Act, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, almost five decades ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed the original Voting Rights Act into law. At the signing, he spoke eloquently about the central purpose of the law. He said:

> This act flows from a clear and simple wrong. Its only purpose is to right that wrong. Millions of Americans are denied the right to vote because of their color. This law will ensure them the right to vote. The wrong is one which no American, in his heart, can justify. The right is one which no American, true to our principles, can deny.

A lot has changed since 1965 and much progress has been made, but 7 years ago the Senate and House examined whether racial discrimination in voting was still a problem that required a Federal solution. After a long series of hearings in both Chambers and based upon a mountain of evidence,

Democrats and Republicans came together to conclude that racial discrimination in voting is still a problem and the protections that voters have had under the Voting Rights Act were still needed. Yet, last summer, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision that struck at the heart of the Voting Rights Act when it held that the coverage provision of section 5 was unconstitutional because it was not sufficiently based on current conditions. In doing so, the Court made clear that Congress could update the law to reinstitute the protections of section 5 coverage if it were based on more recent conduct.

Today, I am pleased to announce that we are responding to the Court's decision by introducing a bill that helps reinvigorate the most vital protections of the act. Through months of cooperation, negotiation, and compromise, Congressmen SENSENBRENNER and CONYERS and I have agreed on a bipartisan and bicameral proposal to restore the protections of the Voting Rights Act that were weakened by the Supreme Court's decision last summer. Our sole focus throughout this entire process was to ensure that no American would be denied their constitutional right to vote because of discrimination on the basis of race or color. We believe that this is a strong bipartisan bill that accomplishes this goal and that every Member of Congress can support.

Under our bipartisan bill, all States and jurisdictions are eligible for section 5 protections under a new coverage formula, which is based on repeated voting rights violations in the last 15 years. This coverage provision is based solely on a State's or local jurisdiction's recent voting rights record. Significantly, the 15-year period ''rolls'' or continuously moves to keep up with ''current conditions,'' as the Supreme Court stated should be a basis for any coverage provision. If a State that is covered establishes a clean record moving forward, it will fall out of coverage. In addition, the existing bailout provision would still be available for States or jurisdictions that can establish that they had a clean record in a 10-year span. These provisions ensure that the coverage provision is not over-inclusive because jurisdictions that have not repeatedly violated the voting rights of its constituents can come out from under preclearance requirements.

Our bill would also improve the Voting Rights Act to allow our Federal courts to bail-in the worst actors for preclearance. Current law permits States or jurisdictions to be bailed in only for intentional voting rights violations, but to ensure that the worst discrimination in voting is captured, the bill would amend the act to allow States or jurisdictions to be bailed in for results-based violations, where the effect of a particular voting measure is to deny an individual his or her right to vote.

In recognition that voters need to be aware of changes in laws affecting their right to vote, the bill provides for greater transparency in elections. Sunlight is a great disinfectant, as Justice Brandeis once observed, and in this instance, the additional sunlight will protect voters from discrimination. The transparency provisions provide for public notice and information in three areas. The first part requires public notice of late breaking changes in Federal elections. The second part requires information on polling place resource allocation for Federal elections. The third part requires information on changes to electoral districts, including demographic information, to prevent racial gerrymandering, impermissible redistricting, and infringement on minority voters. The last part requires this information for Federal, State, and local elections because the most impermissible conduct oftentimes occurs in State and local elections.

Finally, our bill revises the preliminary injunction standard for voting rights actions. The principle behind this part of the proposal is the recognition that when voting rights are at stake, obtaining relief after the election has already concluded is too late to vindicate the individuals' voting rights. We recognize that there will be cases where there is a special need for immediate, preliminary relief where the plaintiff can establish that the voting measure is likely to be discriminatory.

This proposal is a bipartisan effort to provide a narrow fix to address the Supreme Court's Shelby County decision to ensure that all Americans are protected from racial discrimination in voting. I am confident and hopeful that the Congress can work together as a body—not as Democrats or Republicans but as Americans—to ensure that we root out all voter discrimination with a strong and reinvigorated Voting Rights Act.

I am confident we can do this because protecting voting rights has always been a bipartisan effort. In 1965 President Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law. That law was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in Congress. In the Senate the vote was 79 to 18. In the House the vote was 328 to 74. In the four times since it was reauthorized, the support for the law has only increased. In fact, when President George W. Bush signed the most recent reauthorization in 2006, the vote in the Senate was 98 to 0 and the vote in the House was 390 to 33. Too often there is gridlock in Congress, but when it comes to the Voting Rights Act, there is almost unanimous agreement on the principle that no American should be denied his or her right to vote or to participate in our democracy.

My hope is that we can continue this legacy of bipartisanship on the issue of voting rights. As we prepare to celebrate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on Monday, we should remember the words of Dr. King, who, in a powerful speech about the right to vote, said:

> So long as I do not firmly and irrevocably possess the right to vote I do not possess myself. I cannot make up my mind—it is made up for me. I cannot live as a democratic citizen, observing the laws I have helped to enact—I can only submit to the edict of others. So our most urgent request to the president of the United States and every member of Congress is to give us the right to vote.

I believe that the bipartisan bill we are introducing today honors the spirit of those words. I thank Senators DURBIN and COONS for working with me and I look forward to working with all Senators on this important legislation.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1946. A bill to amend the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978 to modify the authorization of appropriations; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I rise to introduce a bill to protect valuable water resource infrastructure across the West. I am pleased to be joined by Senators SCHATZ and FEINSTEIN who share my concern for dam safety. The Bureau of Reclamation's Dam Safety Program is not a new program, but it is vital for farmers, local economies, and communities in 17 Western States. Because the Safety of Dams, SOD Program is running out of money, it is essential that Congress extend the program and allow projects to proceed by permanently authorizing the funding needed.

The SOD Program has a straightforward mission: ''to ensure that Reclamation facilities do not present unreasonable risks to the public, public safety, property, and/or the environment.'' The challenge of meeting that mission is complicated by the strains of aging infrastructure and population growth within dam failure zones. Reclamation manages 476 dams and dikes, 370 of which are listed within the high or significant hazard class, meaning failure of the dam or dike would cause life loss or significant damages. Once Reclamation begins risk modifications to a dam, the local partners share 15 percent of the associated costs. Since the creation of the SOD Program, Congress has seen fit to raise the program's authorized ceiling four times—in 1984, 2000, and 2002. Twelve years later, it is time to keep this program going once more before we hit the ceiling.

My bill would do away with the authorization ceiling and permanently authorize this important program. No longer would the ceiling be a hindrance on advancing dam safety. A project in my home State helps to illustrate the problem. Scoggins Dam is located in Washington County, OR. The dam forms the heart of the water system in the Tualatin Basin, providing drinking water to residents, irrigation for valuable croplands, and support for nearly a quarter million jobs. The risk to Scoggins Dam comes from its position within the Cascade subduction zone, where a typical earthquake has a magnitude of 8.7 to 9.2. As the first U.S. Senator to visit Fukushima after its

devastating subduction zone earthquake and resulting tsunami, I saw firsthand the incredible damage a seismic event can have on a region and its infrastructure.

The Bureau of Reclamation is already well into the process of risk assessment on Scoggins Dam, and the current SOD Program ceiling poses a significant obstacle to advancing the project to concrete risk-mitigation actions. Reclamation has evaluated Scoggins Dam and predicted that an earthquake could cause spill wall failure and potential embankment failure due to deformation, overtopping, or erosion through cracks. Reclamation completed the correction action study for Scoggins in late 2012; however, no modifications can proceed until there is room in the SOD Program budget. The uncertainty around fixing this Federal facility is taking a toll on economic development at a time when pivotal Oregon companies like Intel and Nike are undertaking expansions in Washington County. Scoggins Dam joins a list of other dam projects on the near horizon that won't be able to proceed without this bill.

Ensuring that dams continue to provide the benefits they do across the West in a safe manner is an important responsibility. I want to express my thanks to the Tualatin Basin Water Supply Partners for their diligent work to see that safety modifications are made for the public's benefit and to meet the region's long-run water needs. I look forward to working with Senator SCHATZ, Senator FEINSTEIN, and other colleagues and the bill's other supporters to continue the work of the SOD Program.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1950. A bill to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes; read the first time.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, today as the chairman of the committee I have introduced the most comprehensive piece of veterans legislation that we have seen in a very long time. The Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefit and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 delivers on the promises that we have made to our servicemembers and I believe will have the support of Members of the Senate and of the House. It addresses virtually every single issue the veterans community has been concerned about.

What we have done now is taken two omnibus bills and wrapped them into this legislation. In addition, we have taken other pieces of legislation passed by the committee, and we have added to that based on some recent developments.

This legislation is the product of a year of bipartisan work and includes provisions important to almost every single veterans service organization and dozens of Members of the Senate, Republican, Democrat, and Independent, many of which were reported out of the Veterans' Affairs Committee with strong bipartisan support.

This legislation completely eliminates the cuts that were made to the military retiree cost-of-living adjustments. I know there was great concern here in the Senate from Democrats and Republicans about that cut, as well as in the House of Representatives. I am happy to say this legislation completely eliminates the cuts that were made to the military retiree cost-of-living adjustments.

As we all know, the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 that was passed a few days ago would lower cost-of-living adjustments for military retirees by reducing the annual adjustment by 1 percent until age 62. The American people have spoken very loudly and very clearly. They have told the Congress to restore those cuts to military retirees and we have listened. I applaud the House and the Senate for restoring these cuts for disabled military retirees and survivors in the appropriations act we passed today. Today we took care of part of the problem. But we have to do more. What the comprehensive veterans bill I have introduced today does is restore the full COLA to all military retirees, every single retiree. This bill restores these COLAs and does much more.

I wish to take a moment to highlight some of the key provisions of this comprehensive piece of legislation. Let me say, this legislation is based on listening very carefully to what the veterans organizations have told us in private meetings, in hearings, and at some of the very large hearings we have held with the American Legion, the VFW, the DAV, and many other service organizations. Let me briefly touch on some of the provisions we are addressing, some of the concerns we are addressing in this comprehensive veterans legislation which, I should add, is fully paid for. It is fully paid for.

In the first omnibus bill that we passed, S. 944, the Veterans Health and Benefits Improvement Act of 2013, we dealt with in-State tuition assistance for post-9/11 veterans, an issue of great concern to young veterans and to all of the veterans organizations. This package includes provisions the committee's ranking member Senator BURR and I worked together on, that would help servicemembers transition back into civilian life by making recently separated veterans eligible for tuition at the in-State rate.

Given the nature of our Armed Forces, servicemembers have little to no say as to where they reside during military service. Therefore, many of these servicemembers have not had sufficient time to establish residency by the time they go back to school. This legislation would help the transition of our brave men and women who have sacrificed so much in defense of our country by giving them a fair shot at attaining educational goals without incurring an additional financial burden. We address that issue in this legislation.

Clearly one of the issues that has been an embarrassment to all of us is the degree of sexual assault we have seen in the military. What this legislation does is address that issue as well. While the Pentagon, Congress, and other stakeholders continue to work to end sexual assault within the military, something we have to focus on, we must nonetheless do everything we can to ensure that the VA is a welcoming place for those who have survived sexual assault. That is why this legislation includes important provisions that would improve the delivery of care and benefits to individuals who experience sexual trauma by serving in the military. These provisions were inspired by Ruth Moore, a veteran who struggled for 23 years to receive VA disability compensation.

It would expand access to VA counseling and care to active-duty servicemembers and members of the Guard and Reserve who experienced sexual assault during inactive-duty training. It also takes a number of steps to improve the adjudication of disability compensation claims based on military sexual trauma.

This legislation will give the VA additional tools to provide victims of sexual trauma with the care and benefits they need to confront the emotional and physical consequences of these horrific acts. Sexual assault in the military is unacceptable and this committee is, in a significant way, addressing that issue.

One of the concerns we have heard from many veterans and veterans organizations is the issue of overmedication. Many of our veterans come back and receive in some cases 5, 10 different types of pills to address some of the very serious problems they have. What this bill does is expand, among many other things, access to complementary and alternative medicine. The VA already does a good job in that area. This would expand their capability to provide complementary and alternative medicine.

Maintaining the VA's world-class health care system remains a priority for our committee. I am pleased we were able to respond to calls from veterans to increase access to complementary and alternative medicine for the treatment of chronic pain, mental health conditions, and chronic disease. By expanding access to these treatment options—options such as acupuncture, meditation, massage therapy, and many others—we can enhance the likelihood veterans get the care they need in the way that works for them. These treatments are becoming more and more popular. More and more veterans want access to them and that is what we do in this legislation.

Additionally, this legislation calls for the VA to promote healthy weight in veterans by increasing their access to fitness facilities as a healthy weight is critical to combating multiple chronic diseases, including diabetes and heart disease. In other words, the

most cost-effective and best way to treat disease is to prevent that disease by making sure our veterans have the opportunity to keep healthy. This legislation does that as well.

This legislation further honors as veterans certain persons who performed service in the Reserve components of the Armed Forces. I know how important this provision is for all those who wore this Nation's uniforms as members of the Reserves. I am pleased we will finally honor their service with passage of this legislation.

This legislation also expands benefits for surviving spouses, for the spouses of those who gave their lives to defend this country. I want to make special note of provisions that will be included in this package that would also strengthen the benefits and services provided to surviving family members by addressing a number of concerns brought to the attention of this committee by the Gold Star Wives in testimony last year.

Obviously the Gold Star Wives are the spouses of those soldiers who died in combat. Specifically, this bill would provide additional dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses with children in order to provide financial support in the difficult period following the loss of a loved one. This bill would also expand the Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship to include surviving spouses of members of the Armed Forces who died in the line of duty. That means surviving spouses would become eligible for post-9/11 GI bill benefits, setting them and their families up for success in the years to follow.

One of the issues that has occupied a great deal of time and energy on the committee deals with claim processing. We all know that for the last number of years the VA has had a very significant backlog. That is clearly not acceptable. When a veteran brings forth a claim, that claim should be processed in a reasonable period of time with a reasonable degree of accuracy. We are all too well familiar with the challenges of the claims backlog. I am very pleased to see that the VA is making significant progress on this complex issue. They are going from paper to digital. That is a huge process. As a result, the backlog is declining. That is good news, but we have to do more.

This legislation would support VA's ongoing efforts and would make needed improvements to the claims system. Among a number of claims-related provisions, this bill for the first time would require the Department to publicly report on both claims processing goals and actual production. This would allow Congress and the public to closely track and measure VA's progress on this difficult issue. The Secretary of the VA Eric Shinseki has proposed a very ambitious goal for the end of 2015. We want to make sure they are on track.

That is some of the provisions included in the first bill. Let me talk a little about bit about the second omnibus bill. Both of those bills passed unanimously out of committee. The Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits and Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act of 2014 includes provisions from S. 1581, a second omnibus bill that moved out of the committee with unanimous support at the November markup. Here are some of the provisions in that omnibus.

The improvement and expansion of dental care. I don't know about New Mexico, but I can tell you that in Vermont, and in fact in many parts of this country, inability to access affordable dental care is a major crisis. It is true for the general public and it is true for veterans as well. The truth is, right now the VA, with the exception of service-connected oral problems, does not provide dental care to our veterans. I think that is a very significant omission.

What this legislation does is, starting off with a large-scale pilot project, begin the effort to make sure dental care becomes part of VA health care. This is something that I think the veterans throughout this country will be very excited to learn about and to participate in.

Those are some of the provisions that were in the two omnibus bills, and they passed unanimously.

Let me talk about some other legislation that came out of the committee, in some cases with bipartisan support, but not unanimously. The first one deals with advanced appropriations for the VA; that is, S. 932, the Putting Veterans Funding First Act of 2013. That was introduced, as I recall, by Senators BEGICH and BOOZMAN in a bipartisan way. Here is the story, which is very important: As we saw last year, in the event of a prolonged government shutdown, the Veterans' Administration would not have been able to issue disability compensation or pension payments or provide educational benefit to millions of deserving veterans.

The truth is that during that shutdown, we were perhaps a week or 10 days away from disabled veterans, and others, not getting the benefits so many of them depend upon. It is what they depend upon to buy groceries, it is what they depend upon to pay a mortgage, and to make their car payments. We were a week or 10 days away from those veterans not getting those benefits.

I am happy to say that in this legislation we have addressed that issue, and we have moved forward with advanced appropriations for mandatory accounts at the VA.

Our economy is making slow progress. We are creating jobs, but nobody believes we are anywhere near where we want to be. Real unemployment in this country is close to 13 percent. In my view, we owe a great deal to our veterans who have left their families, their jobs, gone abroad, and then when they come back, they are unable to find employment. What our legislation does is put into this comprehensive bill the Renew Our VOW to Hire Heroes, S. 6, the Putting Veterans Back to Work Act of 2013. This legislation would reauthorize provisions from the VOW to Hire Heroes Act, including a 2-year extension to the Veterans Training Assistance Program which retrains unemployed veterans for high-demand occupations. There are other employment provisions in this legislation as well.

Several years ago, under the leadership of our colleague PATTY MURRAY, who was my predecessor as chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, we proudly passed the Caregivers Act. The Caregivers Act was a very important piece of legislation which said to families who were taking care of disabled veterans: We understand what you are doing is very difficult, and we are going to give you some assistance.

The legislation we had passed dealt with post-9/11 veterans and their families. After listening to the concerns of pre-9/11 veterans and their family members, I introduced S. 851, the Caregivers Expansion and Improvement Act of 2013 to extend eligibility for the caregivers programs to veterans' families of all eras. So we took this program, which was working well, and we said we are going to pay attention to the needs of all families who are taking care of men and women who put their lives on the line to defend us and have become disabled, and that is in this legislation as well.

Also in this legislation is language which will extend eligibility to enroll in VA health care, and that is S. 1604. We all know that early diagnosis of health care conditions is critically important. Under the current law, recently separated veterans have 5 years of free health care from the VA. This legislation would extend the period of time for these individuals, including members of the active component, the National Guard, and Reserves. They will be eligible to enroll in the VA health care system for 10 years post deployment. We go from 5 years to 10 years.

This benefit has been incredibly helpful to our most recent generation of servicemembers, and extending the enrollment period will allow more individuals to take advantage of VA's high-quality, cost-effective health care system, including important access to mental health care services.

Additionally, this legislation simplifies the process for determining eligibility for enrollment in VA health care for lower income veterans. Currently VA uses an extremely complex calculation of geographic income thresholds that vary from county to county. You can have one veteran in one county in Vermont, another person living a mile away, and one is eligible for VA health care because of his or her income, but another person with the same income is not eligible. My legislation establishes one income threshold per State, simplifies the process, and

will enable more veterans to be eligible for VA health care.

This legislation also includes S. 131, the Women Veterans and Other Health Care Improvements Act of 2013. With the widespread use of improvised explosive devices throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, both female and male servicemembers have found themselves with increased risk of spinal cord, reproductive, and urinary tract injury. Many of these veterans dreamed of starting a family, but their injuries prevented them from conceiving, and this legislation will help them fulfill their dreams.

We have three more important provisions I want to briefly touch upon, and that is, once again, the restoration of full COLA for all military retirees. In an effort to address concerns regarding the cost-of-living adjustments for all military retirees, this bill would reaffirm the commitment Congress made to our servicemembers and veterans by ensuring consistent and appropriate funding for military retirees and veterans. This very important provision is in this legislation.

Furthermore, there has been a concern that many CBOCs, community-based outreach clinics, that have been planned all over this country have been unable to be built for a variety of technical reasons. We addressed that issue as well. This bill also improves access to mental health treatment for veterans.

Let me conclude by saying we give a lot of speeches about the respect we have for the men and women who put their lives on the line to defend this country. They have come forward through the veterans committee and they have said: We have concerns. We have concerns about health care; we have concerns about how quickly the benefits that we apply for come to us. They have been very loud and clear in saying—and we agree with them—that it is unacceptable that pensions promised to veterans have been cut. There have been many other issues dealing with employment and dealing with education.

What this bill does in a comprehensive way is to say to the veterans of this country—the millions and millions of people who have given so much to us—we hear your concerns. We hear your concerns, and we are going to address your concerns.

I want to take this moment to thank majority leader Senator REID. He has been very supportive of not only veterans in general but supportive of this effort to make sure we keep our promises to the veterans of this country. That bill has been introduced. My hope is we can get it to the floor as soon as possible.

I hope very much that although there is a partisan climate, that on this issue of keeping our promises to the men and women who have put their lives on the line to defend this country, we can come together as a Senate and as a House and have the President sign this bill which will mean so much to so many.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I want to start by thanking Chairman SANDERS of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, where I serve, for his extraordinary vision and leadership and join him in thanking the majority leader for his commitment to this kind of comprehensive and aggressive approach to revise and reinvigorate, reinvent and reform, veterans programs in a comprehensive and overarching approach.

I will be speaking at greater length in the days and weeks to come, but I want to join the Senator in committing all of us—I hope on a bipartisan basis—to this effort to fix the flaws and fulfill the vision this Nation owes to the men and women who have served and sacrificed year after year.

This program recognizes a fundamental truth: We are dealing with different populations of different ages, and within those populations, people with different needs and challenges, and a comprehensive program is necessary to address the obligation. It is an obligation we owe them to make sure that we leave no veteran behind and keep faith with every man and woman who has served and sacrificed for this Nation.

It fixes the flaws of the last budget agreement that reduced the cost-of-living adjustment on retirees' pensions. It commits the Nation to economic opportunity and real jobs—training for the jobs that exist now and the jobs of the future. It reforms loan and aid programs for college education and also for noncollege education.

It addresses the gaps in health care, not just by promising but performing. And, of course, it will also necessarily help veterans who may be preyed upon by schemes and scams, legal or illegal, and that is a very desperate and challenging need for this Nation to address, and hopefully it will do so on a bipartisan basis.

There should be no reason and no justification for opposing an effort that is paid for—and I stress paid for. My hope is we will have bipartisan support for this visionary and courageous measure that says to America's veterans: We will keep faith with you. We will leave no veteran behind.

One of the first promises I made 3 years ago in the first speech I gave on the floor of this Chamber was I would work and fight aggressively for the veterans of this Nation. I intend to work for this program—work to improve it—and continue to listen to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the American Legion, and all of the groups that represent our veterans so ably, and speak for them. The voices and faces of Connecticut's veterans have been with me always, and I see them always when I return. I will work tirelessly for this program.

Again, my thanks to all of the members of the Veterans' Affairs Committee who will be supporting this program, and to our chairman Senator SANDERS for his great leadership.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. MORAN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. THUNE, Mr. PAUL, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. ENZI, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mrs. FISCHER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. JOHNSON, of Wisconsin, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BURR, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. LEE, Mr. COATS, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. KIRK, Mr. WICKER, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. GRAHAM):

S.J. Res. 30. A joint resolution to disapprove a rule of the Environmental Protection Agency relating to greenhouse gas emissions from electric utility generating units; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

S.J. RES. 30

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That Congress disapproves the rule submitted by the Environmental Protection Agency relating to new source performance standards for emissions of carbon dioxide for new affected fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units (published at 79 Fed. Reg. 1430 (January 8, 2014)), and such rule shall have no force or effect.

SENATE RESOLUTION 333—STRONGLY RECOMMENDING THAT THE UNITED STATES RENEGOTIATE THE RETURN OF THE IRAQI JEWISH ARCHIVE TO IRAQ

Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. KAINE, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. MENENDEZ) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 333

Whereas, before the mid-20th century, Baghdad had been a center of Jewish life, culture, and scholarship, dating back to 721 BC;

Whereas, as recently as 1940, Jews made up 25 percent of Baghdad's population;

Whereas, in the 1930's and 1940's, under the leadership of Rasheed Ali, anti-Jewish discrimination increased drastically, including the June 1-2, 1941, Farhud pogrom, in which nearly 180 Jews were killed;

Whereas, in 1948, Zionism was added to the Iraqi criminal code as punishable by death;

Whereas, throughout 1950–1953, Jews were allowed to leave Iraq under the condition that they renounce their citizenship;

Whereas, as result of past persecution, few Jews remain in Iraq today, and many left their possessions and treasured artifacts behind;

Whereas the Ba'ath regime confiscated these artifacts, later dubbed the Iraqi Jewish Archive, from synagogues and communal organizations;

Whereas, on May 6, 2003, members of the United States Armed Forces discovered the Iraqi Jewish Archive, which included 2,700 books and tens of thousands of documents, in the heavily damaged and flooded basement of the Mukhabarat (secret police) headquarters;

Whereas, under great urgency and before adequate time could be dedicated to researching the history of the Iraqi Jewish Archive, an agreement was signed between the National Archives and Records Administration and the Coalition Provisional Authority on August 20, 2003, stating that the Iraqi Jewish Archive would be sent to the United States for restoration and then would be sent back to Iraq after completion;

Whereas, the Iraqi Jewish community is the constituency of the Archive and is now represented by the diaspora outside Iraq;

Whereas, the current Government of Iraq has publicly acknowledged the importance of the Archive and demonstrated a shared respect for the wishes of the Iraqi Jewish diaspora by attending the December 2013 burial of several Torah fragments from the Archive in New York;

Whereas United States taxpayers have invested $3,000,000 to restore the Iraqi Jewish Archive, and the National Archives and Records Administration has worked diligently to preserve the artifacts;

Whereas the National Archives and Records Administration is displaying the Iraqi Jewish Archive in Washington, D.C. from October 11, 2013, to January 5, 2014, and in New York City from February 4, 2014, to May 18, 2014; and

Whereas the Iraqi Embassy to the United States has said that the Iraqi Jewish community, like other communities in Iraq, played a key role in building the country, shared in its prosperity, and also suffered exile and forced departure because of tyranny: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) strongly urges the Department of State to renegotiate with the Government of Iraq the provisions of the original agreement that was signed between the National Archives and Records Administration and the Coalition Provisional Authority in order to ensure that the Iraqi Jewish Archive be kept in a place where its long-term preservation and care can be guaranteed;

(2) recognizes that the Iraqi Jewish Archive should be housed in a location that is accessible to scholars and to Iraqi Jews and their descendants who have a personal interest in it;

(3) recognizes that the agreement between the National Archives and Records Administration and the Coalition Provisional Authority was signed before knowing the complete history of the Iraqi Jewish Archive;

(4) reaffirms the United States commitment to cultural property under international law; and

(5) reaffirms the United States commitment to ensuring justice for victims of ethnic and religious persecution.

SENATE RESOLUTION 334—RECOGNIZING THE GOALS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK AND HONORING THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. VITTER (for himself and Mr. JOHANNS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

S. RES. 334

Whereas Catholic schools in the United States have received international acclaim for academic excellence while providing students with lessons that extend far beyond the classroom;

Whereas Catholic schools present a broad curriculum that emphasizes the lifelong development of moral, intellectual, physical, and social values in the young people of the United States;

Whereas Catholic schools in the United States today educate 2,001,740 students and maintain a student-to-teacher ratio of 13 to 1;

Whereas the faculty members of Catholic schools teach a highly diverse body of students;

Whereas the graduation rate for all Catholic school is 99 percent;

Whereas 85 percent of Catholic high school graduates go on to college;

Whereas Catholic schools produce students who are strongly dedicated to faith, values, families, and communities by providing an intellectually stimulating environment rich in spiritual character and moral development; and

Whereas in the 1972 pastoral message concerning Catholic education, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops stated: ''Education is one of the most important ways by which the Church fulfills its commitment to the dignity of the person and building of community. Community is central to education ministry, both as a necessary condition and an ardently desired goal. The educational efforts of the Church, therefore, must be directed to forming persons-in-community; for the education of the individual Christian is important not only to his solitary destiny, but also the destinies of the many communities in which he lives.'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the goals of Catholic Schools Week, an event cosponsored by the National Catholic Educational Association and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops that recognizes the vital contributions of thousands of Catholic elementary and secondary schools in the United States; and

(2) commends Catholic schools, students, parents, and teachers across the United States for ongoing contributions to education and for playing a vital role in promoting and ensuring a brighter, stronger future for the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 335—DESIGNATING JANUARY 2014 AS ''NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH''

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARPER, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. SCOTT, Ms. WARREN, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COCHRAN, and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 335

Whereas the goals of National Mentoring Month are to raise awareness of mentoring, recruit individuals to volunteer as mentors, and encourage organizations to engage and integrate quality mentoring into their efforts;

Whereas mentoring is a longstanding tradition in which a dependable, caring adult provides guidance, support, and encouragement to facilitate the social, emotional, and cognitive development of a young person;

Whereas a mentor is a caring, consistent presence who devotes time to a young person to help that young person discover personal strength and achieve their potential through a structured and trusting relationship;

Whereas research on mentoring shows that formal, high-quality mentoring programs focused on developing the competence and character of mentees promote positive outcomes, such as improved academic achievement, self-esteem, social skills, and career development;

Whereas research shows that young people who are matched with a caring adult through a quality mentoring program are 46 percent less likely to use illegal drugs, 27 percent less likely to start drinking, 52 percent less likely to skip school, 37 percent less likely to skip class, and are more trusting of their parents or guardians;

Whereas more than 5,000 mentoring programs in communities of all sizes across the United States focus on building strong, effective relationships between mentors and mentees;

Whereas approximately 3,000,000 young people in the United States are in formal mentoring relationships due to the remarkable vigor, creativity, and resourcefulness of the thousands of mentoring programs in communities throughout the United States;

Whereas in spite of the progress made to increase mentoring, the United States has a serious ''mentoring gap'', with nearly 15,000,000 young people in need of mentors;

Whereas, in 2012, 399,546 children were in foster care in the United States, many of whom were without a mentor and 26,000 of whom ''aged out'' of foster care by reaching adulthood without being placed in a permanent home;

Whereas mentor programs that serve foster children are unique and require additional considerations, including specialized training and support necessary to provide for consistent, meaningful, and long-term relationships for children in foster care;

Whereas mentoring is a proven cost-effective investment;

Whereas for every dollar invested in mentoring, there is a 3 dollar return to society;

Whereas mentoring partnerships between the public and private sectors bring State and local leaders together to support mentoring programs by preventing duplication of efforts, offering training in industry best practices, and making the most of limited resources to benefit young people in the United States;

Whereas the designation of January 2014 as ''National Mentoring Month'' will call attention to the critical role mentors play in helping young people realize their potential; and

Whereas a month-long celebration of mentoring will encourage more individuals and organizations, including schools, businesses, nonprofit organizations, faith institutions, and foundations, to become engaged in mentoring and close the mentoring gap in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the month of January 2014 as ''National Mentoring Month'';

(2) recognizes with gratitude the contributions of the millions of caring adults and students who are already serving as mentors and encourages more adults and students to volunteer as mentors;

(3) supports the goals of mentoring to increase educational achievement, reduce juvenile delinquency, and improve life outcomes for mentees; and

(4) promotes the creation and expansion of quality mentoring programs across the country to equip more young people with the

tools needed to lead healthy and productive lives.

SENATE RESOLUTION 336—DESIGNATING THE FIRST WEEK OF APRIL 2014 AS ''NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK''

Mr. BAUCUS (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. REID, and Mr. TESTER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 336

Whereas dangerous asbestos fibers are invisible and cannot be smelled or tasted;

Whereas the inhalation of airborne asbestos fibers can cause significant damage;

Whereas asbestos fibers can cause cancer such as mesothelioma, asbestosis, and other health problems;

Whereas symptoms of asbestos-related diseases can take 10 to 50 years to present themselves;

Whereas the projected life expectancy for an individual diagnosed with mesothelioma is between 6 and 24 months;

* * * *lioma, at a significantly higher rate than people in the United States as a whole; and

Whereas the designation of a ''National Asbestos Awareness Week'' will raise public awareness about the prevalence of asbestos-related diseases and the dangers of asbestos exposure: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the first week of April 2014 as ''National Asbestos Awareness Week'';

(2) urges the Surgeon General of the United States to warn and educate people about the public health issue of asbestos exposure, which may be hazardous to their health; and

(3) respectfully requests that the Secretary of the Senate transmit a copy of this resolution to the Office of the Surgeon General.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2660. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2661. Mr. SESSIONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2662. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LEE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. HOEVEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2663. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2664. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2665. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2666. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2667. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2668. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2669. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2670. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2671. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2672. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2673. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2674. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2675. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2676. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2677. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2678. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2679. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2680. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2681. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2682. Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEE, and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2683. Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2684. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2685. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2686. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2687. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2688. Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. UDALL of Colorado) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2689. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2690. Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2691. Mrs. HAGAN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1846, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2660. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In title VII of division A, strike section 745.

SA 2661. Mr. SESSIONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page __, between lines __ and __, insert the following:

SEC. ___. REPEAL OF ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT OF RETIRED PAY AND RETAINER PAY AMOUNTS FOR RETIRED MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES UNDER AGE 62.

Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 (Public Law 113–67), as of the date of the enactment of such Act, is hereby repealed, and that section and the amendments made by that section shall be null and void and have had no effect.

SEC. ___. SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUIRED TO CLAIM THE REFUNDABLE PORTION OF THE CHILD TAX CREDIT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d) of section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT WITH RESPECT TO TAXPAYER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any taxpayer for any taxable year unless the taxpayer includes the taxpayer's Social Security number on the return of tax for such taxable year.

''(B) JOINT RETURNS.—In the case of a joint return, the requirement of subparagraph (A) shall be treated as met if the Social Security number of either spouse is included on such return.

''(C) LIMITATION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to the extent the tentative minimum tax (as defined in section 55(b)(1)(A)) exceeds the credit allowed under section 32.''.

(b) OMISSION TREATED AS MATHEMATICAL OR CLERICAL ERROR.—Subparagraph (I) of section 6213(g)(2) of such Code is amended to read as follows:

''(I) an omission of a correct Social Security number required under section 24(d)(5) (relating to refundable portion of child tax credit), or a correct TIN under section 24(e) (relating to child tax credit), to be included on a return,''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (e) of section 24 of such Code is amended by inserting ''WITH RESPECT TO QUALIFYING CHILDREN'' after ''IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT'' in the heading thereof.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2662. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. LEE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. HOEVEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 748, between lines 20 and 21, insert the following:

PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES

For necessary expenses to carry out the payment in lieu of taxes program under chapter 69 of title 31, United States Code, $421,000,000.

On page 1167, line 12, strike ''$2,982,967,000'' and insert ''$2,950,247,000''.

On page 1186, lines 8 through 11, strike ''$344,020,000'' and all that follows through ''Convention on Climate Change'' and insert ''$334,020,000''.

On page 1186, strike lines 16 through 20.

On page 1187, strike lines 14 through 23.

On page 1357, strike lines 1 through 13.

On page 1357, line 16, strike ''$123,500,000''and insert ''$90,780,000''

SA 2663. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. _____. DEDUCTION FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part VII of subchapter B of chapter 1 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (relating to additional itemized deductions for individuals) is amended by redesignating section 224 as section 225 and by inserting after section 223 the following new section:

''SEC. 224. DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.

''(a) DEDUCTION ALLOWED.—In the case of a eligible individual, there shall be allowed as a deduction for the taxable year an amount equal to the aggregate amount paid during such taxable year by or on behalf of such individual to a disaster savings account of such individual.

''(b) LIMITATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The amount allowed as a deduction under subsection (a) to an individual for the taxable year shall not exceed $5,000.

''(2) PARTIAL YEAR OF ELIGIBILITY.—In the case of an individual who is an eligible individual for only a portion of the taxable year, the limitation under paragraph (1) shall be same proportion of $5,000 as such portion bears to the entire taxable year.

''(c) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL.—For purposes of this section, the term 'eligible individual' means any individual if such individual occupied any residence in the United States at any time during the taxable year.

''(d) DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNT.—For purposes of this section—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The term 'disaster savings account' means a trust created or organized in the United States as a disaster savings account exclusively for the purpose of paying the qualified disaster expenses of the account beneficiary, but only if the written governing instrument creating the trust meets the following requirements:

''(A) Except in the case of a rollover contribution described in subsection (f)(5), no contribution will be accepted—

''(i) unless it is in cash, or

''(ii) to the extent such contribution, when added to previous contributions to the trust for the calendar year, exceeds the dollar limitation in effect under subsection (b).

''(B) The trustee is a bank (as defined in section 408(n)), an insurance company (as defined in section 816), or another person who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the manner in which such person will administer the trust will be consistent with the requirements of this section.

''(C) No part of the trust assets will be invested in life insurance contracts.

''(D) The assets of the trust will not be commingled with other property except in a common trust fund or common investment fund.

''(E) The interest of an individual in the balance in his account is nonforfeitable.

''(2) QUALIFIED DISASTER EXPENSES.—The term 'qualified disaster expenses' means—

''(A) disaster mitigation expenses, and

''(B) disaster recovery expenses.

''(3) DISASTER MITIGATION EXPENSES.—The term 'disaster mitigation expenses' means expenses for any of the following with respect to the residence referred to in subsection (c):

''(A) Tornado safe rooms manufactured or constructed in accordance with FEMA 320 or FEMA 361 guidance or tornado shelters manufactured or constructed in accordance with the National Storm Shelter/International Code Council 500 standard.

''(B) Opening protection, including impact and wind resistant windows, exterior doors, and garage doors.

''(C) Reinforcement of roof-to-wall and floor-to-wall connections for wind or seismic activity.

''(D) Roof covering for impact, fire, or high wind resistance.

''(E) Cripple and shear walls to resist seismic activity.

''(F) Flood resistant building materials.

''(G) Elevating structures and utilities above base flood elevation.

''(H) Fire resistant exterior wall assemblies/systems.

''(I) Lightning protection systems.

''(J) Whole home standby generators.

''(K) Any activity specified by the Secretary as appropriate to mitigate the risks of future hazards (including earthquake, flood, hail, hurricane, lightning, power outage, tornado and wildfire) and other natural disasters.

''(4) DISASTER RECOVERY EXPENSES.—The term 'disaster recovery expenses' means with respect to the residence referred to in subsection (c) any expense incurred to replace or repair disaster-related uninsured personal casualty personal losses totaling $3,000 or greater.

''(5) DISASTER-RELATED UNINSURED PERSONAL CASUALTY LOSS.—The term 'disaster-related uninsured personal casualty loss' means a personal casualty loss (as defined in section 165(h)(4)(B), determined without regard to the second sentence thereof) attributable to a State or federally declared disaster for which a deduction is allowable under section 165 (without regard to subsection (h)(1)).

''(6) FEDERALLY DECLARED DISASTER.—The term 'federally declared disaster' has the meaning given such term by section 165(h)(3)(C).

''(7) ACCOUNT BENEFICIARY.—The term 'account beneficiary' means the individual on whose behalf the disaster savings account was established.

''(e) TREATMENT OF ACCOUNT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A disaster savings account is exempt from taxation under this subtitle unless such account has ceased to be a disaster savings account. Notwithstanding the preceding sentence, any such account is subject to the taxes imposed by section 511 (relating to imposition of tax on unrelated business income of charitable, etc. organizations).

''(2) ACCOUNT TERMINATIONS.—Rules similar to the rules of paragraphs (2) and (4) of section 408(e) shall apply to disaster savings accounts, and any amount treated as distributed under such rules shall be treated as not used to pay disaster mitigation expenses.

''(f) TAX TREATMENT OF DISTRIBUTIONS.—

''(1) AMOUNTS USED FOR DISASTER MITIGATION EXPENSES.—Any amount paid or distributed out of a disaster savings account which is used exclusively to pay qualified disaster expenses of any account beneficiary shall not be includible in gross income.

''(2) INCLUSION OF AMOUNTS NOT USED FOR DISASTER MITIGATION EXPENSES.—Any amount paid or distributed out of a disaster savings account which is not used exclusively to pay the qualified disaster expenses of the account beneficiary shall be included in the gross income of such beneficiary.

''(3) EXCESS CONTRIBUTIONS RETURNED BEFORE DUE DATE OF RETURN.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If any excess contribution is contributed for a taxable year to any disaster savings account of an individual, paragraph (2) shall not apply to distributions from the disaster savings accounts of such individual (to the extent such distributions

do not exceed the aggregate excess contributions to all such accounts of such individual for such year) if—

''(i) such distribution is received by the individual on or before the last day prescribed by law (including extensions of time) for filing such individual's return for such taxable year, and

''(ii) such distribution is accompanied by the amount of net income attributable to such excess contribution.

Any net income described in clause (ii) shall be included in the gross income of the individual for the taxable year in which it is received.

''(B) EXCESS CONTRIBUTION.—For purposes of subparagraph (A), the term 'excess contribution' means any contribution (other than a rollover contribution described in paragraph (5)) which is not deductible under this section.

''(4) ADDITIONAL TAX ON DISTRIBUTIONS NOT USED FOR DISASTER MITIGATION EXPENSES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The tax imposed by this chapter on the account beneficiary for any taxable year in which there is a payment or distribution from a disaster savings account of such beneficiary which is includible in gross income under paragraph (2) shall be increased by 20 percent of the amount which is so includible.

''(B) EXCEPTION FOR DISABILITY OR DEATH.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply if the payment or distribution is made after the account beneficiary becomes disabled within the meaning of section 72(m)(7) or dies.

''(5) ROLLOVER CONTRIBUTION.—An amount is described in this paragraph as a rollover contribution if it meets the requirements of subparagraphs (A) and (B).

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) shall not apply to any amount paid or distributed from a disaster savings account to the account beneficiary to the extent the amount received is paid into a disaster savings account for the benefit of such beneficiary not later than the 60th day after the day on which the beneficiary receives the payment or distribution.

''(B) LIMITATION.—This paragraph shall not apply to any amount described in subparagraph (A) received by an individual from a disaster savings account if, at any time during the 1-year period ending on the day of such receipt, such individual received any other amount described in subparagraph (A) from a disaster savings account which was not includible in the individual's gross income because of the application of this paragraph.

''(g) COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the case of a taxable year beginning after 2015, the $5,000 amount in subsection (b) shall be increased by an amount equal to—

''(A) such dollar amount, multiplied by

''(B) the cost-of-living adjustment determined under section 1(f)(3) for the calendar year in which such taxable year begins determined by substituting 'calendar year 2014' for 'calendar year 1992' in subparagraph (B) thereof.

''(2) ROUNDING.—If any increase under paragraph (1) is not a multiple of $50, such increase shall be rounded to the nearest multiple of $50.

''(h) SPECIAL RULES.—

''(1) DENIAL OF DEDUCTION TO DEPENDENTS.—No deduction shall be allowed under this section to any individual with respect to whom a deduction under section 151 is allowable to another taxpayer for a taxable year beginning in the calendar year in which such individual's taxable year begins.

''(2) TAXABLE YEAR MUST BE FULL TAXABLE YEAR.—Except in the case of a taxable year closed by reason of the death of the taxpayer, no deduction shall be allowed under this section in the case of a taxable year covering a period of less than 12 months.

''(3) CERTAIN RULES TO APPLY.—Rules similar to the following rules shall apply for purposes of this section:

''(A) Section 219(d)(2) (relating to no deduction for rollovers).

''(B) Section 219(f)(3) (relating to time when contributions deemed made).

''(C) Section 219(f)(5) (relating to employer payments).

''(D) Section 408(g) (relating to community property laws).

''(E) Section 408(h) (relating to custodial accounts).

''(F) Section 224(f)(7) (relating to transfer of account incident to divorce).

''(G) Section 224(f)(8) (relating to treatment after death of account beneficiary).

''(4) COORDINATION WITH CASUALTY LOSS DEDUCTION.—No deduction shall be allowed under section 165 for a loss for which a disaster recovery expense payment is made from a disaster savings account.

''(i) REPORTS.—The Secretary may require the trustee of a disaster savings account to make such reports regarding such account to the Secretary and to the account beneficiary with respect to contributions, distributions, the return of excess contributions, and such other matters as the Secretary determines appropriate.''.

(b) DEDUCTION ALLOWED WHETHER OR NOT INDIVIDUAL ITEMIZES OTHER DEDUCTIONS.—Subsection (a) of section 62 of such Code is amended by inserting after paragraph (21) the following new paragraph:

''(22) DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.—The deduction allowed by section 224.''.

(c) TAX ON EXCESS CONTRIBUTIONS.—Section 4973 of such Code (relating to tax on excess contributions to certain tax-favored accounts and annuities) is amended—

(1) by striking ''or'' at the end of subsection (a)(4), by inserting ''or'' at the end of subsection (a)(5), and by inserting after subsection (a)(5) the following new paragraph:

''(6) a disaster savings account (within the meaning of section 224(d)),'', and

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

''(h) EXCESS CONTRIBUTIONS TO DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.—For purposes of this section, in the case of disaster savings accounts (within the meaning of section 224(d)), the term 'excess contributions' means the sum of—

''(1) the aggregate amount contributed for the taxable year to the accounts (other than a rollover contribution described in section 224(f)(5)) which is not allowable as a deduction under section 224 for such year, and

''(2) the amount determined under this subsection for the preceding taxable year, reduced by the sum of—

''(A) the distributions out of the accounts which were included in gross income under section 224(f)(2), and

''(B) the excess (if any) of—

''(i) the maximum amount allowable as a deduction under section 224(b) for the taxable year, over

''(ii) the amount contributed to the accounts for the taxable year.

For purposes of this subsection, any contribution which is distributed out of the disaster savings account in a distribution to which section 224(f)(3) applies shall be treated as an amount not contributed.''.

(d) FAILURE TO PROVIDE REPORTS ON DISASTER SAVINGS ACCOUNTS.—Paragraph (2) of section 6693(a) of such Code (relating to reports) is amended by redesignating subparagraphs (D) and (E) as subparagraphs (E) and (F), respectively, and by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following new subparagraph:

''(D) section 224(i) (relating to disaster savings accounts),''.

(e) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections for part VII of subchapter B of chapter 1 of such Code is amended by striking the last item and inserting the following:

''Sec. 224. Disaster savings accounts.
''Sec. 225. Cross reference.''.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2664. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I of division D, insert the following:

SEC. 117. (a) In this section—

(1) the term ''Fund'' means the land and water conservation fund established under section 2 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–5);

(2) the term ''level of receipts'' means the level of taxes, receipts, bonuses, and rents credited to the Fund for a fiscal year as set forth in the budget baseline projection of the President, as determined under section 257 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 907), for that fiscal year submitted pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code; and

(3) the term ''total budget resources'' means the total amount made available by appropriations Acts from the Fund for a fiscal year for making expenditures under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–4 et seq.), as determined by the Chairman of the Committee on the Budget of the Senate.

(b)(1) For each fiscal year, the total budget resources made available from the Fund shall be equal to the level of receipts credited to the Fund for that fiscal year.

(2) The amounts described in paragraph (1) shall be used only to carry out land and water conservation activities authorized under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–4 et seq.).

(3) No amounts may be appropriated for land and water conservation activities authorized under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 460*l*–4 et seq.) unless the requirement under paragraph (1) has been met.

(c) It shall not be in order in the House of Representatives or the Senate to consider any Act making appropriations that would cause total budget resources for a fiscal year for land and water conservation activities described in subsection (b)(2) for that fiscal year to be less than the amount required by subsection (b)(1) for that fiscal year.

SA 2665. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I of division L, insert the following:

SEC. 193. Section 610 of title 23, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

''(A) 10 percent of the funds apportioned to the State for each of fiscal years 2013 and 2014 under each of sections 104(b)(1), 104(b)(2), and 144; and'';

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''2005 through 2009'' and inserting ''2013 and 2014'';

(C) in paragraph (3), by striking ''2005 through 2009'' and inserting ''2013 and 2014''; and

(D) in paragraph (5), by striking ''section 133(d)(3)'' and inserting ''section 133(d)(4)'';

(2) in subsection (h)(2)—

(A) in the first sentence, by striking ''shall'' and inserting ''shall not''; and

(B) in the second sentence, by striking ''shall'' and inserting ''shall not''; and

(3) in subsection (k), by striking ''2005 through 2009'' and inserting ''2013 and 2014''.

SA 2666. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In title I of division L, after section 142, insert the following:

HOURS OF SERVICE OF DRIVERS

SEC. 143. (a) FUNDING RESTRICTION.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, none of the funds provided in this Act may be used to implement the revised 34-hour restart provision published by the Department of Transportation in the Federal Register on December 27, 2011, as part of the rule entitled ''Hours of Service of Drivers'' (76 Fed. Reg. 81134) until the date that is 6 months after the date on which the Comptroller General submits the final report required under subsection (c)(3).

(b) DELAY IN APPLICATION OF RULE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The 34-hour restart rule published by the Department of Transportation in the Federal Register on December 27, 2011, shall have no force or effect during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act and ending 6 months after the Comptroller General submits the report required under subsection (c)(3).

(2) APPLICATION OF PREVIOUS RULE PROVISION.—The 34-hour restart rule issued on April 28, 2003 (68 Fed. Reg. 22456), shall be in effect during the period described in paragraph (1).

(3) DECEMBER 2011 RULE.—The Secretary of Transportation shall not apply the rule described in paragraph (1) if the conclusions of the field study completed pursuant to section 32301(a) of MAP–21 do not support or concur with the conclusions of the laboratory study on which such rule was based.

(c) GAO REPORT.—

(1) ASSESSMENT OF METHODOLOGY FOR MAP–21 RESTART STUDY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—After the report regarding the field study on the efficacy of the 34-hour restart rule, published on December 27, 2011, is submitted to Congress pursuant to section 32301(a) of MAP–21, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct an assessment of the methodology followed by the Secretary of Transportation in carrying out the efficacy of such restart rule.

(B) SCOPE.—The assessment required under subparagraph (A) shall determine the extent to which the methodology followed by the Secretary meets the requirement under MAP–21 that—

(i) the data collected is representative of the drivers subject to the restart rule;

(ii) the methodology is statistically valid; and

(iii) the study followed the plan for the ''Scheduling and Fatigue Recovery Project'' developed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

(2) ASSESSMENT OF REGULATORY IMPACT ANALYSIS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General shall conduct an assessment of the regulatory impact analysis that accompanied the final rule published by the Department of Transportation in the Federal Register on December 27, 2011, entitled ''Hours of Service of Drivers'' (76 Fed. Reg. 81134).

(B) SCOPE.—The assessment required under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) an analysis of the methodology and data used by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration in its Regulatory Impact Analysis;

(ii) an evaluation of the validity and representativeness of the driver data used to evaluate the operational and economic impacts of the new 34-hour restart rule applicable to operators of commercial motor vehicles;

(iii) an analysis of the data and methodology used to develop the proposed safety and health benefits of the new 34-hour restart rule applicable to operators of commercial motor vehicles;

(iv) a review of the safety, health, cost, and operational implications of the restart rule, and the potential impact of a greater number of commercial motor vehicles on major roads during ''morning commutes'' as a result of the restart rule; and

(v) a review of the research used in developing and justifying the new restart rule, particularly as the rule relates to the use of a laboratory test to justify the rule rather than an operational test in the field.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit a final report to the appropriate committees of Congress on the assessments required under paragraphs (1) and (2), including any recommendations.

SA 2667. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 107, between lines 5 and 6, insert the following:

SEC. 109. SELECTUSA.

(a) PROHIBITION.—None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading ''OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION'' under the heading ''INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION'' may be used to carry out activities of SelectUSA.

(b) REDUCTION.—The amount appropriated or otherwise made available by this title under the heading ''OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION'' under the heading ''INTERNATIONAL TRADE ADMINISTRATION'' is hereby decreased by $7,000,000.

SA 2668. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

After section 537 of title V of division B, insert the following:

SEC. 538. (a) In this section, the term ''Crime Victims Fund amounts'' means the sums described in section 1402(d)(3) of chapter XIV of title II of Public Law 98–473 (42 U.S.C. 10601(d)(3)) that are available for obligation under section 510 of this division.

(b) The Crime Victims Fund amounts—

(1) shall be available for—

(A) the United States Attorneys Offices and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to provide and improve services for the benefit of crime victims in the Federal criminal justice system (as described in 3771 of title 18, United States Code, and section 503 of the Victims' Rights and Restitution Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 10607)) through victim coordinators, victims' specialists, and advocates, including for the administrative support of victim coordinators and advocates providing such services; and

(B) a Victim Notification System; and

(2) may not be used for any purpose that is not specified in subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (1).

SA 2669. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 135, strike lines 8 and 9.

SA 2670. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 127, strike lines 15 and 16.

SA 2671. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 378, lines 14 and 15, strike ''$1,912,104,111, to remain available until expended: *Provided*,'' and insert ''$1,902,104,111, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That none of the funds made available under this heading may be used to maintain or support the Energy Efficient Buildings Hub: *Provided further*,''.

SA 2672. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 32, line 7, strike ''$900,000,000'' and insert ''$360,000,000''.

On page 32, line 19, strike ''$24,480,000'' and insert ''$9,792,000''.

SA 2673. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1394, line 9, insert ''*Provided further*, That none of the funds provided in this Act may be used to subsidize food, beverage, or first class services: '' after ''Public Law 112–55:''.

SA 2674. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1449, line 7, strike ''$1,000,000,000'' and insert ''$950,000,000''.

SA 2675. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1354, line 3, strike ''$600,000,000'' and insert ''$475,000,000''.

SA 2676. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Under the heading ''INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE'' in title I of division E, at the end of the matter under the heading ''ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS—INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)'', add the following:

SEC. ____. None of the Funds made available under this Act may be used by the Internal Revenue Service—

(1) to promulgate, finalize, or enforce the proposed regulations published at 78 Fed. Reg. 71535 (November 29, 2013), any successor regulation, or any regulation of substantially similar substance; or

(2) to issue, implement, or enforce any regulation, revenue ruling, or interpretive guidance which delineates political activities that are not for the promotion of the social welfare for purposes of determining whether an organization is described in section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501(a) of such Code, unless such regulation, ruling, or guidance fully protects rights established under the First Amendment of the Constitution.

SA 2677. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

After section 437 of division G, insert the following:

STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING PROJECTS

SEC. 43____. (a) IN GENERAL.—Title VI of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 602. STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING PROJECTS.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) CHIEF.—The term 'Chief' means the Chief of the Forest Service.

''(2) DIRECTOR.—The term 'Director' means the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

''(b) PROJECTS.—The Chief and the Director, via agreement or contract as appropriate, may enter into stewardship contracting projects with private persons or other public or private entities to perform services to achieve land management goals for the national forests and the public lands that meet local and rural community needs.

''(c) LAND MANAGEMENT GOALS.—The land management goals of a project under subsection (b) may include—

''(1) road and trail maintenance or obliteration to restore or maintain water quality;

''(2) soil productivity, habitat for wildlife and fisheries, or other resource values;

''(3) setting of prescribed fires to improve the composition, structure, condition, and health of stands or to improve wildlife habitat;

''(4) removing vegetation or other activities to promote healthy forest stands, reduce fire hazards, or achieve other land management objectives;

''(5) watershed restoration and maintenance;

''(6) restoration and maintenance of wildlife and fish; or

''(7) control of noxious and exotic weeds and reestablishing native plant species.

''(d) AGREEMENTS OR CONTRACTS.—

''(1) PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE.—A source for performance of an agreement or contract under subsection (b) shall be selected on a best-value basis, including consideration of source under other public and private agreements or contracts.

''(2) CONTRACT FOR SALE OF PROPERTY.—A contract entered into under this section may, at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture, be considered a contract for the sale of property under such terms as the Secretary may prescribe without regard to any other provision of law.

''(3) TERM.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Chief and the Director may enter into a contract under subsection (b) in accordance with section 3903 of title 41, United States Code.

''(B) MAXIMUM.—The period of the contract under subsection (b) may exceed 5 years but may not exceed 10 years.

''(4) OFFSETS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may apply the value of timber or other forest products removed as an offset against the cost of services received under the agreement or contract described in subsection (b).

''(B) METHODS OF APPRAISAL.—The value of timber or other forest products used as an offset under subparagraph (A)—

''(i) shall be determined using appropriate methods of appraisal commensurate with the quantity of products to be removed; and

''(ii) may—

''(I) be determined using a unit of measure appropriate to the contracts; and

''(II) may include valuing products on a per-acre basis.

''(5) CANCELLATION CEILINGS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may obligate funds to cover any potential cancellation or termination costs for an agreement or contract under subsection (b) in stages that are economically or programmatically viable.

''(B) NOTICE.—

''(i) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 days before entering into a multiyear agreement or contract under subsection (b) that includes a cancellation ceiling in excess of $25,000,000, but does not include proposed funding for the costs of cancelling the agreement or contract up to the cancellation ceiling established in the agreement or contract, the Chief and the Director shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a written notice that includes—

''(I)(aa) the cancellation ceiling amounts proposed for each program year in the agreement or contract; and

''(bb) the reasons for the cancellation ceiling amounts proposed under item (aa);

''(II) the extent to which the costs of contract cancellation are not included in the budget for the agreement or contract; and

''(III) a financial risk assessment of not including budgeting for the costs of agreement or contract cancellation.

''(ii) TRANSMITTAL TO OMB.—At least 14 days before the date on which the Chief and Director enter into an agreement or contract under subsection (b), the Chief and Director shall transmit to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget a copy of the written notice submitted under clause (i).

''(6) RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.—Notwithstanding subsections (d) and (g) of section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a) and section 2(a)(1) of the Act of July 31, 1947 (commonly known as the 'Materials Act of 1947') (30 U.S.C. 602(a)(1)), the Chief and the Director may enter into an agreement or contract under subsection (b).

''(7) CONTRACTING OFFICER.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary or the Secretary of the Interior may determine the appropriate contracting officer to enter into and administer an agreement or contract under subsection (b).

''(8) FIRE LIABILITY PROVISIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Chief and the Director shall issue for use in all contracts and agreements under subsection (b) fire liability provisions that are in substantially the same form as the fire liability provisions contained in—

''(A) integrated resource timber contracts, as described in the Forest Service contract numbered 2400–13, part H, section H.4; and

''(B) timber sale contracts conducted pursuant to section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a).

''(9) RETROACTIVE APPLICATION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS.—Paragraph (5) and the fire liability provisions issued under paragraph (8) shall also apply to any stewardship contracts and agreements that—

''(A) are entered into during fiscal year 2014 pursuant to the authority provided by section 347 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (as contained in section 101(e) of division A of Public Law 105–277; 16 U.S.C. 2104 note); and

''(B) remain in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

''(e) RECEIPTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may collect monies from an agreement or contract under subsection (b) if the collection is a secondary objective of negotiating the contract that will best achieve the purposes of this section.

''(2) USE.—Monies from an agreement or contract under subsection (b)—

''(A) may be retained by the Chief and the Director; and

''(B) shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation at the project site from which the monies are collected or at another project site.

''(3) RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the value of services received by the Chief or the Director under a stewardship contract project conducted under this section, and any payments made or resources provided by the contractor, Chief, or Director shall not be considered monies received from the National Forest System or the public lands.

''(B) KNUTSON-VANDERBERG ACT.—The Act of June 9, 1930 (commonly known as the 'Knutson-Vanderberg Act') (16 U.S.C. 576 et seq.) shall not apply to any agreement or contract under subsection (b).

''(f) COSTS OF REMOVAL.—Notwithstanding the fact that a contractor did not harvest the timber, the Chief may collect deposits from a contractor covering the costs of removal of timber or other forest products under—

''(1) the Act of August 11, 1916 (16 U.S.C. 490); and

''(2) the Act of June 30, 1914 (16 U.S.C. 498).

''(g) PERFORMANCE AND PAYMENT GUARANTEES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may require performance and payment bonds under sections 28.103–2 and 28.103–3 of

the Federal Acquisition Regulation, in an amount that the contracting officer considers sufficient to protect the investment in receipts by the Federal Government generated by the contractor from the estimated value of the forest products to be removed under a contract under subsection (b).

''(2) EXCESS OFFSET VALUE.—If the offset value of the forest products exceeds the value of the resource improvement treatments, the Chief and the Director shall—

''(A) use the excess to satisfy any outstanding liabilities for cancelled agreements or contracts; or

''(B) if there are no outstanding liabilities under subparagraph (A), apply the excess to other authorized stewardship projects.

''(h) MONITORING AND EVALUATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director shall establish a multiparty monitoring and evaluation process that accesses the stewardship contracting projects conducted under this section.

''(2) PARTICIPANTS.—Other than the Chief and Director, participants in the process described in paragraph (1) may include—

''(A) any cooperating governmental agencies, including tribal governments; and

''(B) any other interested groups or individuals.

''(i) REPORTING.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, and annually thereafter, the Chief and the Director shall report to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives on—

''(1) the status of development, execution, and administration of agreements or contracts under subsection (b);

''(2) the specific accomplishments that have resulted; and

''(3) the role of local communities in the development of agreements or contract plans.''.

(b) OFFSET.—To the extent necessary, the Chief of the Forest Service and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management shall offset any direct spending authorized under section 602 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (as added by subsection (a)) using any additional amounts that may be made available to the Chief or the Director for the applicable fiscal year.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 347 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (16 U.S.C. 2104 note; Public Law 105–277) is repealed.

(2) EFFECT OF REPEAL.—Notwithstanding the amendment made by paragraph (1), nothing in this Act or an amendment made by this Act invalidates or otherwise affects any stewardship contract entered into by the Chief of the Forest Service or the Director of the Bureau of Land Management that is in effect on the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 2678. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM'' under the heading ''NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'' in title I of division G, strike ''$2,236,753,000'' and insert ''$2,236,653,000''.

In the matter under the heading ''OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM'' under the heading ''NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'', before the period at the end, insert '': *Provided,* That none of the funds made available under this heading may be used to carry out the Route 66 corridor preservation program established under Public Law 106–45 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; 113 Stat. 226)''.

SA 2679. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 1341, strike line 20 and all that follows through page 1342, line 2.

SA 2680. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 1343, strike lines 4 through 11.

SA 2681. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 218, line 25, strike ''That of the funds'' and all that follows through ''*further,*'' on page 219, line 17.

SA 2682. Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, Mr. LEE, and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM'' under the heading ''NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'' in title I of division G, insert ''of which $2,000,000 is available to the Director of the National Park Service to refund to each State all funds of the State that were used to reopen and temporarily operate a unit of the National Park System during the period in October 2013 in which there was a lapse in appropriations for the unit and'' before ''of which''.

SA 2683. Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. HATCH, and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''OPERATION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM'' under the heading ''NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'' in title I of division G, insert ''of which $2,000,000 shall be transferred to the general fund of the Treasury and used for Federal budget deficit reduction and'' before ''of which''.

SA 2684. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. ENZI, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. COCHRAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 362, strike line 5 and all that follows through page 364, line 18, and insert the following:

SEC. 10001. REPEAL OF REDUCTIONS MADE BY BIPARTISAN BUDGET ACT OF 2013.

(a) REPEAL.—Section 403 of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 is repealed as of the date of the enactment of such Act.

(b) SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER REQUIRED TO CLAIM THE REFUNDABLE PORTION OF THE CHILD TAX CREDIT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (d) of section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(5) IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT WITH RESPECT TO TAXPAYER.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) shall not apply to any taxpayer for any taxable year unless the taxpayer includes the taxpayer's Social Security number on the return of tax for such taxable year.

''(B) JOINT RETURNS.—In the case of a joint return, the requirement of subparagraph (A) shall be treated as met if the Social Security number of either spouse is included on such return.

''(C) LIMITATION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to the extent the tentative minimum tax (as defined in section 55(b)(1)(A)) exceeds the credit allowed under section 32.''.

(2) OMISSION TREATED AS MATHEMATICAL OR CLERICAL ERROR.—Subparagraph (I) of section 6213(g)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

''(I) an omission of a correct Social Security number required under section 24(d)(5) (relating to refundable portion of child tax credit), or a correct TIN under section 24(e) (relating to child tax credit), to be included on a return,''.

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Subsection (e) of section 24 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting ''WITH RESPECT TO QUALIFYING CHILDREN'' after ''IDENTIFICATION REQUIREMENT'' in the heading thereof.

(4) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2685. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

No funds made available under any portion of this Act shall be used to carry out any provisions of federal law, including the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148) or title I and subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152), or of the amendments made by either such Act, so long as those statutes have the effect causing Americans to lose any health insurance policy they wish to keep, increasing the premiums of any health insurance policy by which the individual is currently covered, or resulting in the inability of any American to obtain treatment from the doctors by which a patient is currently treated.

SA 2686. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

No funds made available under any portion of this Act shall be used to carry out any provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148) or title I and subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–152), or of the amendments made by either such Act, and Section 403 of Pub. L. 113–67 is hereby repealed.

SA 2687. Mr. CRUZ submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. PROHIBITION ON FUNDING FOR THE PATIENT PROTECTION AND AFFORDABLE CARE ACT.

No funds made available under any portion of this Act shall be used to carry out any provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111-148) or title I and subtitle B of title II of the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-152), or the amendments made by either such Act.

SA 2688. Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. UDALL of Colorado) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3547, making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2014, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In the matter under the heading ''DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS'' under the heading ''OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY'' under the heading '' 'DEPARTMENTAL OFFICES' '' in title I of division G, strike ''$264,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2015'' and insert ''$689,000,000, to remain available until September 30, 2015; of which $425,000,000 shall be made available for necessary expenses of the payment in lieu of taxes program under chapter 69 of title 31, United States Code''.

After section 437 of division G, insert the following:

OFFSET FOR PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES PROGRAM

SEC. 43____. (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 251(c)(1)(B) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901(c)(1)(B)) is amended by striking ''491,773,000,000'' and inserting ''$492,198,000,000''.

(b) OFFSETTING REDUCTION IN NON-MEDICARE DIRECT SPENDING.—Section 251A of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 901a) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(11) ADDITIONAL REDUCTION OF NON-MEDICARE DIRECT SPENDING.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—For each of the fiscal years 2015 through 2023, in addition to the reduction in direct spending under paragraph (6), on the date specified in paragraph (2), OMB shall prepare and the President shall order a sequestration, effective upon issuance, reducing the spending described in subparagraph (B) by the uniform percentage necessary to reduce such spending for the fiscal year by $47,223,000.

''(B) SPENDING COVERED.—The spending described in this paragraph is spending that is—

''(i) nonexempt direct spending;

''(ii) not spending for the Medicare programs specified in section 256(d); and

''(iii) within the revised nonsecurity category.''.

SA 2689. Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1____. FLOOD MITIGATION METHODS FOR URBAN BUILDINGS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall issue guidelines for property owners that—

(1) provide alternative methods of mitigation, other than building elevation, to reduce flood risk to urban residential buildings that cannot be elevated due to their structural characteristics, including—

(A) types of building materials; and

(B) types of floodproofing; and

(2) inform property owners about how the implementation of mitigation methods described in paragraph (1) may affect risk premium rates for flood insurance coverage under the National Flood Insurance Program.

(b) CALCULATION OF RISK PREMIUM RATES.—In calculating the risk premium rate charged for flood insurance for a property under section 1308 of the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4015), the Administrator shall take into account the implementation of any mitigation method identified by the Administrator in the guidance issued under subsection (a) of this section.

SA 2690. Mr. HELLER (for himself and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1____. AUTHORITY OF STATES TO REGULATE PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE.

Section 102(b)(7) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(b)(7)) is amended to read as follows:

''(7) PRIVATE FLOOD INSURANCE DEFINED.—In this subsection, the term 'private flood insurance' means an insurance policy that—

''(A) provides flood insurance coverage; and

''(B) is issued by an insurance company that is—

''(i) licensed, admitted, or otherwise approved to engage in the business of insurance in the State or jurisdiction in which the insured building is located, by the insurance regulator of that State or jurisdiction;

''(ii) eligible as a nonadmitted insurer to provide insurance in the State or jurisdiction where the property to be insured is located, in accordance with section 524 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act (15 U.S.C. 8204); or

''(iii) not disapproved as a surplus lines insurer by the insurance regulator of the State or jurisdiction where the property to be insured is located.''.

SA 2691. Mrs. HAGAN (for herself and Mr. PRYOR) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 1____. EXCEPTIONS TO ESCROW REQUIREMENT FOR FLOOD INSURANCE PAYMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), in the second sentence, by striking ''subparagraph (C)'' and inserting ''subparagraph (B)''; and

(2) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) in clause (ii), by redesignating subclauses (I) and (II) as items (aa) and (bb), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(B) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subclauses (I) and (II), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(C) in the matter preceding subclause (I), as redesignated by subparagraph (B), by striking ''(A) or (B), if—'' and inserting the following: ''(A)—

''(i) if—'';

(D) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(E) by adding at the end the following

''(ii) in the case of a loan that—

''(I) is in a junior or subordinate position to a senior lien secured by the same residential improved real estate or mobile home for which flood insurance is being provided at the time of the origination of the loan;

''(II) is secured by residential improved real estate or a mobile home that is part of a condominium, cooperative, or other project development, if the residential improved real estate or mobile home is covered by a flood insurance policy that—

''(aa) meets the requirements that the regulated lending institution is required to enforce under subsection (b)(1);

''(bb) is provided by the condominium association, cooperative, homeowners association, or other applicable group; and

''(cc) the premium for which is paid by the condominium association, cooperative, homeowners association, or other applicable group as a common expense;

''(III) is secured by residential improved real estate or a mobile home that is used as collateral for a business purpose;

''(IV) is a home equity line of credit;

''(V) is a nonperforming loan; or

''(VI) has a term of not longer than 12 months.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—

(A) REQUIRED APPLICATION.—The amendments to section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) made by section 100209(a) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920) and by subsection (a) of this section shall apply to any loan that is originated, refinanced, increased, extended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2016.

(B) OPTIONAL APPLICATION.—

(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this subparagraph—

(I) the terms ''Federal entity for lending regulation'', ''improved real estate'', ''regulated lending institution'', and ''servicer'' have the meanings given the terms in section 3 of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4003);

(II) the term ''outstanding loan'' means a loan that—

(aa) is outstanding as of January 1, 2016;

(bb) is not subject to the requirement to escrow premiums and fees for flood insurance under section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)) as in effect on July 5, 2012; and

(cc) would, if the loan had been originated, refinanced, increased, extended, or renewed on or after January 1, 2016, be subject to the requirements under section 102(d)(1)(A) of

the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended; and

(III) the term ''section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended'' means section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)(A)), as amended by—

(aa) section 100209(a) of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920); and

(bb) subsection (a) of this section.

(ii) OPTION TO ESCROW FLOOD INSURANCE PAYMENTS.—Each Federal entity for lending regulation (after consultation and coordination with the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council) shall, by regulation, direct that each regulated lending institution or servicer of an outstanding loan shall offer and make available to a borrower the option to have the borrower's payment of premiums and fees for flood insurance under the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 4001 et seq.), including the escrow of such payments, be treated in the same manner provided under section 102(d)(1)(A) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, as amended.

(2) REPEAL OF 2-YEAR DELAY ON APPLICABILITY.—Subsection (b) of section 100209 of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–141; 126 Stat. 920) is repealed.

(3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section or the amendments made by this section shall be construed to supersede, during the period beginning on July 6, 2012 and ending on December 31, 2015, the requirements under section 102(d)(1) of the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4012a(d)(1)), as in effect on July 5, 2012.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS ON JANUARY 15, 2014

SA 2652. Mr. REED submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1846, to delay the implementation of certain provisions of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

TITLE II—UNEMPLOYMENT PROVISIONS

SEC. 201. EXTENSION OF EMERGENCY UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION PROGRAM.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 4007(a)(2) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by striking ''January 1, 2014'' and inserting ''January 1, 2015''.

(b) FUNDING.—Section 4004(e)(1) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (I), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (J), by inserting ''and'' at the end; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (J) the following:

''(K) the amendment made by section 201(a) of the 'Homeowner Flood Insurance Affordability Act of 2013';''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240).

SEC. 202. TEMPORARY EXTENSION OF EXTENDED BENEFIT PROVISIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 2005 of the Assistance for Unemployed Workers and Struggling Families Act, as contained in Public Law 111–5 (26 U.S.C. 3304 note), is amended—

(1) by striking ''December 31, 2013'' each place it appears and inserting ''December 31, 2014''; and

(2) in subsection (c), by striking ''June 30, 2014'' and inserting ''June 30, 2015''.

(b) EXTENSION OF MATCHING FOR STATES WITH NO WAITING WEEK.—Section 5 of the Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–449; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by striking ''June 30, 2014'' and inserting ''June 30, 2015''.

(c) EXTENSION OF MODIFICATION OF INDICATORS UNDER THE EXTENDED BENEFIT PROGRAM.—Section 203 of the Federal-State Extended Unemployment Compensation Act of 1970 (26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (d), by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''; and

(2) in subsection (f)(2), by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240).

SEC. 203. EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR REEMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND REEMPLOYMENT AND ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4004(c)(2)(A) of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) is amended by striking ''through fiscal year 2014'' and inserting ''through fiscal year 2015''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–240).

SEC. 204. ADDITIONAL EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS UNDER THE RAILROAD UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT.

(a) EXTENSION.—Section 2(c)(2)(D)(iii) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act (45 U.S.C. 352(c)(2)(D)(iii)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''June 30, 2013'' and inserting ''June 30, 2014''; and

(2) by striking ''December 31, 2013'' and inserting ''December 31, 2014''.

(b) CLARIFICATION ON AUTHORITY TO USE FUNDS.—Funds appropriated under either the first or second sentence of clause (iv) of section 2(c)(2)(D) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act shall be available to cover the cost of additional extended unemployment benefits provided under such section 2(c)(2)(D) by reason of the amendments made by subsection (a) as well as to cover the cost of such benefits provided under such section 2(c)(2)(D), as in effect on the day before the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) FUNDING FOR ADMINISTRATION.—Out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, there are appropriated to the Railroad Retirement Board $250,000 for administrative expenses associated with the payment of additional extended unemployment benefits provided under section 2(c)(2)(D) of the Railroad Unemployment Insurance Act by reason of the amendments made by subsection (a), to remain available until expended.

SEC. 205. FLEXIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT PROGRAM AGREEMENTS.

(a) FLEXIBILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (g) of section 4001 of the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2008 (Public Law 110–252; 26 U.S.C. 3304 note) shall not apply with respect to a State that has enacted a law before December 1, 2013, that, upon taking effect, would violate such subsection.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Paragraph (1) is effective with respect to weeks of unemployment beginning on or after December 29, 2013.

(b) PERMITTING A SUBSEQUENT AGREEMENT.—Nothing in such title IV shall preclude a State whose agreement under such title was terminated from entering into a subsequent agreement under such title on or after the date of the enactment of this Act if the State, taking into account the application of subsection (a), would otherwise meet the requirements for an agreement under such title.

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 January 29, 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a business meeting to consider the following legislation and nomination: S. 1448, to provide for equitable compensation to the Spokane Tribe of Indians of the Spokane Reservation for the use of tribal land for the production of hydropower by the Grand Coulee Dam, and for other purposes; and the President's nomination of Vincent G. Logan to be Special Trustee, Office of Special Trustee for American Indians, Department of the Interior.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at 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 January 29 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a legislative hearing to receive testimony on the following bill: S. 919, to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, and for other purposes.

Those wishing additional information may contact the Indian Affairs Committee at 224–2251.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 10 a.m. in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Progress Report on Public Transportation Under MAP–21.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to hold a meeting during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 10:30 a.m. in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building. The committee will hold a hearing entitled ''Locating 911 Callers in a Wireless World.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a Business Meeting on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 9:30 a.m. in room 366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 16, at 9:15 a.m. in room 406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Review of the President's Climate Action Plan.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 10 a.m., in 215 Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Advancing Congress's Trade Agenda: the Role of Trade Negotiating Authority.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a nominations hearing.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate in order to conduct a hearing entitled ''Strengthening Federal Access Programs to Meet 21st Century Needs: A Look at TRIO and GEAR UP'' on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room 106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 16, 2014, at 10 a.m. in SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Veterans' Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Thursday, January 16, 2014, at a time to be determined during first vote of the day in S–219 to consider pending nominations before the Committee.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on January 16, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. to hold a closed hearing.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to Laura Markstein, a member of my staff.

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

NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 335.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 335) designating January 2014 as ''National Mentoring Month.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I wish to speak for just a minute in honor of National Mentoring Month. Senator ISAKSON and I have submitted a Senate resolution to pay tribute to the millions of men and women whose lives are enriched every day by mentoring in our country. I know we are going to get right back on the discussion on the Appropriations bill, but I want to take just a point of personal privilege for 2 or 3 minutes to talk about the fact that this is the 13th anniversary of National Mentoring Month, and today is Thank Your Mentor Day. With heartfelt gratitude, I would like to thank all of the mentors who serve in communities across Louisiana and all those who serve across the nation.

I wish to acknowledge and I am very grateful to the following Senators: Senator BALDWIN, Senator BROWN, Senator CARPER, Senator COCHRAN, Senator DURBIN, Senator GILLIBRAND, Senator KLOBUCHAR, Senator MIKULSKI, Senator MURRAY, Senator RUBIO, Senator SCHUMER, Senator SCOTT, Senator WARREN, and Senator WYDEN, who cosponsored our mentor resolution and have been real leaders in the mentorship movement.

In situations in which a young person is missing a caring, consistent presence, there is one simple intervention that can make all the difference: a good mentor. Research shows that mentoring improves academic achievement, self-esteem, social skills, and career development in children.

The U.S. has strong mentoring programs, but more are needed. More than 4.5 million young people in the U.S. are in formal mentoring relationships; however, there are a growing number of young people who need mentors but do not have them. More than one in three young people, about 16 million Americans, are in need of a mentor. More than half of those who are without a mentor are at-risk youth. There is a particular need for an increase in mentors for foster youth who perhaps more than anyone else could benefit from a steady, dependable mentor. Because foster youth tend to move from home to home and school to school, they often lack the consistent academic guidance and emotional support they need to succeed. We need more caring mentors for these at-risk youth.

We can all identify hundreds of young people or people of all different ages who are stepping up and doing an act of support and mentoring for a young person and who is making a real difference in their lives.

I wish to just point out four in Louisiana today.

One, as shown in this picture, is Lorita. She is serving 20 hours a week as a foster grandparent, working with special needs children at the James Ward Elementary School in Lake Charles, LA.

With Lorita's loving guidance, her student mentee went from a 47-percent skill mastery in math to 80 percent. That is a pretty significant jump. That is a life-changing improvement for that child and opens a real opportunity for future mentorship work.

One of my favorite mentor programs is the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program, which started in Louisiana in 1993. The program opens its doors to young people between the ages of 16 and 18 who have dropped out of school, in many instances have dropped out of their families. Their families have given up on them and they have given up on their families and in many instances they are headed nowhere but to either prison or to a homeless shelter or worse.

Our National Guard steps up and helps; doing all the amazing things our National Guard does here at home in

peacetime and in war, they have also mentored over 15,000 young people in Louisiana in the last 20 years. We graduate from our three programs in Louisiana about 1,400 kids a year, each one with a mentor.

So I wish to give a shout out to the National Guard and the National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program.

Of course, a program we all support on both sides of the aisle is Big Brothers Big Sisters. There are three Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies, serving 871 at-risk youth in the State of Louisiana.

These are youth who include children of single parent families, those with a parent who currently may be incarcerated or children who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. We have a wonderful Big Brother Big Sister mentor here. Urmie is an outstanding Big Sister serving in Jennings, LA, who proudly says her most rewarding aspect of serving as a mentor is: Knowing I am making a difference in a young person's life.

Finally, our Big Buddy Program. Big Buddy is a leading community program in Baton Rouge, LA. It is national as well, supported broadly by Members of Congress and local officials. We in our program serve 700 disadvantaged youth each week.

One of their most dedicated mentors, John, has served since 2008 and is a product of mentoring.

John's father wasn't a presence in his life, so by his own admission, he lacked guidance growing up. However, he was blessed with some caring adults—his coach, teacher, and pastor—who stepped in to make sure he did not fall through the cracks.

Once into adulthood and established in his career, John felt the need to reconnect and give back to children who face adversity. John is now the proud mentor of two mentees: Bobby and Charles.

I encourage all Americans to seek out opportunities in their community to serve as a mentor, and I urge the public and private sectors to come together and create partnerships to close the mentoring gap.

With an increase in dedicated mentors like Lorita, Michael, Urmie, and John we can ensure that more young Americans are better prepared for school, work, and life.

Once again, please join me in celebrating January 2014 as National Mentoring Month and in honoring the millions of Americans who guide our youngest citizens towards achieving their dreams.

Now I am going to end. But I do want to particularly say how proud I am of the Million Women Mentors which I find very exciting as a woman leader. I know the Presiding Officer will be thrilled to see the number of extraordinary businesses and organizations that are trying to identify 1 million mentors for girls in America to go into the field of science, technology, engineering, and math, which is a game changer for little girls and young women to think about careers such as science, technology, engineering, and math. There is often a need in our country for that skilled labor, so mentors are stepping up and filling in the gap.

I want everyone to be proud that today is a celebration of mentorship month. I thank Senator ISAKSON for joining me in supporting this effort.

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 considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 335) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

NATIONAL ASBESTOS AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 336.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 336) designating the first week of April 2014 as ''National Asbestos Awareness Week.''

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 considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 336) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 1950

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told that S. 1950 is 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 assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1950) to improve the provision of medical services and benefits to veterans, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for its second reading but 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.

APPOINTMENT AUTHORITY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming recess or adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses, or by order of the Senate.

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

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that during the adjournment or recess of the Senate from Thursday, January 16, through Monday, January 27, Senators LEVIN, WARNER, and ROCKEFELLER be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions.

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

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 17, 2014, THROUGH MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn and convene for pro forma sessions only with no business conducted on the following dates and times and that following each pro forma session, the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, January 17, at 11:15 a.m.; Tuesday, January 21 at 10:30 a.m.; and Friday, January 24 at 9:30 a.m.; that the Senate adjourn on Friday, January 24, 2014, until 2 p.m. on Monday, January 27, 2014; that on Monday, 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 resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 1926, the flood insurance legislation.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the next rollcall vote will be Monday, January 27, at 5:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 11:15 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 7:55 p.m., adjourned until Friday, January 17, 2014, at 11:15 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

STEPHEN R. BOUGH, OF MISSOURI, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI, VICE FERNANDO J. GAITAN, JR., RETIRING.

RICHARD FRANKLIN BOULWARE II, OF NEVADA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA, VICE PHILIP M. PRO, RETIRED.

SALVADOR MENDOZA, JR., OF WASHINGTON, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON, VICE LONNY R. SUKO, RETIRED.

STACI MICHELLE YANDLE, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS, VICE JOHN PHIL GILBERT, RETIRING.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

GUSTAVO VELASQUEZ AGUILAR, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, VICE JOHN D. TRASVINA, RESIGNED.

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

JEROME H. POWELL, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR A TERM OF FOURTEEN YEARS FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2014. (REAPPOINTMENT)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

NINA HACHIGIAN, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY.

MATTHEW H. TUELLER, OF UTAH, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MARIA CONTRERAS–SWEET, OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, VICE KAREN GORDON MILLS, RESIGNED.

CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

RICHARD CHRISTMAN, OF KENTUCKY, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2017. (REAPPOINTMENT)

SHAMINA SINGH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2014, VICE ALAN D. SOLOMONT, RESIGNED.

SHAMINA SINGH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING OCTOBER 6, 2019. (REAPPOINTMENT)

IN THE COAST GUARD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD RESERVE UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203(A):

To be captain

RUBY L. COLLINS
MICHAEL W. WAMPLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD UNDER TITLE 14, U.S.C. SECTION 271(E):

To be lieutenant commander

WILLIAM C. ADAMS
LISA M. AGUIRRE
SCOT C. ALBRECHT
MICHAEL D. ANDERSON
RYAN G. ANGELO
MORGAN D. ARMSTRONG
NICOLE D. AUTH
LEE D. BACON
AMMIE L. BALDWIN
ARMELL V. BALMACEDA
DAVID BARKALOW
ALEXANDER S. BARKER
PRESTON A. BARROW
KEVIN A. BEAUDOIN
MICHAEL A. BENSON
TIMOTHY J. BERNADT
RICHARD J. BIRBILAS
JASON R. BLYTH
JEREMY A. BOHN
THOMAS R. BOLIN
MICAH W. BONNER
KURT F. BRANDSTAETTER
JASON A. BUSTAMENTE
MICHAEL J. CAGLE
JASON R. CAMERON
ACE V. CASTLE
ADAM T. CERNOVICH
NATHANIEL E. CHAMPLIN
BRIAN M. CHAPMAN
ALEXANDRA K. CHERRY
RICHARD M. CHMIELECKI
MUHAMMADALI N. COCHRAN
LEAH M. COLE
DANIEL K. COMUNALE
CARA J. CONDIT
NEAL A. CORBIN
CHRISTOPHER H. COURTNEY
JEFFREY D. COWAN
TREVOR C. COWAN
JEFFREY R. DAIGLE
ADAM M. DAVENPORT
ROBERT B. DAVENPORT
JESSICA S. DAVILA
KELVIN J. DAVIS
JARROD A. DEIR
KELLY A. DEUTERMANN
RYAN P. DEVLIN
TODD R. DEVRIES
KRISTINA K. DEWINTER
JESSE M. DIAZ
JOHN R. DOGGETT
PATRICK A. DRAYER
TIFFANY A. DUFFY
BROCK S. ECKEL
STEVEN R. ELLIOTT
KRISTOPHER R. ENSLEY
TODD D. FARRELL
MICHAEL G. FAULKNER
JOEL S. FERGUSON
JOHN A. FILIPOWICZ
ROBERT F. FITZGERALD
CHRISTOPHER A. FLOYD
DAVID M. FRENCH
GAVIN V. GARCIA
CHRISTJAN C. GAUDIO
SARAH J. GEOFFRION
EMILY M. GIBBONS
MICHAEL S. GLINSKI
JUSTIN H. GORDON
ANNA A. GRAFCHIKOVA
JOSEPH F. GRAHAM
DOUGLAS D. GRAUL
MATTHEW E. GRAY
MICHAEL P. GREENE
MYLES J. GREENWAY
ANDREW T. GREENWOOD
JEREMY M. GREENWOOD
MATTHEW A. GULLY
JASON D. HAGEN
KRISTEN A. HAHN
PETER K. HAHN
JONATHAN E. HANNAN
CHAD E. HANSON
JOSHUA B. HARRINGTON
TODD E. HARTFIEL
AMANDA R. HENDERSON
DIRK E. HEPWORTH
ROBERTO R. HERRERA
SCOTT M. HIGBEE
GREGORY E. HIGGINS
MICHAEL A. HJERSTEDT
KENNETH E. HOGUE
ANDREA M. HOLT
DANIEL B. HOWE
NATHAN R. HUDSON
JUSTIN C. HUNT
WILLIAM J. JACOBS
BEAU J. JAMES
JEFF G. JANARO
JEANITA A. JEFFERSON
SEAN P. JEHU
WILL D. JOHNSON
HANNAH K. KAWAMOTO
MATTHEW M. KEENEY
RYAN P. KELLEY
KALEN M. KENNY
JEREMY A. KIME
MARVIN L. KIMMEL
JOSEPH M. KLINKER
SEAN J. KONECCI
JAMIE L. KOPPI
HEIDI L. KOSKI
AARON J. KOWALCZK
MARK E. LABERT
MICHAEL W. LALOR
JILLIAN M. LAMB
RYAN L. LAMPE
IGOR V. LANDYSHEV
JON D. LANE
MARC J. LANORE
ADAM G. LEGGETT
BRIAN S. LIED
TONYA M. LIM
KIRTLAND L. LINEGAR
JEREMY D. LOEB
LORI A. LOUGHRAN
ASHLEY F. LOVEJOY
GREGORY R. LYNCH
DAVID S. MACCAFERRI
BRYON J. MACE
JOHN K. MACKINNON
RHIANNA N. MACON
JODY J. MAISANO
PATRICK A. MARSHALL
MARY E. MARTIN
THOMAS P. MARTIN
ROGER M. MASSON
CHARLES R. MATHIS
CAMERON A. MCCAMPBELL
AMY D. MCELROY
WILLIAM T. MCGHEE
GREGORY A. MCLAMB
YANCEE L. MCLEMORE
KEVIN J. MCQUILLEN
CHRISTIAN T. MEDICK
CHARLES A. MELLOR
JEANINE M. MENZE
GARRETT R. MEYER
MICHAEL J. MEYER
JASON A. MICHALCZAK
ALLISON M. MIDDLETON
JAMES R. MILLER
JODI J. MIN
ALEXANDER J. MOORE
JOSEPH W. MORGANS
JASON G. MORITZ
GREGORY C. MOSKO
GREGORY N. MOURITSEN
ZACHARY M. MUNDY
SEAN M. MURRAY
JUSTIN P. NADOLNY
THAO V. NGUYEN
KEIDI M. NIEMANN
MICHAEL J. NORDHAUSEN
JOSHUA L. O'BRIEN
ESTEVAN OLIVERA
JENNIFER M. OSBURN
CORRINA OTT
JAMES H. PAFFORD
ERIC C. PARE
KALEB PEREZ
SEAN M. PETERSON
ARIEL E. PIEDMONT
WALTER S. PIERCE
STEPHEN W. PITTMAN
DAVID C. PIZZURRO
CHRISTIAN T. POLYAK
NICHOLAS R. PORTA
JONATHAN H. POTTERTON
THOMAS E. PRZYBYLA
WAYNE E. REED
JOSEPH R. REINHART
LISA M. RODMAN
WILLIAM B. ROGERS
JOSE M. ROSARIO
JOHNA N. ROSSETTI
DANA E. RUPPRECHT
BEN P. RUSSELL
DANA E. SCHULMAN
MARK E. SEAVEY
MAX J. SEDA
COURTNEY A. SERGENT
MARIE L. SEVIN
LISA M. SHARKEY
JONATHAN D. SHUMATE
DANIELLE M. SHUPE
JOHN M. SINGLETARY
JASON A. SMILIE
JERRY L. SMITH
MATTHEW B. SMITH
TRAVIS R. SMITH
BAXTER B. SMOAK
DAVID N. SOLORZANO
MATTHEW M. SPOLARICH
CHARLES B. STANLEY
JEFFREY J. SULLENS
CHRISTINA D. SULLIVAN
DANIEL B. SWEIGART
LAURA M. SWIFT
BRYAN J. SWINTEK
JOSHUA M. TABOR
MARIO B. TEIXEIRA
MAILE I. TESLER
PAUL D. TESSITORE
CHAD R. THOMPSON
RYAN J. TICKELL
KELLEY L. TIFFANY
BRYAN D. TILEY
JASON E. TRICHLER
HOWARD E. VACCO
KELLY A. VANDENBERG
ERIC A. VANVELZEN
PEDRO L. VAZQUEZ
JONATHON R. WAECHTER
JASON S. WARREN
CHRISTIANE D. WEBER
CHRISTOPHER L. WEBER
ANDREW S. WEISS
EUSTACIA Y. WEIST
KYLE A. WEIST
JENNIFER L. WESCOTT
JUDSON B. WHEELER
BRIAN R. WHISLER
MICHAEL E. WHITTREDGE
BRYAN P. WICK
WILLIAM D. WICKLINE
DUSTIN R. WILLIAMS
JAMES E. WILLINGHAM
JOSHUA D. WINE
KEVIN L. WINTERS
KISMET R. WUNDER
ADAM K. YOUNG

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 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. PAUL W. TIBBETS IV

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12211:

To be colonel

STEPHEN E. FORSYTH, JR.
ERIC J. FRYE