United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12, 2014 No. 41

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Almighty God, You are the way, the truth, and the life. Shine Your light upon our Senators' pathway, keeping them from straying from Your will. Lord, keep them from sluggish thinking or ambiguous expression or coldness of heart or weakness of will. As they experience Your constancy, enable them to see Your higher wisdom, which is a lamp for their feet and a light for their path. Continue to guide them until they see You more clearly, follow You more nearly, and love You more dearly each day.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 12, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with the majority controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

Following morning business the Senate will proceed to executive session. At 10:30 a.m., there will be up to 6 rollcall votes on the confirmation of several executive nominations.

Upon disposition of the nomination of Sarah Bloom Raskin to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury, the Senate will begin consideration of S. 1086, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act reauthorization bill.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2110 AND H.R. 4152

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2110) to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate, and for other purposes.

An act (H.R. 4152) to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine.

Mr. REID. I would object to anything at this time as to these two matters.

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

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, in our great country we think of a college education as the key to unlock our children's success. But many families in this country struggle to afford child care, leaving no money whatsoever for higher education.

In 2011, in most States, 1 year of daycare for an infant was more expensive than 1 year of tuition at a public university.

Let me repeat that. In America, in almost every State, 1 year of daycare is more expensive than 1 year of tuition at a public university. It is no wonder that middle-class families are struggling with sticker shock, and for many low-income families childcare is simply out of reach.

For millions of families in the United States, childcare is their single largest household expense at nearly $15,000 a year. In an economy where most families have two working parents, childcare isn't a luxury, it is a necessity.

That is why President Bush signed the first Child Care and Development Block Grant Act into law in 1990. He did this to ensure working families

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

Printed on recycled paper.

have access to quality, affordable childcare.

I thank HELP Committee Chairman HARKIN and Senators BURR, MIKULSKI, and ALEXANDER for their diligent bipartisan work to reauthorize this measure.

The program serves more than 1.6 million children, including more than 7,300 in Nevada, making access to affordable, high-quality care possible. But the program serves only a fraction of the need. We should be doing more to guarantee every parent who wants to work can afford adequate supervision for their children and for every child, regardless of income, so that kids have a safe place to learn.

This bipartisan measure is an investment in America's mothers, 65 percent of whom work outside the home. Yet women earn less and are less likely to go back to work after having children—than men—in part because of the shortage of safe, affordable daycare.

This program is helping millions of parents, and especially mothers, get back to work to help support their families. In the two decades since this important program was last authorized, we have learned a great deal about the importance of early childhood education and high-quality childcare.

This bipartisan measure builds on that knowledge, updates health and safety standards for childcare centers, and requires providers to undergo comprehensive background checks.

This reauthorization is only the first step. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on the larger effort to broaden access to quality early childhood education.

We are going to take up this bill later today. As I have said before, and I will say again so everyone understands, this is a bipartisan bill. I hope the managers of this bill will do everything they can to move this expeditiously through this body. But we are going to finish—not finish it this week, but I prefer finishing it, and I hope we can do that.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. REID. Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein in for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

RASKIN NOMINATION

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, shortly we will be voting on some nominees, and I want to thank all the nominees and their families for their willingness to serve the public. This is a real sacrifice. People are giving up other opportunities in order to serve their country. It is not just the individual who accepts these positions of public service, it is a family matter, and so I applaud them all for their service to our country.

I would like to speak in particular about the last vote we will have in this series, and that is the confirmation of Sarah Bloom Raskin as Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. Sarah is a person who has given much to public service throughout her career. I know her personally. She is a Marylander, and we are very proud of the fact she is a Marylander.

If Sarah is confirmed, she will be the highest ranking woman in the history of the Treasury, and I am very proud of that accomplishment. She has been very active in Maryland and at the national level. For the past several years Sarah has served on the Federal Reserve Board of Governors. Her deep financial and regulatory knowledge and sound judgment made her an essential asset during her tenure there. As the Presiding Officer knows, this has been a very turbulent time in regard to the economy of our Nation, and during this great economic unease her dedication to strong consumer protections has been especially valuable.

Even before joining the Board of Governors, Sarah was no stranger to successfully navigating choppy economic waters. In 2007 she was appointed Commissioner of Financial Regulation for the State of Maryland, so I have had the chance to observe her and her dedication and her effectiveness at the State level and also at the national level.

At the State level she has significantly improved consumer protections and supported banks through the many challenges of the financial crisis. That is where I got to see her work firsthand and her thoughtfulness and how dedicated she was, and her ability to bring people of different persuasions together, different stakeholders in our financial community, and to chart a course where we could have a positive result not only for the financial institutions but for consumers and for our economy.

Sarah is also part of a family of government service. Her husband Jamie is a member of the Maryland State Senate and has an excellent record of public service in his own right. So this is a family that has given much to public service. We need people in the administration like Sarah Bloom Raskin. Her background, her education, and her job training all serve to make her particularly well suited to be the deputy secretary.

I, for one, am thankful to Sarah and her family that she is willing to serve in an extremely challenging position. This is not going to be an easy position, obviously, as Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. It gives me great confidence to know Sarah will be handling the many responsibilities demanded of the deputy secretary, and it gives me great pride that a fellow Marylander may continue to be among the financial leaders who guide our economy toward our future growth and stability.

I urge my colleagues to support her confirmation. We are indeed fortunate to have a person of her skills willing to serve as Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I got the chance to meet David Weis, a 22-year-old student at Georgetown University, about a week ago. David's story, unfortunately, although it may sound exceptional, is not. He was just about to celebrate his 19th birthday, when 2 days before it, in 2010, he was diagnosed with thyroid and lymphatic cancer—a devastating diagnosis that came just as he was preparing to start college.

As most of his classmates were enjoying the first days of their freshman year at Georgetown University, David was dealing with a rigorous course of treatment for his disease that left him tired, left him confused, and left him anxious about his future. David had an ace up his sleeve, and that was the fact he had insurance. But he only has it as long as he is covered as a student.

David came to the U.S. Capitol last week to testify in favor and in support of the Affordable Care Act, because he knows that with the passage of this bill his diagnosis will not be a death sentence; that he will be able to get the coverage he needs; and that he will be able to pursue his dreams when he graduates rather than have his life decisions dictated by his illness—having to choose a job simply because it provides health care or having to be locked into a career simply because he can't afford going without insurance to cover his cancer.

David's story can be repeated hundreds of thousands of times all across

this country by young people in their teens and their twenties and in their thirties who thought they were invincible but who got knocked off their feet by a devastating disease such as cancer and who desperately need health care insurance at the time of that illness in order to get back onto their feet.

Some of the best news that has come out over the past several months, as the enrollment has started to ramp up on the Affordable Care Act, has been the number of young people who have signed up. We have seen that 31 percent of all of the people who have signed up for insurance exchanges all across this country are 34 years or under. This is a real signal that young people are recognizing that, although they may feel as if they are going to live forever, they desperately need insurance, just as everyone else does. So that is why I was so glad to see President Obama yesterday go on the show ''Between Two Ferns,'' with Zach Galifianakis, to talk about the importance of young people signing up.

We all know about the ''Two Ferns'' effect. Previously unknown stars such as Will Ferrell and Bradley Cooper went on ''Two Ferns'' and were catapulted to stardom. I am glad to see the ''Two Ferns'' effect has had the same impact on health care enrollment. Since President Obama went on ''Two Ferns,'' 19,000 people were referred to the Web site of enrollment from the ''Funny or Die'' Web site. By 6 p.m. that day the video had sent 32,000 people to healthcare.gov. HHS officials said traffic on healthcare.gov had risen by 40 percent on Tuesday to over 890,000 visits in 1 day.

It is a signal that when young people, through whatever means is available to them, find out about the benefits of the Affordable Care Act, they are interested and they are signing up. I hope President Obama uses more innovative tools and methods to try to get the word out to young adults in their late teens, twenties, and thirties about the importance of signing up for the Affordable Care Act because it is important. Some 70,000 adolescents and young adults are diagnosed with cancer every single year in this country. There are 151,000 people below the age of 20 living with diabetes right now. So despite the fact that we may think we are going to live forever or think we may not need coverage, young people need it as well. It is affordable.

The President said yesterday on this show: You effectively can get coverage for the cost of a cell phone bill. And it is true. Having a cell phone is pretty important, but being able to get treatment when you get a serious disease is pretty important as well.

In Connecticut the numbers are pretty reasonable. A 22-year-old in Hartford making a $25,000 salary—which is the salary I made in my first job in Hartford—can get a bronze policy for as low as $66 a month through Anthem. A 25-year-old living in Bridgeport making a little more, $30,000, can get a bronze policy for as low as $108 a month. About two-thirds of all young adults across the country who are currently uninsured are eligible for these subsidies.

For all of these young people who were previously going to the marketplace and often having to pay full price, often buying insurance on their own with no ability to negotiate a group discount, this health care law is transformational. Fifty or sixty dollars a month is the price for bronze plans. And this doesn't even count the catastrophic option open to most young people as well.

The good news continues to roll in when it comes to the numbers of people signing up. Yesterday the administration announced that 4.2 million people have enrolled in marketplaces through March 1; 943,000 people enrolled in the short month of February; and 31 percent of all those people are 34 or younger. And, of course, we haven't even gotten to crunch time yet.

I wish this weren't the case, but I know something about how young people think. Too many leave big decisions until the last minute, whether it be studying for a test, writing a term paper, or signing up for health care.

As we have seen in the past on a lot of these enrollment deadlines, like the enrollment deadline for Medicare Part D, the surge comes in the final few weeks of enrollment. So we expect to see the numbers pick up in a significant way through March.

Knowing how people in their twenties and thirties think, I expect we will see a major surge in enrollment from young people as well. But they shouldn't wait until the last minute. It does take more than a few hours to look at the choices and decide which is best. In Connecticut we have three insurance plans offering coverage, but each one of them has three or four different plans. So I hope young adults in their twenties and thirties take more than a few hours or a day to sign up because we want to make sure they get the plan available for them. It is easy to do with a phone call to an enrollment center, a visit in Connecticut to the in-person centers in New Britain and New Haven, and very simple to do on healthcare.gov.

In Connecticut our exchange is going like gangbusters. We had a goal of signing up 80,000 to 100,000 people, and a full 30 days before the deadline we have signed up 152,000 people. Of those individuals in Connecticut, about 25 percent are 25 years or younger. We are on track to double our original estimates in Connecticut.

Connecticut is a State that had a pretty high rate of insured to begin with, so our delta to get to full insurance was relatively small compared to other States. But guess what Connecticut is doing. Connecticut is actually working to implement the law rather than working to undermine the law. We put a lot of time and thought into getting a working Web site, into doing the kind of outreach other States are not doing to get people to sign up. When we have done that, young people and old people across the board have flocked to sign up.

I was glad to see the President do his outreach yesterday to young people all across the country. I was glad to see the spike in interest on healthcare.gov. I am glad to see that 4.2 million people have signed up for health care, as more people all across the country—young people especially—are realizing the Affordable Care Act works.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

ENERGY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, too often in Washington our friends on the left seem to operate under a very dangerous assumption: that good intentions are more important than a good outcome. I say it is dangerous because we see all the time how liberal Washington politics that aim to alleviate problems such as poverty or wage stagnation or other social or economic problems just seem to make things worse. Yet, despite the evidence, the policies never seem to change. More money just gets thrown at the same failed programs year after year with barely any thought as to whether they actually work.

ObamaCare is a case in point. Here is a big-government bill that Washington Democrats thought they could just pass and—poof—health care would magically be made more affordable for everybody. Yet for millions of Americans just the opposite happened. Contrary to the assurances, ObamaCare has upended lives and businesses all across our country. It has forced painful choices for people who could barely get by as it was. It is a mess.

So one would assume Washington Democrats would step back and take a long hard look at the accumulating evidence and start thinking about ways to keep this thing from pummeling even more Americans. But we would be wrong. They just keep doubling down.

When the Web site crashed, they called it a glitch. When people started losing their doctors and their plans, they told them: You can live with it. When Americans started sharing their ObamaCare horror stories, they basically called them all liars. That would tell us something we need to know about how much Washington liberals care about middle-class Americans. They are captive to the most extreme ideologies of the left, and they don't even try to hide it anymore. Forget reason or economics or sound argument; it is all about ideology with these guys.

We saw it all on vivid display a couple nights ago with the Democrats' all-

night talkathon on global warming. The reason for the all-nighter was pretty obvious: It was a command performance for a leftwing activist donor out in California. And the fact that taxpayers were basically subsidizing the whole thing was bad enough, but what about the basic substance of the issue Democrats were talking about the other night. What about that. It is just one more case where good intentions trump the impact their proposals would have on ordinary Americans.

See, the Obama administration seems to think that if it just wishes really hard and issues enough regulations, it can singlehandedly reduce global carbon emissions—without bringing Beijing and New Delhi onboard. It is an alternate universe where ''victory'' means U.S. emissions going down by some negligible amount—and where China and India don't simultaneously eclipse that tiny emissions reduction with expanded energy of their own. It is a universe where the massive economic consequence of acting so recklessly doesn't seem to matter, and it is a universe where middle-class Americans somehow don't take the hit to our economic output right on the chin. In other words, it is the kind of thing that could only make sense to a party blinded by extremist ideology.

Of course, Washington Democrats love to pull out that old straw man and say: Either you support our approach completely—even if it won't actually solve the problem it purports to—or you hate the environment. It is kind of like when they said: Either you vote for ObamaCare or you hate affordable health care. Well, our constituents remember how that worked out, and our constituents are quite capable of seeing the complexity in the world which so often eludes our friends on the left. They are capable of caring deeply about the environment, for instance, while disagreeing with the administration's ideological crusade.

Of course, every ideological crusade needs an enemy. In the administration's war on coal, Washington Democrats appear to have found their foil. It is not some fat cat. It is not some Wall Street titan. No. This time it seems to be middle-class Kentucky families—miners who struggle every day just to put food on the table, the kinds of Americans who work hard so the rest of us can have a better life. Well, it is unfair and it is wrong.

Where Washington Democrats seem to see faceless adversaries, I see human beings, people who are hurting. I wish my Democratic colleagues would join me sometime as I travel around Kentucky listening to their concerns.

At one recent hearing, a miner named Howard Abshire had this message for President Obama:

> Come and look at our little children, look at our people, Mr. President. You're not hurting for a job; you've got one. I don't have one.

Another miner, Gary Lockhart, said his biggest worry was just trying to keep a roof over his family's head and food on the table. When it comes to his fellow miners, here is what he had to say:

> Many of these men, who have never asked the government for any kind of assistance in their lives . . . [are] having to go home and tell their families that their pay's going to be cut to practically nothing, [that] there'll be very little Christmas this year, no vacations, nothing extra.

Miners aren't the only ones affected by all the pain out there in coal country. I will read a letter I received from Bill Scaggs, a businessman and pastor from Pikeville. Here is what Bill had to say:

> We have had to lay off employees due to the closings of mines and the [effect] they have had. Our business is losing thousands of dollars due to the negative impact of the EPA. As a pastor . . . our benevolence to the community has increased fivefold with help for food, power bills, clothing, and just the day to day living expenses that families need.

Americans may not always know it, but they owe a lot to coal miners like the ones I represent in Kentucky. Whether it is watching a TV show, drying a pair of jeans, or saving some leftover takeout for tomorrow, we often probably have a miner to thank for the electricity that makes it all possible. That is also true if we try to keep the lights on all night long.

So I hope our friends on the other side will remember to be thankful for the electricity that makes all-night talkathons actually possible. Honestly, I still don't get the point of the stunt. They didn't introduce legislation or schedule votes on the national electricity tax they seem to want so badly. Remember, they control the Senate, so they can bring it up for debate whenever they want to. Where is the climate change debate? Where is the bill? People who were speaking all night control the Senate. Bring up the bill. Here is the point: Republicans care deeply about the environment. We also care deeply about creating jobs and growing the middle class, and we do not think our country should have to sacrifice one priority for the other. The American people do not either. So it is time for Washington Democrats to drop the billionaire-approved ideological crusades, to quit all the talk and get onboard with sensible forward-looking action to create jobs. We have tried the left's wish-upon-a-star approach already and real people have been hurt. So why not try some things that will actually work.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Will the Senator withhold his request?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I will withhold.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Missouri.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I rise to talk about the new numbers that have been released on the President's health care plan. Yesterday the administration announced that slightly more than 4.2 million people have signed up for health plans through the exchanges. As we all know, that is substantially below their first goal and substantially below their adjusted goal just a few weeks ago.

One of the things, in an effort by the Washington Post to find out how many of those people hadn't had insurance before—the group that was supposed to be served well by this—their estimate was in an article also this week, about 1 million people—an incredible amount of effort to add 1 million people to the insurance rolls, particularly with the stories from the millions of people who were on the insurance rolls that come to our offices every day; stories that clearly reflect problems with this law and problems, more importantly, for the American families who are impacted.

I brought a few of them with me today—since I was talking about this topic last week—that have come to our office. These are stories where we reached back, contacted these people, said I was going to come to the floor with their story. I mentioned their first name and where they are from, are they concerned with that. Time after time people say, oh, no, we want this story told, which is why we reached out to you.

Gary in Lake Ozark, MO, says what so many people are saying—that his deductible is now the problem. In fact, his deductible on the policy he can now have—let me just read what he said:

> Before I knew I'd be able to stay on my company's plan—

He was going to be able to stay on his company plan 1 year longer than he thought he was just a few months ago—

> Before I knew I'd be able to stay on my company's plan, I went to the exchange to seek coverage. I found a plan available to me but was shocked to learn that my deductible was going to be over $8,000 per family member.

This is quickly becoming the new group of people who aren't able to meet their health care costs. I met with a number of health care administrators, hospital administrators from Missouri recently. They said their fastest growing category of unpaid bills, of unpaid debt, is from people who have insurance. So many people with insurance now have a deductible that is a deductible they believe they cannot pay, and because they believe they cannot pay it, they simply do not pay it. So whether it is the $8,000 on Gary's policy or the other lower amounts—hopefully, I will find some lower amounts here.

Here is one from another Gary. This Gary is in southeast Missouri. His wife's deductible went from $500 to $1,800—story after story. What happens when you have that growing deductible, whether it is the $1,800 or the $3,000 or the $8,000, if it was $500 and that was all you were going to have to pay, you might figure out how to put together $500 or maybe even more than that, but when you see $1,800 or $3,000

or $8,000, apparently people who used to pay their $500 deductible say they can't possibly pay that, so the hospital needs to write that off, I guess, as bad debt. They are going to come after me for $7,500 just like they would have for $8,000.

So a deductible that used to be reasonable and was paid, now the family looks at that and says we cannot possibly ever get to that deductible, so there is no reason to even start down that path.

I have a whole list of Gary's here on top of this. I don't think they are all making up the name Gary. This Gary from Higginsville—I could have organized these to have a little more variety in the first three, but this is Gary from Higginsville, MO. They said his prescription costs for his premium for Humana Gold Plus Medicare Advantage and his copays have all gone up significantly. He is concerned about Medicare Advantage.

Just a few days ago I was here—in fact, I ran into this person. Reading this letter:

> I am the man you spoke with outside Starbucks in Independence, MO, across from the mall. You leaned down on my car door of which the window was down. . . .

He called me over to talk about ObamaCare.

> What has changed is that several of my medications have gone up in price . . . my premium has gone up for Human Gold Plus Medicare Advantage. My deductibles and copays have gone up—

Things that are the result of the cuts made to Medicare now actually cost him the money that used to be paid for by Medicare. When you cut Medicare $500 billion to start a new program, somebody who is on the old program is going to be impacted by that. It is not like when we debated this we said, well, this Medicare Program is in such great shape that now we can start a new program and use money from Medicare to do that. That was done in the face of the understanding that Medicare, one of the principal obligations the country has made to retired people—people over 65, going back to 1965—that this was a program that wasn't going to be able to support itself.

So what do we decide to do as a Congress—and I voted against it and I am glad I did, but the ultimate decision was we are going to cut Medicare to start a new program, and we will see what happens to a program we already know is in trouble when we do that.

Frank from Kansas City's policy was canceled for not meeting the Affordable Care Act requirements. So he was forced to sign up on the exchange for himself, his wife, his 22-year-old daughter, his 19-year-old son, his 11-year-old daughter.

Frank was told that his 11-year-old daughter would qualify for Medicaid. He submitted three applications that they said they never received. After 2 months they asked him for additional information about his daughter, including tax information not available until April 1. Because of all this the Affordable Care Act is causing his daughter to go uninsured, according to Frank, until at least June.

This is one of those States that has an exchange the States have set up. A couple of places have never been able to sign up one single person. It is not October 1, it is now much closer to April 1, and this system is just not meeting the needs of families or meeting the goals that clearly it set for itself.

Farrell from Versailles, MO, says he is facing financial hardship because his employer cut his hours to avoid covering his health insurance. The employer told him ObamaCare was the reason they were cutting his hours. He was teaching at a community college as an adjunct professor for 8 years. He said he quit his full-time job because, according to him, he was teaching four courses each semester and a course over the summer and that appeared to be meeting his needs.

Suddenly the new law comes along and his employer says: If you work as much as you have been working, we will have to provide health insurance.

Something that you and I would both be interested in too, having worked together for a long time, is seeing the response that even local governments and State governments have had for people they always—because they thought it was the right thing to do—provided health care. But sadly when the Federal Government said here is what you have to do, then that drew an interesting line across our society. It also means if you have to do this, you do not have to do anything for people who do not meet the requirement—the 30-hour workweek, the impact it has had on people.

I was in a location the other day, and I said to the manager of the store: How are you doing, meaning I thought this would be a skill discussion; how are you doing with the skill levels you may need to find here for people who are dealing with customers. He said it is harder all the time because now we have to hire four people, where we used to have to hire three people because nobody new whom we are hiring is working more than 29 hours a week. So instead of finding three people to do that job to work 40 hours a week, now we are having to find four people who work less than 30 hours a week.

He went on to say managers and people who were already working, nobody's getting their hours cut, but he said: When we are hiring new people, we are doing what our competitors are doing, which is hiring part-time people who do not have benefits.

Emmett at Lake Ozark, despite the fact that he was paying all his premiums through his employer, his employer dropped early retirees from the company policy.

He did not feel comfortable submitting his information to healthcare.gov, he says, for security reasons. By the way, nobody contends that this Web site is secure or that the information people put on it is secure. In fact, it is just the opposite. Every indication has been it is not secure. He did say he used ''the website to find a plan, but three months later, when I finally got a quote, it was unaffordable, and much higher than the quotes I was able to find'' outside of the exchange.

Bob from Wentzville, MO, said he has seen his insurance increase by 15 percent over the past 3 years. I feel like writing back to Bob, saying, based on all the other letters, with 15 percent you should be feeling pretty good about that, but nobody feels good about a 15-percent increase. It is just that so many people are seeing an increase that is so much higher than that.

On the other hand, his insurance premiums have increased by 15 percent, but—back to the earlier discussion—his deductible has gone from $500 annually to $4,000 annually or $8,000 for the family.

Is this the kind of insurance families need? They used to pay a premium that was just a little bit less, 15 percent less, but they had a $500 annual deductible, not a $4,000 annual deductible.

Beverly from Potosi, MO, went to her doctor for her annual screening and was told she could only have one now every 2 years because of the Affordable Care Act. Although her risk of cancer increases with age, she believes she is getting less care than she got before.

Holly from Jefferson County, MO, is a registered nurse who is now working two part-time jobs. She is living paycheck to paycheck. Here is what she says in her letter:

> I am a registered nurse that is only working part-time at 2 jobs. I live paycheck to paycheck like most people since the economic crisis. I am barely able to keep my bills paid much less able to add another one. I am upset that my right as a US citizen has been taken away from me to decide for myself if I want health insurance or not.

I think she could have added to that, to decide for herself whether she wanted it and what she wanted. I cannot tell what the President's latest announcement was, but it appears to be if you had insurance, even if it has been canceled because it didn't meet the qualifications, now somehow it is not canceled—and how you deal with that as someone who has maybe gotten another policy or maybe moved beyond the insurance you had and do not qualify to go back.

I don't know how many times we can change this law without finally admitting the law is not working. Let's take everything we know now, which is so much more than the country knew and most Members of Congress knew when the law passed—let's take everything we know now and go back and do this the right way.

Jason from Pleasant Hill and his wife purchased plans through their employer. Again, they experienced price increases without added benefits and in fact with less benefits than they had before.

There is one letter after another coming to our office in various ways every day. I could stand here and read them for a long time, but if I read the clock correctly, I think my time is out and we are ready to move on to other business.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, the last two days, we have spent unnecessary floor time overcoming procedural obstacles so that we can vote to confirm the five judicial nominations before us today. Every single one of the nominees that we will vote on today has bipartisan support and will be confirmed by significant margins. Judge Carolyn McHugh was nominated last May, while all four nominees to the Eastern District of Michigan were nominated last July. All of these nominees could and should have been confirmed before we adjourned last year. Instead, because Republicans refused to consent to hold these nominations in the Senate, and every single one had to be returned to the President at the end of last year. They then had to be re-nominated and re-processed through Committee this year and were all reported out with bipartisan support on January 16, 2014.

We have not had a vote on a judicial nomination this year that was not subjected to a Republican filibuster. I appreciate very much the two Republican senators, Senator COLLINS and Senator MURKOWSKI, who have voted each time to end the filibuster of judicial nominees. For other Republican senators, however, I have started to notice a pattern of voting to end filibusters only if a nominee is from a state with at least one Republican home state Senator. Most recently this happened earlier this week on the cloture vote for Judge McHugh with nine Republicans voting to end the filibuster. It should not require a judicial nominee to be from a state with one or more Republican home state senators for some senators to do the right thing. Filling vacancies so that our Federal judiciary can be fully functioning should not be a partisan issue.

Today, we will finally vote to confirm the following nominees:

Judge Carolyn McHugh has been nominated to fill a vacancy in the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals. She has served since 2005 as a judge on the Utah Court of Appeals and as the Presiding Judge of that court since 2012. She previously worked in private practice at Parr Brown Gee & Loveless as an Associate, 1983–1987, and subsequently as a Shareholder, 1987–2005. She has served as an Adjunct Professor at the University of Utah Law School and at the University of Utah College of Social and Behavioral Science. Judge McHugh earned her J.D., Order of the Coif, from the University of Utah Law School in 1982. After law school, she clerked for Judge Bruce S. Jenkins of the United States District Court for the District of Utah. The ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary unanimously rated Judge McHugh ''Well Qualified'' to serve on the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit, its highest rating. She has the support of her home state senators, Senator HATCH and Senator LEE.

Matthew Leitman is nominated to fill a judicial emergency vacancy in the Eastern District of Michigan. He has worked in private practice for almost 20 years, including as senior principal, 2005–present, and senior counsel, 2004, at Miller, Canfield, Paddock, and Stone, P.L.C, and as Partner, 2000–2004, and Associate, 1994–1999, at Miro, Weiner, & Kramer, P.C. He earned his J.D., magna cum laude, from Harvard Law School in 1993. Following his graduation from law school, he served as a law clerk to Justice Charles L. Levin of the Michigan Supreme Court. The ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary unanimously rated Mr. Leitman ''Well Qualified'' to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, its highest rating.

Judith Levy is nominated to fill a judicial emergency vacancy in the Eastern District of Michigan. She has served since 2000 as an Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of Michigan, where she has served as the Chief of the Civil Rights Unit since 2010. She has also worked as an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of Michigan Law School, 2005–present, and as a trial attorney for the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1999–2000. She earned her J.D., cum laude, from Michigan Law School in 1996. Following her graduation from law school, she served as a law clerk to Judge Bernard Friedman of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern of District of Michigan, 1996–1999.

Judge Laurie Michelson is nominated to fill a vacancy in the Eastern District of Michigan. She has served since 2011 as a U.S. Magistrate Judge in the Eastern District of Michigan. Prior to her judicial service, she worked in private practice for 18 years at Butzel Long as an associate, 1993–2000, and subsequently as a shareholder, 2000–2011. She has also served for 3 years as an Adjunct Professor at Oakland University, 2003–2006. She earned her J.D. from Northwestern University Law School in 1992. Following her graduation from law school, she served as a law clerk to Judge Cornelia G. Kennedy of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. The ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary unanimously rated Mr. Leitman ''Well Qualified'' to serve on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan, its highest rating.

Judge Linda Parker is nominated to fill a vacancy in the Eastern District of Michigan. She has served since 2009 as a circuit court judge on the Third Judicial Circuit of Michigan. Prior to her judicial service, she worked as director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights, 2003–2008, as Director of Development at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 2000–2003, as Executive Assistant United States Attorney in the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Eastern District of Michigan, 1994–2000, in private practice at Dickinson Wright as associate attorney, 1989–1992, and partner from (1992–1994), and as a staff attorney to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, 1985–1989. She earned her J.D. from George Washington University Law School in 1983. Following graduation from law school, she served as a law clerk to Judge William S. Thompson of the District of Columbia Superior Court, 1983–1985.

All four of the district court nominees have the support of their home state senators—Senator LEVIN and Senator STABENOW. I hope my fellow senators will join me today to confirm these nominees so that they can begin working on behalf of the American people.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, consideration of judicial nominees is among the most important duties of the Senate. I am pleased that four, well-qualified nominees to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan will now be before the Senate, and I urge my colleagues to confirm them. Each of them has demonstrated a commitment to impartial justice and a thorough knowledge of the law. Each was recommended by an independent screening committee that Senator STABENOW and I have formed. It is broadly based and chaired by one of Michigan's truly outstanding lawyers, Eugene Driker.

Each of the nominees has a distinguished background. Matthew Leitman served as a clerk to Justice Charles Levin on the Michigan Supreme Court and has extensive experience in private practice, focusing on complex commercial litigation, criminal defense, and appellate litigation. He has argued before State and Federal trial courts, as well as numerous appeals before State and Federal appellate courts, and has written a number of influential journal articles on important aspects of State and Federal law such as immigration and fraud enforcement. He has on many occasions been recognized by his peers as one of the most effective and knowledgeable litigators in our State.

He is also dedicated to public service. He has been a pro bono honoree for the Eastern District of Michigan every year since 2008.

Judith Ellen Levy worked in private practice and as a trial attorney for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in Detroit. She has conducted research and taught classes and seminars at the University of Michigan. Since 2000, she has served as an assistant U.S. attorney and Civil Rights Unit chief in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Detroit. There, she is responsible for investigating and litigating civil rights cases on behalf of the United States, including fair housing, fair lending,

disability access, and police misconduct cases, and for handling citizen civil rights complaints addressed to the office and conducting outreach regarding a variety of office programs.

Ms. Levy has also received numerous awards for her dedication to community service, including several Department of Justice Civil Rights Division Certificates of Commendation and an award from the University of Michigan Council for Disability Concerns.

Judge Laurie J. Michelson served as law clerk to the Honorable Cornelia G. Kennedy of the U.S. Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit and then for nearly 18 years worked in private practice in the areas of white-collar criminal defense and media and intellectual property law. She was sworn in as a magistrate judge for the Eastern District of Michigan in February 2011.

In private practice and as a magistrate judge, Judge Michelson has ably navigated some of the most complex areas of Federal law but has never lost sight of the fact that the law has a human impact.

Judge Linda Vivienne Parker served as the director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights from 2003 to 2008. She also worked in private practice and served as the first executive assistant U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan under U.S. attorney Saul A. Green from 1994 to 2000. In 2008, she was appointed to the Third Judicial Circuit Court in Wayne County. In addition to her criminal docket, Judge Parker serves as a judge in the Adult Drug Treatment Court.

Judge Parker has dedicated her legal career to public service and has committed a great deal of time to serving and advocating for homeless families and teenage mothers. She served as the Chair of New Steps, an organization committed to providing services for economically disadvantaged new mothers in substance abuse recovery.

Each of these nominees knows the law and is ready to bear the responsibilities of a Federal judge. I urge my colleagues to confirm their nominations so they can begin serving the people of the Eastern District of Michigan.

I would yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF CAROLYN B. McHUGH TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE TENTH CIRCUIT

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

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Carolyn B. McHugh, of Utah, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on the McHugh nomination.

All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Carolyn B. McHugh, of Utah, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit?

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 67 Ex.]

YEAS—98

Alexander	Franken	Moran
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Baldwin	Graham	Murphy
Barrasso	Grassley	Murray
Begich	Hagan	Nelson
Bennet	Harkin	Paul
Blumenthal	Hatch	Portman
Blunt	Heinrich	Pryor
Booker	Heitkamp	Reed
Boozman	Heller	Reid
Boxer	Hirono	Risch
Brown	Hoeven	Roberts
Burr	Inhofe	Sanders
Cantwell	Isakson	Schatz
Cardin	Johanns	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Scott
Casey	Johnson (WI)	Sessions
Chambliss	Kaine	Shaheen
Coats	King	Shelby
Coburn	Kirk	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Landrieu	Thune
Coons	Leahy	Toomey
Corker	Lee	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	Levin	Udall (NM)
Crapo	Manchin	Vitter
Cruz	Markey	Walsh
Donnelly	McCain	Warner
Durbin	McCaskill	Warren
Enzi	McConnell	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Menendez	Wicker
Fischer	Merkley	Wyden
Flake	Mikulski	

NOT VOTING—2

Rockefeller Rubio

The nomination was confirmed.

NOMINATION OF MATTHEW FREDERICK LEITMAN TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Matthew Frederick Leitman, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to the vote on the nomination.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I yield back the remaining time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Matthew Frederick Leitman, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan?

Mr. CHAMBLISS. 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 assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 68 Ex.]

YEAS—98

Alexander	Franken	Moran
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Baldwin	Graham	Murphy
Barrasso	Grassley	Murray
Begich	Hagan	Nelson
Bennet	Harkin	Paul
Blumenthal	Hatch	Portman
Blunt	Heinrich	Pryor
Booker	Heitkamp	Reed
Boozman	Heller	Reid
Boxer	Hirono	Risch
Brown	Hoeven	Roberts
Burr	Inhofe	Sanders
Cantwell	Isakson	Schatz
Cardin	Johanns	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Scott
Casey	Johnson (WI)	Sessions
Chambliss	Kaine	Shaheen
Coats	King	Shelby
Coburn	Kirk	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Landrieu	Thune
Coons	Leahy	Toomey
Corker	Lee	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	Levin	Udall (NM)
Crapo	Manchin	Vitter
Cruz	Markey	Walsh
Donnelly	McCain	Warner
Durbin	McCaskill	Warren
Enzi	McConnell	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Menendez	Wicker
Fischer	Merkley	Wyden
Flake	Mikulski	

NOT VOTING—2

Rockefeller Rubio

The nomination was confirmed.

NOMINATION OF JUDITH ELLEN LEVY TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the Levy nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Judith Ellen Levy, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield back time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Judith Ellen Levy, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 97, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 69 Ex.]

YEAS—97

Alexander	Franken	Moran
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Baldwin	Graham	Murphy
Barrasso	Grassley	Murray
Begich	Hagan	Nelson
Bennet	Harkin	Paul
Blumenthal	Hatch	Portman
Blunt	Heinrich	Pryor
Booker	Heitkamp	Reed
Boozman	Heller	Risch
Boxer	Hirono	Roberts
Brown	Hoeven	Sanders
Burr	Inhofe	Schatz
Cantwell	Isakson	Schumer
Cardin	Johanns	Scott
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Sessions
Casey	Johnson (WI)	Shaheen
Chambliss	Kaine	Shelby
Coats	King	Stabenow
Coburn	Kirk	Tester
Cochran	Klobuchar	Thune
Collins	Landrieu	Toomey
Coons	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Corker	Lee	Udall (NM)
Cornyn	Levin	Vitter
Crapo	Manchin	Walsh
Cruz	Markey	Warner
Donnelly	McCain	Warren
Durbin	McCaskill	Whitehouse
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Feinstein	Menendez	Wyden
Fischer	Merkley	
Flake	Mikulski	

NOT VOTING—3

Reid	Rockefeller	Rubio

The nomination was confirmed.

NOMINATION OF LAURIE J. MICHELSON TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate prior to the nomination.

Mr. LEVIN. I ask unanimous consent that the time be yielded back.

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

All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Laurie J. Michelson, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 70 Ex.]

YEAS—98

Alexander	Franken	Moran
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Baldwin	Graham	Murphy
Barrasso	Grassley	Murray
Begich	Hagan	Nelson
Bennet	Harkin	Paul
Blumenthal	Hatch	Portman
Blunt	Heinrich	Pryor
Booker	Heitkamp	Reed
Boozman	Heller	Reid
Boxer	Hirono	Risch
Brown	Hoeven	Roberts
Burr	Inhofe	Sanders
Cantwell	Isakson	Schatz
Cardin	Johanns	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Scott
Casey	Johnson (WI)	Sessions
Chambliss	Kaine	Shaheen
Coats	King	Shelby
Coburn	Kirk	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Landrieu	Thune
Coons	Leahy	Toomey
Corker	Lee	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	Levin	Udall (NM)
Crapo	Manchin	Vitter
Cruz	Markey	Walsh
Donnelly	McCain	Warner
Durbin	McCaskill	Warren
Enzi	McConnell	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Menendez	Wicker
Fischer	Merkley	Wyden
Flake	Mikulski	

NOT VOTING—2

Rockefeller	Rubio

The nomination was confirmed.

NOMINATION OF LINDA VIVIENNE PARKER TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the Parker nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Linda Vivienne Parker, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to the vote.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Linda Vivienne Parker, of Michigan, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 60, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 71 Ex.]

YEAS—60

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

NAYS—37

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Ayotte	Graham	Portman
Barrasso	Heller	Risch
Blunt	Hoeven	Roberts
Boozman	Inhofe	Scott
Burr	Isakson	Sessions
Coburn	Johanns	Shelby
Cochran	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Cornyn	Lee	Toomey
Crapo	McCain	Vitter
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Moran	
Fischer	Murkowski	

NOT VOTING—3

Begich	Rockefeller	Rubio

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that with respect to the nominations confirmed today, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF SARAH BLOOM RASKIN TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the Raskin nomination.

The assistant bill clerk read the nomination of Sarah Bloom Raskin, of

Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided prior to a vote on confirmation.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back 2 minutes.

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

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I yield back our time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Sarah Bloom Raskin, of Maryland, to be Deputy Secretary of the Treasury?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table.

The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session and proceed to consideration of S. 1086, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1086) to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

The Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

S. 1086

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014''.

SEC. 2. SHORT TITLE AND PURPOSES.

Section 658A of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9801 note) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 658A. SHORT TITLE AND PURPOSES.

''(a) SHORT TITLE.—This subchapter may be cited as the 'Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990'.

''(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this subchapter are—

''(1) to allow each State maximum flexibility in developing child care programs and policies that best suit the needs of children and parents within that State;

''(2) to promote parental choice to empower working parents to make their own decisions regarding the child care that best suits their family's needs;

''(3) to assist States in providing high-quality child care services to parents trying to achieve independence from public assistance;

''(4) to assist States in improving the overall quality of child care services and programs by implementing the health, safety, licensing, training, and oversight standards established in this subchapter and in State law (including regulations);

''(5) to improve school readiness by having children, families, and child care providers engage in activities, in child care settings, that are developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate for the children and that promote children's language and literacy and mathematics skills, social and emotional development, physical health and development, and approaches to learning;

''(6) to encourage States to provide consumer education information to help parents make informed choices about child care services and to promote involvement by parents and family members in the education of their children in child care settings;

''(7) to increase the number and percentage of low-income children in high-quality child care settings; and

''(8) to improve the coordination and delivery of early childhood education and care (including child care).''.

SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 658B of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858) is amended by striking ''subchapter'' and all that follows, and inserting ''subchapter, such sums as may be necessary for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2020.''.

SEC. 4. LEAD AGENCY.

(a) DESIGNATION.—Section 658D(a) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858b(a)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''chief executive officer'' and inserting ''Governor''; and

(2) by striking ''designate'' and all that follows and inserting ''designate an agency (which may be an appropriate collaborative agency), or establish a joint interagency office, that complies with the requirements of subsection (b) to serve as the lead agency for the State under this subchapter.''.

(b) COLLABORATION WITH TRIBES.—Section 658D(b)(1) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858b(b)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(E) at the option of an Indian tribe or tribal organization in the State, collaborate and coordinate with such Indian tribe or tribal organization in the development of the State plan.''.

SEC. 5. APPLICATION AND PLAN.

(a) PERIOD.—Section 658E(b) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858c(b)) is amended, by striking ''2-year'' and inserting ''3-year''.

(b) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.—Section 658E(c) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858c(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''or established'' after ''designated'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by inserting a comma after ''care of such providers'';

(B) by striking subparagraphs (D) through (H); and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) MONITORING AND INSPECTION REPORTS.—The plan shall include a certification that the State, not later than 1 year after the State has in effect the policies and practices described in subparagraph (K)(i), will make public by electronic means, in a consumer-friendly and easily accessible format, organized by provider, the results of monitoring and inspection reports, including those due to major substantiated complaints about failure to comply with this subchapter and State child care policies, as well as the number of deaths, serious injuries, and instances of substantiated child abuse that occurred in child care settings each year, for eligible child care providers within the State. The results shall also include information on the date of such an inspection and, where applicable, information on corrective action taken.

''(E) CONSUMER EDUCATION INFORMATION.—The plan shall include a certification that the State will collect and disseminate (which dissemination may be done, except as otherwise specified in this subparagraph, through resource and referral organizations or other means as determined by the State) to parents of eligible children and the general public—

''(i) information that will promote informed child care choices and that concerns—

''(I) the availability of child care services provided through programs authorized under this subchapter and, if feasible, other child care services and other programs provided in the State for which the family may be eligible;

''(II) if available, information about the quality of providers, including information from a Quality Rating and Improvement System;

''(III) information, made available through a State website, describing the State process for licensing child care providers, the State processes for conducting background checks, and monitoring and inspections, of child care providers, and the offenses that prevent individuals and entities from serving as child care providers in the State;

''(IV) the availability of assistance to obtain child care services;

''(V) other programs for which families that receive child care services for which financial assistance is provided in accordance with this subchapter may be eligible, including the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families established under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.), Head Start and Early Head Start programs carried out under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), the program carried out under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 8621 et seq.), the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children established under section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786), the child and adult care food program established under section 17 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1766), and the Medicaid and State children's health insurance programs under titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq., 1397aa et seq.);

''(VI) programs carried out under section 619 and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.); and

''(VII) research and best practices concerning children's development, including language and cognitive development, development of early language and literacy and mathematics skills, social and emotional development, meaningful parent and family engagement, and physical health and development (particularly healthy eating and physical activity);

''(ii) information on developmental screenings, including—

''(I) information on existing (as of the date of submission of the application containing the plan) resources and services the State can deploy, including the coordinated use of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment program under the Medicaid program carried out under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.) and developmental screening services available under section 619 and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.), in conducting developmental screenings and providing referrals to services, when appropriate, for children who receive assistance under this subchapter; and

''(II) a description of how a family or eligible child care provider may utilize the resources and services described in subclause (I) to obtain developmental screenings for children who receive assistance under this subchapter who may be at risk for cognitive or other developmental delays, which may include social, emotional, physical, or linguistic delays; and

''(iii) information, for parents receiving assistance under the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) and low-income parents, about eligibility for assistance provided in accordance with this subchapter.

''(F) COMPLIANCE WITH STATE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The plan shall include a certification that the State involved has in effect licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided within the State, and provide a detailed description of such requirements and of how such requirements are effectively enforced.

''(ii) LICENSE EXEMPTION.—If the State uses funding received under this subchapter to support a child care provider that is exempt from the corresponding licensing requirements described in clause (i), the plan shall include a description stating why such licensing exemption does not endanger the health, safety, or development of children who receive services from child care providers who are exempt from such requirements.

''(iii) REQUESTS FOR RELIEF.—As described in section 658I(d), a State may request relief from a provision of Federal law other than this subchapter that might conflict with a requirement of this subchapter, including a licensing requirement.

''(G) TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The plan shall describe the training requirements that are in effect within the State that are designed to enable child care providers to promote the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children and that are applicable to child care providers that provide services for which assistance is provided in accordance with this subchapter in the State.

''(ii) REQUIREMENTS.—The plan shall provide an assurance that such training requirements—

''(I) provide a set of workforce and competency standards for child care providers that provide services described in clause (i);

''(II) are developed in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care (designated or established pursuant to section 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)(1)(A)(i)));

''(III) include an evidence-based training framework that is designed to promote children's learning and development and school readiness and to improve child outcomes, including school readiness;

''(IV) incorporate knowledge and application of the State's early learning and developmental guidelines (where applicable), and the State's child development and health standards; and

''(V) to the extent practicable, are appropriate for a population of children that includes—

''(aa) different age groups (such as infants, toddlers, and preschoolers);

''(bb) English learners;

''(cc) children with disabilities; and

''(dd) Native Americans, including Indians, as the term is defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b) (including Alaska Natives within the meaning of that term), and Native Hawaiians (as defined in section 7207 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7517)).

''(iii) PROGRESSION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.—In developing the requirements, the State shall develop a statewide progression of professional development designed to improve the skills and knowledge of the workforce—

''(I) which may include the acquisition of course credit in postsecondary education or of a credential, aligned with the framework; and

''(II) which shall be accessible to providers supported through Indian tribes or tribal organizations that receive assistance under this subchapter.

''(iv) ALIGNMENT.—The State shall engage the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, and may engage institutions of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)), and other training providers in aligning training opportunities with the State's training framework.

''(v) CREDENTIALS.—The Secretary shall not require an individual or entity that provides child care services for which assistance is provided in accordance with this subchapter to acquire a credential to provide such services. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a State from requiring a credential.

''(H) CHILD-TO-PROVIDER RATIO STANDARDS.—

''(i) STANDARDS.—The plan shall describe child care standards, for child care for which assistance is made available in accordance with this subchapter, appropriate to the type of child care setting involved, that address—

''(I) group size limits for specific age populations;

''(II) the appropriate ratio between the number of children and the number of providers, in terms of the age of the children in child care, as determined by the State; and

''(III) required qualifications for such providers.

''(ii) CONSTRUCTION.—The Secretary may offer guidance to States on child-to-provider ratios described in clause (i) according to setting and age group but shall not require that States maintain specific child-to-provider ratios for providers who receive assistance under this subchapter.

''(I) HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS.—The plan shall include a certification that there are in effect within the State, under State or local law, requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children that are applicable to child care providers that provide services for which assistance is made available in accordance with this subchapter. Such requirements—

''(i) shall relate to matters including health and safety topics (including prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma) consisting of—

''(I) the prevention and control of infectious diseases (including immunization) and the establishment of a grace period that allows homeless children to receive services under this subchapter while their families are taking any necessary action to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements;

''(II) handwashing and universal health precautions;

''(III) the administration of medication, consistent with standards for parental consent;

''(IV) the prevention of and response to emergencies due to food and other allergic reactions;

''(V) prevention of sudden infant death syndrome and use of safe sleeping practices;

''(VI) sanitary methods of food handling;

''(VII) building and physical premises safety;

''(VIII) emergency preparedness and response planning for emergencies resulting from a natural disaster, or a man-caused event (such as violence at a child care facility), within the meaning of those terms under section 602(a)(1) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5195a(a)(1));

''(IX) the handling and storage of hazardous materials and the appropriate disposal of biocontaminants;

''(X) identification of and protection from hazards that can cause bodily injury such as electrical hazards, bodies of water, and vehicular traffic;

''(XI) for providers that offer transportation, if applicable, appropriate precautions in transporting children;

''(XII) first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation; and

''(XIII) minimum health and safety training, to be completed pre-service or during an orientation period, appropriate to the provider setting involved that addresses each of the requirements relating to matters described in subclauses (I) through (XII); and

''(ii) may include requirements relating to nutrition, access to physical activity, or any other subject area determined by the State to be necessary to promote child development or to protect children's health and safety.

''(J) COMPLIANCE WITH STATE AND LOCAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS.—The plan shall include a certification that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers within the State, that provide services for which assistance is made available in accordance with this subchapter, comply with all applicable State and local health and safety requirements as described in subparagraph (I).

''(K) ENFORCEMENT OF LICENSING AND OTHER REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.—

''(i) CERTIFICATION.—The plan shall include a certification that the State, not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, shall have in effect policies and practices, applicable to licensing or regulating child care providers that provide services for which assistance is made available in accordance with this subchapter and the facilities of those providers, that—

''(I) ensure that individuals who are hired as licensing inspectors in the State are qualified to inspect those child care providers and facilities and have received training in related health and safety requirements, child development, child abuse prevention and detection, program management, and relevant law enforcement;

''(II) require licensing inspectors (or qualified inspectors designated by the lead agency) of those child care providers and facilities to perform inspections, with—

''(aa) not less than 1 prelicensure inspection for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards, of each such child care provider and facility in the State; and

''(bb) not less than annually, an inspection (which shall be unannounced) of each such child care provider and facility in the State for compliance with all child care licensing standards, which shall include an inspection for compliance with health, safety, and fire standards (although inspectors may or may not inspect for compliance with all 3 standards at the same time); and

''(III) require the ratio of licensing inspectors to such child care providers and facilities in the State to—

''(aa) be maintained at a level sufficient to enable the State to conduct inspections of such child care providers and facilities on a timely basis in accordance with Federal and State law; and

''(bb) be consistent with research findings and best practices.

''(ii) CONSTRUCTION.—The Secretary may offer guidance to a State, if requested by the State, on a research-based minimum standard regarding ratios described in clause (i)(III) and provide technical assistance to the State on meeting the minimum standard within a reasonable time period, but shall not prescribe a particular ratio.

''(L) COMPLIANCE WITH CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—The plan shall include a certification that child care providers within the State will comply with the child abuse reporting requirements of section 106(b)(2)(B)(i) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(i)).

''(M) MEETING THE NEEDS OF CERTAIN POPULATIONS.—The plan shall describe how the State will develop and implement strategies (which may include the provision of compensation at higher payment rates and bonuses to child care providers, the provision of direct contracts or grants to community-based organizations, or other means determined by the State) to increase the supply and improve the quality of child care for—

''(i) children in underserved areas;

''(ii) infants and toddlers;

''(iii) children with disabilities, as defined by the State; and

''(iv) children who receive care during nontraditional hours.

''(N) PROTECTION FOR WORKING PARENTS.—

''(i) MINIMUM PERIOD.—

''(I) 12-MONTH PERIOD.—The plan shall demonstrate that each child who receives assistance under this subchapter in the State will be considered to meet all eligibility requirements for such assistance and will receive such assistance, for not less than 12 months before the State redetermines the eligibility of the child under this subchapter, regardless of a temporary change in the ongoing status of the child's parent as working or attending a job training or educational program or a change in family income for the child's family, if that family income does not exceed 85 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size.

''(II) FLUCTUATIONS IN EARNINGS.—The plan shall demonstrate how the State's processes for initial determination and redetermination of such eligibility take into account irregular fluctuations in earnings.

''(ii) REDETERMINATION PROCESS.—The plan shall describe the procedures and policies that are in place to ensure that working parents (especially parents in families receiving assistance under the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)) are not required to unduly disrupt their employment in order to comply with the State's requirements for redetermination of eligibility for assistance provided in accordance with this subchapter.

''(iii) PERIOD BEFORE TERMINATION.—At the option of the State, the plan shall demonstrate that the State will not terminate assistance provided to carry out this subchapter based on a factor consisting of a parent's loss of work or cessation of attendance at a job training or educational program for which the family was receiving the assistance, without continuing the assistance for a reasonable period of time, of not less than 3 months, after such loss or cessation in order for the parent to engage in a job search and resume work, or resume attendance at a job training or educational program, as soon as possible.

''(iv) GRADUATED PHASEOUT OF CARE.—The plan shall describe the policies and procedures that are in place to allow for provision of continued assistance to carry out this subchapter, at the beginning of a new eligibility period under clause (i)(I), for children of parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program and whose family income exceeds the State's income limit to initially qualify for such assistance, if the family income for the family involved does not exceed 85 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size.

''(O) COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The plan shall describe how the State, in order to expand accessibility and continuity of quality early childhood education and care, and assist children enrolled in prekindergarten, Early Head Start, or Head Start programs to receive full-day services, will coordinate the services supported to carry out this subchapter with—

''(I) programs carried out under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.), including the Early Head Start programs carried out under section 645A of that Act (42 U.S.C. 9840a);

''(II) programs carried out under part A of title I, and part B of title IV, of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311 et seq., 7171 et seq.);

''(III) programs carried out under section 619 and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.);

''(IV) the maternal, infant, and early childhood home visiting programs authorized under section 511 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 711), as added by section 2951 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (Public Law 111–148);

''(V) State, Indian tribe or tribal organization, and locally funded early childhood education and care programs;

''(VI) programs serving homeless children and services of local educational agency liaisons for homeless children and youths designated under subsection (g)(1)(J)(ii) of section 722 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11432(g)(1)(J)(ii)); and

''(VII) other Federal programs supporting early childhood education and care activities, and, where applicable, child care programs funded through State veterans affairs offices.

''(ii) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in clause (i) shall be construed to affect the priority of children described in clause (i) to receive full-day prekindergarten or Head Start program services.

''(P) PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.—The plan shall demonstrate how the State encourages partnerships among State agencies, other public agencies, Indian tribes and tribal organizations, and private entities to leverage existing service delivery systems (as of the date of the submission of the application containing the plan) for early childhood education and care and to increase the supply and quality of child care services for children who are less than 13 years of age, such as by implementing voluntary shared services alliance models.

''(Q) PRIORITY FOR LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS.—The plan shall describe the process the State proposes to use, with respect to investments made to increase access to programs providing high-quality early childhood education and care, to give priority for those investments to children of families in areas that have significant concentrations of poverty and unemployment and that do not have such programs.

''(R) CONSULTATION.—The plan shall include a certification that the State has developed the plan in consultation with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care designated or established pursuant to section 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)(1)(A)(i)).

''(S) PAYMENT PRACTICES.—The plan shall include a certification that the payment practices of child care providers in the State that serve children who receive assistance under this subchapter reflect generally accepted payment practices of child care providers in the State that serve children who do not receive assistance under this subchapter, so as to provide stability of funding and encourage more child care providers to serve children who receive assistance under this subchapter.

''(T) EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL GUIDELINES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The plan shall include an assurance that the State will develop or implement early learning and developmental guidelines that are appropriate for children from birth through entry into kindergarten, describing what such children should know and be able to do, and covering the essential domains of early childhood education and care and early childhood development for use statewide by child care providers. Such child care providers shall—

''(I) be licensed or regulated under State law; and

''(II) not be a relative of all children for whom the provider provides child care services.

''(ii) ALIGNMENT.—The guidelines shall be research-based, developmentally appropriate, and aligned with State standards for education in kindergarten through grade 3.

''(iii) PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.—The plan shall include an assurance that funds received by the State to carry out this subchapter will not be used to develop or implement an assessment for children that—

''(I) will be the sole basis for a child care provider being determined to be ineligible to participate in the program carried out under this subchapter;

''(II) will be used as the primary or sole basis to provide a reward or sanction for an individual provider;

''(III) will be used as the primary or sole method for assessing program effectiveness; or

''(IV) will be used to deny eligibility to participate in the program carried out under this subchapter.

''(iv) EXCEPTIONS.—Nothing in this subchapter shall preclude the State from using a single assessment (if appropriate) for children for—

''(I) supporting learning or improving a classroom environment;

''(II) targeting professional development to a provider;

''(III) determining the need for health, mental health, disability, developmental delay, or family support services;

''(IV) obtaining information for the quality improvement process at the State level; or

''(V) conducting a program evaluation for the purposes of providing program improvement and parent information.

''(v) NO FEDERAL CONTROL.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize an officer or employee of the Federal Government to—

''(I) mandate, direct, or control a State's early learning and developmental guidelines, developed in accordance with this section;

''(II) establish any criterion that specifies, defines, or prescribes the standards or measures that a State uses to establish, implement, or improve—

''(aa) early learning and developmental guidelines, or early learning standards, assessments, or accountability systems; or

''(bb) alignment of early learning and developmental guidelines with State standards for education in kindergarten through grade 3; or

''(III) require a State to submit such standards or measures for review.'';

(3) in paragraph (3)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''as required under'' and inserting ''in accordance with'';

(B) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) by striking ''The State'' and inserting the following:

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The State'';

(ii) by striking ''and any other activity that the State deems appropriate to realize any of the goals specified in paragraphs (2) through (5) of section 658A(b)'' and inserting ''activities that improve access to child care services, including use of procedures to permit immediate enrollment (after the initial eligibility determination and after a child is determined to be eligible) of homeless children while required documentation is obtained, training and technical assistance on identifying and serving homeless children and their families, and specific outreach to homeless families, and any other activity that the State determines to be appropriate to meet the purposes of this subchapter (which may include an activity described in clause (ii))''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL SYSTEM.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—A State may use amounts described in clause (i) to establish or support a system of local or regional child care resource and referral organizations that is coordinated, to the extent determined appropriate by the State, by a statewide public or private nonprofit, community-based or regionally based, lead child care resource and referral organization.

''(II) LOCAL OR REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.—The local or regional child care resource and referral organizations supported as described in subclause (I) shall—

''(aa) provide parents in the State with consumer education information referred to in paragraph (2)(E) (except as otherwise provided in that paragraph), concerning the full range of child care options, analyzed by provider, including child care provided during nontraditional

hours and through emergency child care centers, in their political subdivisions or regions;

''(bb) to the extent practicable, work directly with families who receive assistance under this subchapter to offer the families support and assistance, using information described in item (aa), to make an informed decision about which child care providers they will use, in an effort to ensure that the families are enrolling their children in high-quality care;

''(cc) collect and analyze data on the coordination of services and supports, including services under section 619 and part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419, 1431 et seq.), for children with disabilities (as defined in section 602 of such Act (20 U.S.C. 1401));

''(dd) collect and analyze data on the supply of and demand for child care in political subdivisions or regions within the State and submit such data and analysis to the State;

''(ee) work to establish partnerships with public agencies and private entities to increase the supply and quality of child care services in the State; and

''(ff) as appropriate, coordinate their activities with the activities of the State lead agency and local agencies that administer funds made available in accordance with this subchapter.'';

(C) in subparagraph (D)—

(i) by striking ''1997 through 2002'' and inserting ''2015 through 2020''; and

(ii) by striking ''families described in paragraph (2)(H)'' and inserting ''families with children described in clause (i), (ii), (iii), or (iv) of paragraph (2)(M)''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(E) DIRECT SERVICES.—From amounts provided to a State for a fiscal year to carry out this subchapter, the State shall—

''(i) reserve the minimum amount required to be reserved under section 658G, and the funds for costs described in subparagraph (C); and

''(ii) from the remainder, use not less than 70 percent to fund direct services (provided by the State) in accordance with paragraph (2)(A).'';

(4) by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

''(4) PAYMENT RATES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The State plan shall certify that payment rates for the provision of child care services for which assistance is provided in accordance with this subchapter are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to child care services that are comparable to child care services in the State or substate area involved that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this subchapter or to receive child care assistance under any other Federal or State program and shall provide a summary of the facts relied on by the State to determine that such rates are sufficient to ensure such access.

''(B) SURVEY.—The State plan shall—

''(i) demonstrate that the State has, after consulting with the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care designated or established in section 642B(b)(1)(A)(i) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)(1)(A)(i)), local child care program administrators, local child care resource and referral agencies, and other appropriate entities, developed and conducted (not earlier than 2 years before the date of the submission of the application containing the State plan) a statistically valid and reliable survey of the market rates for child care services in the State (that reflects variations in the cost of child care services by geographic area, type of provider, and age of child);

''(ii) demonstrate that the State prepared a detailed report containing the results of the State market rates survey conducted pursuant to clause (i), and made the results of the survey widely available (not later than 30 days after the completion of such survey) through periodic means, including posting the results on the Internet;

''(iii) describe how the State will set payment rates for child care services, for which assistance is provided in accordance with this subchapter—

''(I) in accordance with the results of the market rates survey conducted pursuant to clause (i);

''(II) taking into consideration the cost of providing higher quality child care services than were provided under this subchapter before the date of enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014; and

''(III) without, to the extent practicable, reducing the number of families in the State receiving such assistance to carry out this subchapter, relative to the number of such families on the date of enactment of that Act; and

''(iv) describe how the State will provide for timely payment for child care services provided in accordance with this subchapter.

''(C) CONSTRUCTION.—

''(i) NO PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to create a private right of action.

''(ii) NO PROHIBITION OF CERTAIN DIFFERENT RATES.—Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed to prevent a State from differentiating the payment rates described in subparagraph (B)(iii) on the basis of such factors as—

''(I) geographic location of child care providers (such as location in an urban or rural area);

''(II) the age or particular needs of children (such as the needs of children with disabilities and children served by child protective services);

''(III) whether the providers provide child care during weekend and other nontraditional hours; or

''(IV) the State's determination that such differentiated payment rates are needed to enable a parent to choose child care that is of high quality.''; and

(5) in paragraph (5), by inserting ''(that is not a barrier to families receiving assistance under this subchapter)'' after ''cost sharing''.

(c) TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.—Section 658F(b)(2) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858d(b)(2)) is amended by striking ''section 658E(c)(2)(F)'' and inserting ''section 658E(c)(2)(I)''.

SEC. 6. ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE.

Section 658G of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858e) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 658G. ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE.

''(a) RESERVATION.—

''(1) RESERVATION FOR ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE QUALITY OF CHILD CARE SERVICES.—A State that receives funds to carry out this subchapter for a fiscal year referred to in paragraph (2) shall reserve and use a portion of such funds, in accordance with paragraph (2), for activities provided directly, or through grants or contracts with local child care resource and referral organizations or other appropriate entities, that are designed to improve the quality of child care services and increase parental options for, and access to, high-quality child care, provided in accordance with this subchapter.

''(2) AMOUNT OF RESERVATIONS.—Such State shall reserve and use—

''(A) to carry out the activities described in paragraph (1), not less than—

''(i) 6 percent of the funds described in paragraph (1), for the first and second full fiscal years after the date of enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014;

''(ii) 8 percent of such funds, for the third and fourth full fiscal years after the date of enactment; and

''(iii) 10 percent of such funds, for the fifth full fiscal year after the date of enactment and each succeeding fiscal year; and

''(B) in addition to the funds reserved under subparagraph (A), 3 percent of the funds described in paragraph (1), for the first full fiscal year after the date of enactment and each succeeding fiscal year, to carry out the activities described in paragraph (1) and subsection (b)(4), as such activities relate to the quality of care for infants and toddlers.

''(b) ACTIVITIES.—Funds reserved under subsection (a) shall be used to carry out not fewer than 2 of the following activities:

''(1) Supporting the training, professional development, and professional advancement of the child care workforce through activities such as—

''(A) offering child care providers training and professional development that is intentional and sequential and leads to a higher level of skill or certification;

''(B) establishing or supporting programs designed to increase the retention and improve the competencies of child care providers, including wage incentive programs and initiatives that establish tiered payment rates for providers that meet or exceed child care services guidelines, as defined by the State;

''(C) offering training, professional development, and educational opportunities for child care providers that relate to the use of developmentally appropriate and age-appropriate curricula, and early childhood teaching strategies, that are scientifically based and aligned with the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children, including offering specialized training for child care providers who care for infants and toddlers, children who are English learners, and children with disabilities (as defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401));

''(D) providing training concerning the State early learning and developmental guidelines, where applicable, including training concerning early mathematics and early language and literacy development and effective instructional practices to support mathematics and language and literacy development in young children;

''(E) incorporating effective use of data to guide instruction and program improvement;

''(F) including effective behavior management strategies and training, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, that promote positive social and emotional development and reduce challenge behaviors;

''(G) at the option of the State, incorporating feedback from experts at the State's institutions of higher education, as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002), and other early childhood development experts and early childhood education and care experts;

''(H) providing training corresponding to the nutritional and physical activity needs of children to promote healthy development;

''(I) providing training or professional development for child care providers to serve and support children with disabilities;

''(J) providing training and outreach on engaging parents and families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways to expand their knowledge, skills, and capacity to become meaningful partners in supporting their children's learning and development; and

''(K) providing training or professional development for child care providers regarding the early neurological development of children.

''(2) Supporting the use of the early learning and developmental guidelines described in section 658E(c)(2)(T) by—

''(A) developing and implementing the State's early learning and developmental guidelines; and

''(B) providing technical assistance to enhance early learning for preschool and school-aged children in order to promote language and literacy skills, foster school readiness, and support later school success.

''(3) Developing and implementing a tiered quality rating system for child care providers, which shall—

''(A) support and assess the quality of child care providers in the State;

''(B) build on licensing standards and other State regulatory standards for such providers;

''(C) be designed to improve the quality of different types of child care providers;

''(D) describe the quality of early learning facilities;

''(E) build the capacity of State early childhood education and care programs and communities to promote parents' and families' understanding of the State's early childhood education and care system and the ratings of the programs in which the child is enrolled; and

''(F) provide, to the maximum extent practicable, financial incentives and other supports designed to help child care providers achieve and sustain higher levels of quality.

''(4) Improving the supply and quality of child care programs and services for infants and toddlers through activities, which may include—

''(A) establishing or expanding neighborhood-based high-quality comprehensive family and child development centers, which may serve as resources to child care providers in order to improve the quality of early childhood education and care and early childhood development services provided to infants and toddlers from low-income families and to help eligible child care providers improve their capacity to offer high-quality care to infants and toddlers from low-income families;

''(B) establishing or expanding the operation of community or neighborhood-based family child care networks;

''(C) supporting statewide networks of infant and toddler child care specialists, including specialists who have knowledge regarding infant and toddler development and curriculum and program implementation as well as the ability to coordinate services with early intervention specialists who provide services for infants and toddlers with disabilities under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.);

''(D) carrying out initiatives to improve the quality of the infant and toddler child care workforce, such as providing relevant training, professional development, or mentoring opportunities and linking such opportunities to career pathways, developing career pathways for providers in such workforce, and improving the State credentialing of eligible providers caring for infants and toddlers;

''(E) if applicable, developing infant and toddler components within the State's quality rating system described in paragraph (3) for child care providers for infants and toddlers, or the development of infant and toddler components in a State's child care licensing regulations or early learning and developmental guidelines;

''(F) improving the ability of parents to access information about high-quality infant and toddler care; and

''(G) carrying out other activities determined by the State to improve the quality of infant and toddler care provided in the State, and for which there is evidence that the activities will lead to improved infant and toddler health and safety, infant and toddler development, or infant and toddler well-being, including providing training (including training in safe sleep practices, first aid, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

''(5) Promoting broad child care provider participation in the quality rating system described in paragraph (3).

''(6) Establishing or expanding a statewide system of child care resource and referral services.

''(7) Facilitating compliance with State requirements for inspection, monitoring, training, and health and safety, and with State licensing standards.

''(8) Evaluating and assessing the quality and effectiveness of child care programs and services offered in the State, including evaluating how such programs and services may improve the overall school readiness of young children.

''(9) Supporting child care providers in the pursuit of accreditation by an established national accrediting body with demonstrated, valid, and reliable program standards of high quality.

''(10) Supporting State or local efforts to develop or adopt high-quality program standards relating to health, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, and physical development and providing resources to enable eligible child care providers to meet, exceed, or sustain success in meeting or exceeding, such standards.

''(11) Carrying out other activities determined by the State to improve the quality of child care services provided in the State, and for which measurement of outcomes relating to improved provider preparedness, child safety, child well-being, or school readiness is possible.

''(c) CERTIFICATION.—Beginning with fiscal year 2015, at the beginning of each fiscal year, the State shall annually submit to the Secretary a certification containing an assurance that the State was in compliance with subsection (a) during the preceding fiscal year and a description of how the State used funds received under this subchapter to comply with subsection (a) during that preceding fiscal year.

''(d) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—Each State receiving funds under this subchapter shall prepare and submit an annual report to the Secretary, which shall include information about—

''(1) the amount of funds that are reserved under subsection (a);

''(2) the activities carried out under this section; and

''(3) the measures that the State will use to evaluate the State's progress in improving the quality of child care programs and services in the State.

''(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall offer technical assistance, in accordance with section 658I(a)(3), which may include technical assistance through the use of grants or cooperative agreements, to States for the activities described in subsection (b).

''(f) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as providing the Secretary the authority to regulate, direct, or dictate State child care quality activities or progress in implementing those activities.''.

SEC. 7. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 658G the following:

''SEC. 658H. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—A State that receives funds to carry out this subchapter shall have in effect—

''(1) requirements, policies, and procedures to require and conduct criminal background checks for child care staff members (including prospective child care staff members) of child care providers described in subsection (c)(1); and

''(2) licensing, regulation, and registration requirements, as applicable, that prohibit the employment of child care staff members as described in subsection (c).

''(b) REQUIREMENTS.—A criminal background check for a child care staff member under subsection (a) shall include—

''(1) a search of each State criminal and sex offender registry or repository in the State where the child care staff member resides and each State where such staff member resided during the preceding 10 years;

''(2) a search of State-based child abuse and neglect registries and databases in the State where the child care staff member resides and each State where such staff member resided during the preceding 10 years;

''(3) a search of the National Crime Information Center;

''(4) a Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint check using the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System; and

''(5) a search of the National Sex Offender Registry established under the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (42 U.S.C. 16901 et seq.).

''(c) PROHIBITIONS.—

''(1) CHILD CARE STAFF MEMBERS.—A child care staff member shall be ineligible for employment by a child care provider that is licensed, regulated, or registered by the State or for which assistance is provided in accordance with this subchapter, if such individual—

''(A) refuses to consent to the criminal background check described in subsection (b);

''(B) knowingly makes a materially false statement in connection with such criminal background check;

''(C) is registered, or is required to be registered, on a State sex offender registry or repository or the National Sex Offender Registry established under the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (42 U.S.C. 16901 et seq.); or

''(D) has been convicted of a felony consisting of—

''(i) murder, as described in section 1111 of title 18, United States Code;

''(ii) child abuse or neglect;

''(iii) a crime against children, including child pornography;

''(iv) spousal abuse;

''(v) a crime involving rape or sexual assault;

''(vi) kidnaping;

''(vii) arson;

''(viii) physical assault or battery; or

''(ix) subject to subsection (e)(4), a drug-related offense committed during the preceding 5 years.

''(2) CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.—A child care provider described in paragraph (1) shall be ineligible for assistance provided in accordance with this subchapter if the provider employs a staff member who is ineligible for employment under paragraph (1).

''(d) SUBMISSION OF REQUESTS FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A child care provider covered by subsection (c) shall submit a request, to the appropriate State agency designated by a State, for a criminal background check described in subsection (b), for each child care staff member (including prospective child care staff members) of the provider.

''(2) STAFF MEMBERS.—Subject to paragraph (4), in the case of an individual who became a child care staff member before the date of enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, the provider shall submit such a request—

''(A) prior to the last day described in subsection (i)(1); and

''(B) not less often than once during each 5-year period following the first submission date under this paragraph for that staff member.

''(3) PROSPECTIVE STAFF MEMBERS.—Subject to paragraph (4), in the case of an individual who is a prospective child care staff member on or after that date of enactment, the provider shall submit such a request—

''(A) prior to the date the individual becomes a child care staff member of the provider; and

''(B) not less often than once during each 5-year period following the first submission date under this paragraph for that staff member.

''(4) BACKGROUND CHECK FOR ANOTHER CHILD CARE PROVIDER.—A child care provider shall not be required to submit a request under paragraph (2) or (3) for a child care staff member if—

''(A) the staff member received a background check described in subsection (b)—

''(i) within 5 years before the latest date on which such a submission may be made; and

''(ii) while employed by or seeking employment by another child care provider within the State;

''(B) the State provided to the first provider a qualifying background check result, consistent with this subchapter, for the staff member; and

''(C) the staff member is employed by a child care provider within the State, or has been separated from employment from a child care provider within the State for a period of not more than 180 consecutive days.

''(e) BACKGROUND CHECK RESULTS AND APPEALS.—

''(1) BACKGROUND CHECK RESULTS.—The State shall carry out the request of a child care provider for a criminal background check as expeditiously as possible, but in not to exceed 45 days after the date on which such request was submitted, and shall provide the results of the criminal background check to such provider and to the current or prospective staff member.

''(2) PRIVACY.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The State shall provide the results of the criminal background check to the provider in a statement that indicates whether a child care staff member (including a prospective child care staff member) is eligible or ineligible for employment described in subsection (c), without revealing any disqualifying crime or other related information regarding the individual.

''(B) INELIGIBLE STAFF MEMBER.—If the child care staff member is ineligible for such employment due to the background check, the State will, when providing the results of the background check, include information related to each disqualifying crime, in a report to the staff member or prospective staff member.

''(C) PUBLIC RELEASE OF RESULTS.—No State shall publicly release or share the results of individual background checks, however, such results of background checks may be included in the development or dissemination of local or statewide data related to background checks, if such results are not individually identifiable.

''(3) APPEALS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The State shall provide for a process by which a child care staff member (including a prospective child care staff member) may appeal the results of a criminal background check conducted under this section to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in such member's criminal background report.

''(B) APPEALS PROCESS.—The State shall ensure that—

''(i) each child care staff member shall be given notice of the opportunity to appeal;

''(ii) a child care staff member will receive instructions about how to complete the appeals process if the child care staff member wishes to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in such member's criminal background report; and

''(iii) the appeals process is completed in a timely manner for each child care staff member.

''(4) REVIEW.—The State may allow for a review process through which the State may determine that a child care staff member (including a prospective child care staff member) disqualified for a crime specified in subsection (c)(1)(D)(ix) is eligible for employment described in subsection (c)(1), notwithstanding subsection (c). The review process shall be consistent with title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.).

''(5) NO PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to create a private right of action if the provider is in compliance with State regulations and requirements.

''(f) FEES FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS.—Fees that a State may charge for the costs of processing applications and administering a criminal background check as required by this section shall not exceed the actual costs to the State for the processing and administration.

''(g) CONSTRUCTION.—

''(1) DISQUALIFICATION FOR OTHER CRIMES.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent a State from disqualifying individuals as child care staff members based on their conviction for crimes not specifically listed in this section that bear upon the fitness of an individual to provide care for and have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children.

''(2) RIGHTS AND REMEDIES.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter or otherwise affect the rights and remedies provided for child care staff members residing in a State that disqualifies individuals as child care staff members for crimes not specifically provided for under this section.

''(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'child care provider' means a center-based child care provider, a family child care provider, or another provider of child care services for compensation and on a regular basis that—

''(A) is not an individual who is related to all children for whom child care services are provided; and

''(B) is licensed, regulated, or registered under State law or receives assistance provided in accordance with this subchapter; and

''(2) the term 'child care staff member' means an individual (other than an individual who is related to all children for whom child care services are provided)—

''(A) who is employed by a child care provider for compensation;

''(B) whose activities involve the care or supervision of children for a child care provider or unsupervised access to children who are cared for or supervised by a child care provider; or

''(C) who is a family child care provider.

''(i) EFFECTIVE DATE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—A State that receives funds under this subchapter shall meet the requirements of this section for the provision of criminal background checks for child care staff members described in subsection (d)(1) not later than the last day of the second full fiscal year after the date of enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014.

''(2) EXTENSION.—The Secretary may grant a State an extension of time, of not more than 1 fiscal year, to meet the requirements of this section if the State demonstrates a good faith effort to comply with the requirements of this section.

''(3) PENALTY FOR NONCOMPLIANCE.—Except as provided in paragraphs (1) and (2), for any fiscal year that a State fails to comply substantially with the requirements of this section, the Secretary shall withhold 5 percent of the funds that would otherwise be allocated to that State in accordance with this subchapter for the following fiscal year.''.

SEC. 8. REPORTS AND INFORMATION.

(a) ADMINISTRATION.—Section 658I of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858g) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by inserting a comma after ''publish''; and

(ii) by striking ''and'' at the end;

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

''(3) provide technical assistance to States (which may include providing assistance on a reimbursable basis), consistent with (as appropriate) scientifically valid research, to carry out this subchapter; and''; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

''(4) disseminate, for voluntary informational purposes, information on practices that scientifically valid research indicates are most successful in improving the quality of programs that receive assistance under this subchapter.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) PROHIBITION.—Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed as providing the Secretary the authority to permit States to alter the eligibility requirements for eligible children, including work requirements that apply to the parents of eligible children.''.

(b) REQUESTS FOR RELIEF.—Section 658I of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, as amended by subsection (a), is further amended by adding at the end the following:

''(d) REQUEST FOR RELIEF.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The State may submit to the Secretary a request for relief from any provision of Federal law (including a regulation, policy, or procedure) affecting the delivery of child care services with Federal funds, other than this subchapter, that conflicts with a requirement of this subchapter.

''(2) CONTENTS.—Such request shall—

''(A) detail the provision of Federal law that conflicts with that requirement;

''(B) describe how modifying compliance with that provision of Federal law to meet the requirements of this subchapter will, by itself, improve delivery of child care services for children in the State; and

''(C) certify that the health, safety, and well-being of children served through assistance received under this subchapter will not be compromised as a result.

''(3) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall consult with the State submitting the request and the head of each Federal agency (other than the Secretary) with responsibility for administering the Federal law detailed in the State's request. The consulting parties shall jointly identify—

''(A) any provision of Federal law (including a regulation, policy, or procedure) for which a waiver is necessary to enable the State to provide services in accordance with the request; and

''(B) any corresponding waiver.

''(4) WAIVERS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, and after the joint identification described in paragraph (3), the head of the Federal agency involved shall have the authority to waive any statutory provision administered by that agency, or any regulation, policy, or procedure issued by that agency, that has been so identified, unless the head of the Federal agency determines that such a waiver is inconsistent with the objectives of this subchapter or the Federal law from which relief is sought.

''(5) APPROVAL.—Within 90 days after the receipt of a State's request under this subsection, the Secretary shall inform the State of the Secretary's approval or disapproval of the request. If the plan is disapproved, the Secretary shall inform the State, in writing, of the reasons for the disapproval and give the State the opportunity to amend the request.

''(6) DURATION.—The Secretary may approve a request under this subsection for a period of not more than 3 years, and may renew the approval for additional periods of not more than 3 years.

''(7) TERMINATION.—The Secretary shall terminate approval of a request for relief authorized under this subsection if the Secretary determines, after notice and opportunity for a hearing, that the performance of a State granted relief under this subsection has been inadequate, or if such relief is no longer necessary to achieve its original purposes.''.

(c) REPORTS.—Section 658K(a) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858i(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B)—

(A) in clause (ix), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) in clause (x), by inserting ''and'' at the end; and

(C) by inserting after clause (x), the following:

''(xi) whether the children receiving assistance under this subchapter are homeless children;''; and

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''1997'' and inserting ''2014''; and

(B) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''section 658P(5)'' and inserting ''section 658P(6)''.

(d) REPORT BY SECRETARY.—Section 658L of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858j) is amended—

(1) by striking the section heading and inserting the following:

''SEC. 658L. REPORTS, HOTLINE, AND WEB SITE.'';

(2) by striking ''Not later'' and inserting the following:

''(a) REPORT BY SECRETARY.—Not later'';

(3) by striking ''1998'' and inserting ''2016''; and

(4) by striking ''to the Committee'' and all that follows through ''of the Senate'' and inserting ''to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) NATIONAL TOLL-FREE HOTLINE AND WEB SITE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall operate a national toll-free hotline and Web site, to—

''(A) develop and disseminate publicly available child care consumer education information for parents and help parents access safe, affordable, and quality child care in their community; and

''(B) to allow persons to report (anonymously if desired) suspected child abuse or neglect, or violations of health and safety requirements, by an eligible child care provider that receives assistance under this subchapter.

''(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall ensure that the hotline and Web site meet the following requirements:

''(A) REFERRAL TO LOCAL CHILD CARE PROVIDERS.—The Web site shall be hosted by 'childcare.gov'. The Web site shall enable a child care consumer to enter a zip code and obtain a referral to local child care providers described in subparagraph (B) within a specified search radius.

''(B) INFORMATION.—The Web site shall provide to consumers, directly or through linkages to State databases, at a minimum—

''(i) a localized list of all State licensed child care providers;

''(ii) any provider-specific information from a Quality Rating and Improvement System or information about other quality indicators, to the extent the information is publicly available and to the extent practicable;

''(iii) any other provider-specific information about compliance with licensing, and health and safety, requirements to the extent the information is publicly available and to the extent practicable;

''(iv) referrals to local resource and referral organizations from which consumers can find more information about child care providers, and a recommendation that consumers consult with the organizations when selecting a child care provider; and

''(v) State information about child care subsidy programs and other financial supports available to families.

''(C) NATIONWIDE CAPACITY.—The Web site and hotline shall have the capacity to help families in every State and community in the Nation.

''(D) INFORMATION AT ALL HOURS.—The Web site shall provide, to parents and families, access to information about child care 24 hours a day.

''(E) SERVICES IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.—The Web site and hotline shall ensure the widest possible access to services for families who speak languages other than English.

''(F) HIGH-QUALITY CONSUMER EDUCATION AND REFERRAL.—The Web site and hotline shall ensure that families have access to child care consumer education and referral services that are consistent and of high quality.

''(3) PROHIBITION.—Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to allow the Secretary to compel States to provide additional data and information that is currently (as of the date of enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014) not publicly available, or is not required by this subchapter.''.

SEC. 9. RESERVATION FOR TOLL-FREE HOTLINE AND WEB SITE; PAYMENTS TO BENEFIT INDIAN CHILDREN.

Section 658O of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858m) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by adding at the end the following:

''(3) NATIONAL TOLL-FREE HOTLINE AND WEB SITE.—The Secretary shall reserve not less than $1,000,000 of the amount appropriated under this subchapter for each fiscal year for the operation of a national toll-free hotline and Web site, under section 658L(b).''; and

(2) in subsection (c)(2), by adding at the end the following:

''(D) LICENSING AND STANDARDS.—In lieu of any licensing and regulatory requirements applicable under State or local law, the Secretary, in consultation with Indian tribes and tribal organizations, shall develop minimum child care standards that shall be applicable to Indian tribes and tribal organizations receiving assistance under this subchapter. Such standards shall appropriately reflect Indian tribe and tribal organization needs and available resources, and shall include standards requiring a publicly available application, health and safety standards, and standards requiring a reservation of funds for activities to improve the quality of child care provided to Indian children.''.

SEC. 10. DEFINITIONS.

Section 658P of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858n) is amended—

(1) by striking paragraph (4) and inserting the following:

''(3) CHILD WITH A DISABILITY.—The term 'child with a disability' means—

''(A) a child with a disability, as defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1401);

''(B) a child who is eligible for early intervention services under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.);

''(C) a child who is less than 13 years of age and who is eligible for services under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 794); and

''(D) a child with a disability, as defined by the State involved.

''(4) ELIGIBLE CHILD.—The term 'eligible child' means an individual—

''(A) who is less than 13 years of age;

''(B) whose family income does not exceed 85 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size; and

''(C) who—

''(i) resides with a parent or parents who are working or attending a job training or educational program; or

''(ii) is receiving, or needs to receive, protective services and resides with a parent or parents not described in clause (i).'';

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (5) through (9) as paragraphs (6) through (10), respectively;

(3) by inserting after paragraph (4), the following:

''(5) ENGLISH LEARNER.—The term 'English learner' means an individual who is limited English proficient, as defined in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801) or section 637 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9832).'';

(4) in paragraph (6)(A), as redesignated by paragraph (2)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking ''section 658E(c)(2)(E)'' and inserting ''section 658E(c)(2)(F)''; and

(B) in clause (ii), by striking ''section 658E(c)(2)(F)'' and inserting ''section 658E(c)(2)(I)'';

(5) in paragraph (9), as redesignated by paragraph (2), by striking ''designated'' and all that follows and inserting ''designated or established under section 658D(a).'';

(6) in paragraph (10), as redesignated by paragraph (2), by inserting '', foster parent,'' after ''guardian'';

(7) by redesignating paragraphs (11) through (14) as paragraphs (12) through (15), respectively; and

(8) by inserting after paragraph (10), as redesignated by paragraph (2), the following:

''(11) SCIENTIFICALLY VALID RESEARCH.—The term 'scientifically valid research' includes applied research, basic research, and field-initiated research, for which the rationale, design, and interpretation are soundly developed in accordance with principles of scientific research.''.

SEC. 11. STUDIES ON WAITING LISTS.

(a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct studies to determine, for each State, the number of families that—

(1) are eligible to receive assistance under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.);

(2) have applied for the assistance; and

(3) have been placed on a waiting list for the assistance.

(b) REPORT.—The Comptroller General shall prepare a report containing the results of each study and shall submit the report to the appropriate committees of Congress—

(1) not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) every 2 years thereafter.

(c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''State'' has the meaning given the term in section 658P of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858n).

SEC. 12. CONFORMING AMENDMENT.

Section 319C–1(b)(2)(A)(vii) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 247d–3a(b)(2)(A)(vii)) is amended by inserting ''or established'' after ''designated''.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

AMENDMENT NO. 2811

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I am pleased the Senate is now considering the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. I have a first-degree amendment to the committee-reported substitute amendment at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the amendment.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Iowa [Mr. HARKIN] proposes an amendment numbered 2811.

Mr. HARKIN. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To include rural and remote areas as underserved areas identified in the State plan)

On page 88, line 8, insert '', such as rural and remote areas'' after ''underserved areas''.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, we are now on the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. I know Senator ALEXANDER and I, and others, are anxious to consider amendments. I encourage people who have amendments to bring them to the floor so Senator BURR, Senator ALEXANDER, Senator MIKULSKI or I could look at them and get things lined up.

It is my intent—and I hope I can speak for Senator ALEXANDER on this too—to have an open yet managed process with respect to this bill and for Senators who have relevant amendments to have the opportunity to have them offered and to be voted on. I expect we would have a couple of votes within the next few hours. I don't even know when but sometime soon. So again, I strongly encourage Senators with amendments to bring them over and file them so we can get them discussed expeditiously.

This bill was voted unanimously out of the HELP Committee last September. I hope it will receive strong bipartisan support here on the Senate floor. I give tremendous credit and thanks to Senators MIKULSKI and

BURR, the sponsors of this legislation, for their leadership in this process over a couple of years working together, creating a bill which takes huge steps in improving the lives of children and their families.

At the outset I also thank our ranking member Senator ALEXANDER for his partnership and for working with us to reauthorize this vital program. Our offices have worked collaboratively over the last couple of years to produce a strong bipartisan bill.

I would start first by saying this program has a big impact in my State of Iowa. Right now Iowa serves about 15,800 children every month with CCDBG funds: 28 percent infants and toddlers; 26 percent ages 3 to 4; and about half or 46 percent, ages 5 to 13.

Most people think of this simply as a childcare-type bill for infants and toddlers, but this is not true. This goes to age 13, but over half goes to those under the age of 5.

The last time this was reauthorized in 1996, 18 years ago, this program was basically looked at as mainly a work support program, taking care of kids while parents went to work. It was only incidentally thought of as something which could have a real impact on the lives of kids. Well, 18 years later and backed by scientific research, we know the program can and should be much more. In addition to providing vital work support for parents, it could be a rich early learning opportunity for children.

In 2000 the National Research Council published a groundbreaking report called ''Neurons to Neighborhoods.'' The report's author said:

> From the time of conception to the first day of kindergarten, development proceeds at a pace exceeding that of any subsequent stage of life. . . . that what happens during the first months and years of life matters a lot, not because this period of development provides an indelible blueprint for adult well-being, but because it sets either a sturdy or fragile stage for what follows.

What this bill does is set that sturdy stage.

This report that I talk about from the National Research Council reinforces what we already know—that learning starts at birth and that preparation for learning begins even before birth. Eighty percent of a child's brain develops between birth and age 3. Because much of a child's intellect and skills develop before he or she begins kindergarten, we need to give all children every opportunity to reach their full potential at their earliest stages in life. This means supporting access to high-quality early-learning programs, including high-quality childcare.

The bill before us represents a strong and positive advance for low-income families who benefit from the childcare subsidies. The bill makes many needed improvements that will help establish high expectations for federally subsidized childcare in this country. The bill accomplishes a lot of good. I will highlight two or three items here.

First of all, education and training for childcare workers. Under this bill the States that apply and get these block grants will need to develop minimum education and training requirements for childcare workers that describe what they must know and be able to do to promote the health and development of the children they serve. Just as we know that a great teacher is one of the most important factors in a classroom, we also know that one of the most critical components of early development in children is whether they have supportive nurturing interactions with caring adults.

Another important thing we do in the bill is to promote safety and health standards. This bill ensures that licensed childcare providers receive a prelicensure inspection and one annual inspection thereafter. Alarmingly, some States inspect childcare centers only once in 5 years. Some States don't even do a prelicensure inspection until a provider is serving more than a dozen children.

The bill also stipulates and focuses on vulnerable populations, including children with disabilities, infants and toddlers, and children whose parents work nontraditional hours. I want to highlight that the sponsors of this bill, Senator BURR and Senator MIKULSKI, took great care to ensure that childcare programs supported through this block grant would be well-suited for children with special needs and their families. The legislation asks States to consider the unique needs of children with disabilities when developing training requirements for childcare workers. A childcare worker may be trained to take care of nondisabled children. But taking care of a child with a disability requires a little bit more expertise and a little extra training, and that is what this bill does provide. It also lets parents know the types of services available through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The bill also provides families with stability and continuity of care for families. Once they receive care, they are going to get it for at least 1 year if they are initially deemed eligible. Currently, some States require parents to reapply for care after only a few months. In some cases States will kick parents off of care if they receive a small pay raise that makes them ineligible under the State's eligibility guidelines. This bill remedies this by ensuring that as long as a parent is working or is in a training program and whose income does not exceed 85 percent of the State's median income, they will get care for at least 1 year without having to work. Again, this helps children because we know that a lot of times these kinds of disruptions can really set a child back, and this allows at least for continuity for 1 year.

The bill also supports the development of a Web site. I know Senator BURR was very interested in that and helped promote and put that in the bill. The Web site is going to be available for all parents to show them the range of childcare providers in their area so they can shop around and see what is out there.

Right now the law says States can set the eligibility requirement as long as it does not exceed 85 percent of the State's median income. If you look at all of the children ages 0 to age 13—because the bill covers up to age 13—if you look at preschool age kids 0 to 5, we do a little bit better. States are serving a little more than a quarter of the children who would be eligible under the Federal guidelines. I think this shows the present landscape right now. Out of 100 percent of the kids that are eligible, we have 73 percent eligible preschool-aged children not being served. There are about 27 percent of preschool-aged children being served. So we do have a long way to go. As chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies, our committee has fought for years to increase funding so we can serve more children. The fiscal year 2014 omnibus included more than a $154 million increase for the childcare program. I know that sounds like a lot, but all that it did was replace the $118 million cut that happened because of sequestration. We replaced the $118 million plus whatever that figures out to—about another $36 more million. So it helps. The increased funding will help States improve access to quality and affordable childcare by increasing the number of kids who can receive it.

But actually we have a long way to go. The last chart shows what is happening. If you look at the blue line at the bottom, that is the actual funding in this program. If you go back to 2005 and see what was in place, we are about $600 million short of where we would be if we kept up with inflation. You see, this is 2005. Those who have been around since then, we know what it was like before that. We have lost a lot of ground. So we need to make that up, and I hope we can do that in our appropriations bills that are coming up.

This bill changes the landscape and makes it a lot better for families out there. The bill authorizes the funding, but the appropriations have to fund it. I hope that we can in fiscal year 2015 continue to be able to keep up the funding increases for the childcare development block grants.

It is a good bill. I am very proud of this bill, proud of the efforts that Senator BURR and Senator MIKULSKI put into it over a long period of time. So I urge my colleagues to join in the bipartisan spirit of cooperation that we have witnessed in the health committee over the last year.

If Senators have amendments that are germane to the bill, I encourage them to bring them over so we can take a look at them and determine a fair path forward with respect to those amendments.

Again, I thank Senator ALEXANDER for a great working relationship on this committee and thank him for

working so hard to help bring this bill forward to the bill today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, I want to say to the Senator from Iowa how much I appreciate working with him.

We were talking yesterday, and he told me—I think I have these facts about right—that our committee in this Congress has reported 17 bills that have passed the Senate and 10 that have become law, which I suspect exceeds that of any other committee. As our hearing this morning on the minimum wage showed, it is not because we always agree with each other all the time. We probably have the most ideologically split committee in the Congress by party, but we get a lot done. That is due in great measure to the way the Senator from Iowa leads the committee, and I appreciate that very much.

I will have more to say about Senator BURR and Senator MIKULSKI in a few moments because they have done the yeoman's work on this. They are the leaders of this effort. They immersed themselves in it for the last two years. They brought it to a position which convinced everybody on the committee it was time to move ahead, but that is not where we were when we started. We had lots of differences of opinions, and we came to a conclusion that they will be explaining in detail.

So the way we will proceed today is this. After my remarks, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR will step up and begin to manage the bill. Senator HARKIN and I will be here. We are continuing right through the afternoon.

We hope that Senators will bring their amendments to the floor. What we are hoping to do is to have a debate about the child care and development block grant. We are hoping to have amendments, and we will have votes on those amendments. It is not our desire to pick this Democratic amendment or this Republican amendment. If you have an amendment on the child care and development block grant that is related to the bill, please bring it over and talk to Senator BURR, Senator MIKULSKI, Senator HARKIN, or me, and we will start lining them up. There will be time for debate. There will be a vote and it will be considered.

Our hope is to have votes this afternoon, votes tomorrow morning, and to let Senators know that there won't be votes tonight so they can plan their schedules. Senator BURR will talk more about that and the time for attempting to conclude the bill tomorrow. That is our goal. That is the way the Senate traditionally has worked. It is the way we hope it works today.

Since Senator MIKULSKI from Maryland and the Senator from North Carolina have done the principal amount of work on the bill, I see no need for me to go through the details of the bill. I think they are better equipped and prepared to do that. Let me try to put the whole effort in perspective before I step aside and Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR step up.

During World War II there were a great many mothers, women, who took jobs outside the home. That was different. In our agricultural society families worked together. As the industrial society in America developed during the 20th century, men largely went away from home to work and women mostly worked at home.

But in World War II something different happened. Many of the men were overseas fighting. There was a lot of work to be done at home, and so women took jobs in the factories that they didn't have before. That produced a new phenomenon in the American society which was called worksite daycare. Someone had to take care of the children. In many cases companies employing large numbers of women during World War II provided sites at the workplace so that mothers could bring their children while they worked.

Then after the war was over, things went back to the way they were before, and most American women worked at home. That began to change probably in the 1970s. It is probably fair to say that the greatest social change in our country over the last 40 years has been the gradual and steady phenomenon of more women in the workplace outside the home and the adjustments our society has made to that.

I was lucky. I had an early head start in the little town of Maryville, Tennessee, where I grew up at the edge of the Smoky Mountains. My mother had one of the town's two preschool education programs. She had it in a converted garage in her backyard. She had been trained in Kansas and in a settlement house in Chicago. It is hard for me today to imagine how she could do this, but she had 25 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds in the morning and 25 5-year-olds in the afternoon. That was Mrs. Alexander's preschool, which we called the institution of lower learning.

She had nowhere else to put me, so I became the first Senator to have 5 years of kindergarten, which I probably needed, but which gave me a head start. It gave me the understanding of what Senator HARKIN said earlier—that research then, but especially now, shows the brain develops at least from the moment of conception and that all of the influences around an infant are important to that person's development over a long period of time.

Most parents who understand that want to make sure that they are with a child at a very early age stimulating that child, or if they can't be with their child for some period of time for some reason, someone else is looking after their child. Along with the changing role of women in the workforce came the idea of more childcare.

I remember in 1986 when I was Governor of Tennessee, the head of our human services division—a woman named Marguerite Sallee, now Marguerite Kondracke—came to me, and she proposed that I ask the businesses in Tennessee to create 1,000 worksite daycare places. I was kind of taken aback by that because I didn't understand the need for it, and I didn't think the businesses would do it voluntarily.

Well, we did that, and we got twice as many worksite daycare places as we requested. It was good for businesses to do and there was plenty of demand for it from the parents who had to take their children to work. The next year I was out of a job—I was through with my time as Governor—and so was Marguerite. Along with Captain Kangaroo—Bob Keeshan—my wife, and Brad Martin, we founded a company called Corporate Child Care, which provided worksite daycare places. After about 10 years, it merged with its major competitor Bright Horizons, and they became what is today the largest provider of worksite daycare in the world.

Companies have realized the importance of worksite daycare, but not all mothers and fathers can send their children to Bright Horizons while they work, and so there came to be a recognition that there needed to be some response by the Federal Government.

The next year, about 1988, the first Federal childcare programs came into existence. In 1996, the law we are considering today was basically a part of the reform of the Welfare Act. It is a remarkable law because it involves lots of State flexibility. In other words, it acknowledges that what is good for Maryland may not be good for North Carolina. It models our higher education system by letting the money follow the child to the institution that the parent thinks is best for their child. These are vouchers. It has gradually grown to an area where we spend $5 billion or $6 billion of taxpayers' money each year to provide about 1½ million children with an opportunity for childcare.

I will mention one success story so we have an example of exactly what we are talking about. I am thinking of a young mother in Memphis, TN, who was attending LeMoyne-Owen College and earning a business degree. She had an infant child, and so she put that child in a childcare center she chose. The voucher, through this program we are talking about today, provided $500 to $600 a month to help pay for the bill. Infant childcare is especially expensive. If you think about it, this is understandable.

The success part of the story is that she earned her degree. She is now an assistant manager at Walmart in Memphis. She has a second child who attends the same childcare center now, but she earns enough to pay the full cost.

This program encourages work, it encourages job training, and for those Americans who are low income and working or low income and training or educating themselves for a job, this helps them get that job. This is an important bill for many families.

In Tennessee, we have about 20,000 families affected each month and nearly 40,000 children. It is a big help to them. It makes a difference in their lives.

I thank Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR for their work on this legislation. I know of no two Senators in this body who approach issues in a more serious, effective, and determined way. They also understand that in a body of 100 Members, where we each have a right to object, that no bill is going to be exactly what any of us want.

For example, I am leery of the extent of the background checks required by this bill, which is one of its major accomplishments. As a former Governor, I am very skeptical of Washington setting rules for States, but I accept the compromise they have agreed to with the background checks. We talked that matter through, and I think it is a sound proposal. I congratulate them for the way they have done this over the last 2 years and the way we have approached it.

I will conclude with where I started. We are asking Senators to join us in a debate about the child care and development block grant. We hope Senators will come to the floor with their ideas on it. We know there are a number of Senators who have amendments on both sides of the aisle. What we are saying to those Senators is if you have an amendment that is related to our bill, you will have a chance to talk about it and you will have a chance for it to be voted on and perhaps accepted by the full Senate, and hopefully this bill will go to the House and become law.

We know that has not been the story as often as it should be in the Senate, but we would like to see that happen more often. It requires a little bit of restraint on the part of each of us as Senators. We can't all exercise all of our rights all the time and get anything done. It requires some trust and restraint on the part of our leaders, Senator REID and Senator MCCONNELL. We appreciate them turning the management of the bill over to Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR, with Senator HARKIN and me in support of their efforts.

We appreciate the cooperation of the many Senators who have already come up with excellent amendments and notified us about them. Senator BURR and Senator MIKULSKI know about them and will talk about them.

At this stage, I wish to step down and turn this matter over to Senator MIKULSKI first, and then Senator BURR. We invite Senators to come over. We will continue through lunch and discuss, debate, talk, and begin voting on the Child Care and Development Block Grant Reauthorization.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I am so pleased to bring to the floor this very important bipartisan legislation, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. I am standing here today to speak on behalf of families and children across this Nation.

I am excited to bring forward this bill for two reasons; one, the content it represents—a reauthorization framework for the childcare and development block grant, one of the most important tools families have to be able to afford child are so they may go to work. It is a childcare development bill and it is a work assistance bill.

I am also proud of the process by which we are undertaking this bill, the process by which we arrived at and brought this bill to the floor today.

This legislation has not been reauthorized since 1996. Senator RICHARD BURR of North Carolina and I serve on the HELP Committee, of which the Presiding Officer is a member. We once shared the Subcommittee on Children and Families. Senator BURR and I, who have a longstanding professional relationship, said: Let's see what we can get done on that committee. Where can we find common ground? Where can we find that sensible center? How can we move things forward on a bipartisan basis where we add value to our country but don't add to our debt?

We put our heads together, and by looking at the childcare needs in our country, we began a regular order process. We held three hearings, lots of meetings with stakeholders, over 50 organizations, as well as meetings with our staffs and each other, characterized by three factors: mutual respect, focusing on national needs, and how we could be smart in terms of our policies yet frugal in terms of the way we went about the money. We didn't expand the vouchers the way some of us would like, but we looked at how we could expand value by focusing on quality. Because of the tone we set with each other, we were able to do this.

This is how the Senate should operate. We should have mutual respect, talking with each other and not at each other, listening to the experts, listening to the grassroots, and paying attention to the bottom line. We were able to accomplish what we set out to do.

Today, as we come to the floor, this is an open amendment process. We talk a lot about regular order. There are very few Members of the Senate—particularly those who have been elected since 2006—who know what regular order is. A quick thumbnail of it means legislation is brought to the floor, we offer an open amendment process, debate, deliberate, and vote. This is how we hope to be able to proceed today.

There will be no strong-arming, no stiff-arming, no heavy hand, just regular order, regular debate, with every Senator having the opportunity to have their day and their say. This is how the Senate should operate.

What also excites me in coming to the floor is not only being the Senator from Maryland, but also, as the Presiding Officer knows, I am a professionally trained social worker. I have a master's degree in social work. I was a foster care worker for Catholic Charities, and I was a child abuse worker for the Department of Social Services. One of the reasons I came into politics was to be able to take the value of a social worker and bring it to the floor of the U.S. Congress to make sure we looked at families and their needs. This is what I think this bill does.

We are looking at childcare. Every family in America with children is concerned about childcare. They wonder if it is available. They wonder if it is affordable. They worry if it is safe, and they are also concerned about whether it will help their children to be ready to learn.

We all say that children are one of our most important resources, which also means childcare is one of our most important decisions. Families will scrimp and save to make sure they have adequate childcare. If you are a single parent and working a double shift, you wonder if childcare is safe and sound. If you are a student working toward a degree, you want to make sure that while you are in school, your children are in a good preschool or daycare program. These worries weigh heavily on the shoulders of parents everywhere, and our bill lifts that burden. This bill gives families and children the childcare they need.

This bill, as I said, is the product of a bipartisan effort. Childcare is something all families worry about, regardless of income or ZIP Code. This bill ensures that all children get the care they need and deserve. What we did was focus on those needs.

Childcare has not been evaluated since 1996. At that time the program was solely a vision as a workforce aid. What we know today is that this is also the time of the most rapid period of brain development, and that is why it is imperative we ensure our young children are in high-quality childcare programs. We need to make sure that childcare nurtures their development, prepares their minds, and prepares them for school.

The current program is out of date. It doesn't go far enough to promote health and safety and also make sure that the staff is ready to meet emergency responses and take care of the needs of those children.

When we worked on this legislation, we focused on quality. I will elaborate on that in more detail.

Way back when this bill was first signed into law, it was under George Herbert Bush. It was so women could go from welfare to work. President Clinton came in, and part of the welfare reform was to be able to do that. Now it is a new day, and we want to make sure that childcare not only helps the parents but it also focuses on the children. We want to ensure that when parents leave their children at daycare, they know their children's providers are trained, that the environment is safe, and their program will

help their children prepare for their education.

We know there are differences in North Carolina compared to Maryland. We know there are differences in Utah compared to Maine. So what we have provided is the ability to make sure there is incredible State flexibility. I will go into that in more detail.

I hope my colleagues will join Senator BURR, Senator ALEXANDER, Senator HARKIN, and myself in passing this bill. I look forward to further debate and discussion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, I thank the Chair, and I thank my good friend and colleague from Maryland, Senator MIKULSKI.

In the Senate, for those of us who have been around for a while, we understand how it works. I am not sure the media does justice to the American people in terms of how difficult it is for legislation to actually pass the Senate. As a matter of fact, the historical threshold of 67 and then 60 in agreement means that if a Senator is a serious legislator and their interest is to work on good policy—not perfect; I think Senator ALEXANDER said we have never seen a perfect bill—then the first thought that goes through a Senator's mind as they work on a legislative agenda is, who on the other side of the aisle can I look to whom this would be appealing to from the standpoint of their interests and, No. 2, an individual who understands how to get through difficult times? I am here to say to my colleagues that BARBARA MIKULSKI is a Senator who fills that category not just as it pertains to this legislation but as it pertains to so much because of her great depth of knowledge and, more importantly, her tenacity and her willingness to tell people no and to pursue what is right. Because at the end of the day—I think I can speak for both of us—this is not about headlines; this is about looking at a generation of kids who will be benefited by reforms to a reauthorization that hasn't happened since 1996.

Historically on this issue, George H.W. Bush started the program, and it was under the Clinton administration, under welfare reform, that we formalized these vouchers. The vouchers were really created so families who struggled to keep a job and were low income but had childcare needs didn't have to worry about the childcare piece. There was Federal assistance that was determined on a sliding scale.

By the way, let me say to my colleagues, if a State doesn't provide a waiver to a family, then they have skin in the game on these vouchers. So this is not free across the board.

This has benefited now 1.6 million families. In North Carolina, there are 74,000 vouchers on an annual basis that benefit our children. Those are family members who are either in education or who work, and they can commit to those jobs because they know that childcare is available and the cost is affordable because of this Federal voucher program.

I think Senator MIKULSKI would agree with me in saying we hope we never see a program that waits this long to be reauthorized. Every program here deserves to be reevaluated every 5 years—No. 1, on its effectiveness, and No. 2, do we still have the problem we had when the program was started. I daresay in her time here—and she has been here a lot longer than I have, and I don't say that with regard to her age—there are programs still on the books that don't have a constituency anymore. But the hardest thing for Congress to do is to get rid of something or to consolidate. I think Senator MIKULSKI and I have always taken the attitude that if we can make this better and have a positive effect on the folks it was intended for, then that is our job. That is our responsibility as Members of the Senate.

So I certainly look forward, after the 2 years we have spent on an issue—some might listen to the debate today and say: Geez, why didn't they go to the floor and pass it by unanimous consent?

That is an option. But we also believe we are not perfect, and by reaching out to Members and colleagues and saying: Come to the floor; if Senators can make this bill better, then come to the floor and offer amendments—if a Senator comes to the floor with an amendment and we think it makes the bill worse, then we are going to vote against it, but we promise this: We will have a vote. That is an important part of the Senate, that Members always feel they can put their fingerprints, they can put their State's interest into every piece of legislation whether or not they are on that committee or subcommittee. We have now, with this bill, returned to a process that I think reaches out and incorporates that.

Let me say to our colleagues, it is our intent when I finish speaking to start accepting amendments. At some point, with both leaders' agreement, this afternoon we will target a period when we will vote on whatever stacked amendments we have been able to process. After that, we will hopefully go back and consider more amendments. I think it is our intent to not have votes tonight but to work with the leaders in order to roll those votes to tomorrow morning.

Let me make this perfectly clear to our colleagues: It is our intent to finish this bill tomorrow afternoon, period. So the way to effect positive change in this legislation—to get Senators' input into it and fingerprints on it—is to not wait until tomorrow afternoon but to come down this afternoon and debate the amendments, process the amendments, and let's work as the Senate is designed to work. So I encourage my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do that.

I rise today to speak about S. 1986, the childcare development block grant reauthorization bill, with my good friend Senator MIKULSKI. I must say we wouldn't be here if it weren't for the cooperation of Senator HARKIN and Senator ALEXANDER. Senator HARKIN has a long history of interest and involvement with policies that affect children. He is passionate about it. Senator ALEXANDER has a similar lifetime commitment, a Senator who has served as the education governor of Tennessee, the Secretary of Education of the United States, and the president of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. So both of them come with a tremendous amount of expertise and passion for this issue.

This legislation is actually necessary to build on what the Child Care Development Block Grant Program was established for. As I said earlier, 1.6 million children nationally are served today—74,000 in North Carolina—and there tends to be a lot of talk in this body about strengthening job training, getting people back to work, and incentivizing self-reliance. I wish to recommend to my colleagues that is exactly what the Child Care Development Block Grant Program does. It says to a family: Work and we will help you with childcare. Get additional education and we will help you with childcare.

But one of the problems since 1996 when this program was created was the way we looked at one's income was an instantaneous snapshot. So as a parent, if I was offered a second shift where I could earn a little more money, I would look at how that might affect my child's childcare voucher and realize that they will take my voucher away if I take that second shift or if I work overtime and get time-and-a-half pay.

Well, this is evidence that we have looked at all angles. We have reached out to the communities that are affected. We have talked to people who are providers. We have talked to parents. We have looked at the difficulties they struggle with, because our intent is to make sure we have a piece of legislation that parents can choose to accept that shift offer, can accept working overtime and know they are not going to be adversely affected because now we are looking at the yearlong versus the individual snapshot.

So through Federal vouchers, parents who demonstrate that they are working or they are in job-training programs or furthering their education and who are below 85 percent of the State median income are eligible to receive the childcare voucher and to use that at a childcare provider of their choice in their State. This is not one where we are saying: You have to go here and you have to go there. We open it for the choice of the parent.

In addition, CDBG requires families, as I said earlier, to have skin in the game on a sliding scale based upon their income. As a block grant, States have great flexibility in how they administer these funds but are generally required to set health, safety, and quality guidelines to promote parental

choice, assist parents in becoming independent through work promotion, and provide good consumer information so parents can make good decisions about their child's care.

S. 1086, the legislation we have offered, would reauthorize this law for the first time since 1996. It would do so by making some commonsense changes that address the realities which I have highlighted, prioritizing the safety of children who receive care with Federal dollars.

First, we would require all providers and individuals who have unsupervised access to children to submit to a criminal background check. That check would ensure our young children are not left alone with individuals who have committed felonies such as murder, rape, child abuse, neglect, robbery, and other serious offenses. This provision is the result of legislation I introduced over the past several Congresses called the Child Care Protection Act, which I believe will do a great deal to improve the safety of our children.

Let me just stop there and say this is incredible because I think most Americans probably believe these background checks take place today. And to some degree they are right. States such as North Carolina have been responsible, and they do carry out some degree of background checks—although not all States, not all providers. But when this bill becomes law, it will say to all States and to all providers that receive Federal vouchers: You must do this. You must assure every parent that these felons are not part of the workforce that has unsupervised access to your children.

Second, this bill asks States to monitor through inspections the quality of childcare settings so that basic health and safety precautions are taken. Many States currently conduct no checks at all for certain settings or conduct them years apart, all while providers receive State and Federal tax dollars. At the very least, parents who are working several jobs just to make it should know that their child is in someone's care who has been trained in the basics of CPR, fire prevention, and other commonsense precautions.

I think one of our colleagues—Senator LANDRIEU—will come to the floor sometime this afternoon and offer an amendment that requires evacuation plans. Well, for a Senator from Louisiana who lived this firsthand, this is really important. It is a great job of where a Member's amendment is going to help to perfect our bill. For anybody who lives in a coastal State such as North Carolina—I am sorry I didn't think of exactly what she did—but when we look at tornadoes and when we look at fires, we are all susceptible to the need of a daycare facility having an evacuation plan so that local officials and, more importantly, parents and the providers who work there understand what to do.

Third, it asks States to make transparent all the information as widely as possible so parents are armed with all the information they need when they shop for childcare under the Federal childcare vouchers.

Fourth, in keeping with the maximum flexibility afforded to States under the CDBG, this bill provides States the option of seeking waivers from any Federal law that funds early learning or childcare that might have conflicting or onerous results for the delivery of that care and requires the Secretary of HHS to work with other agencies to provide a waiver for those requirements so States and childcare providers can focus on providing quality care and not just complying with Washington's confusing set of requirements. In other words, the focus of this is to make sure the childcare quality component is the single most important feature to providers.

Fifth, it promotes continued employment incentives for parents to move higher in their careers by providing better guidance to States on how they determine the eligibility of parents and their children. To me, it is just common sense that we should not penalize a parent from taking on an extra shift or working overtime. But at the same time we require States to make sure that only the most needy parents receive the childcare vouchers and that they can demonstrate they are following the law's work rules. Let me say again—because I think this is lost because we have not talked about this in almost two decades—for many in the communities we all represent, this is the difference between a family being able to keep a job or to be 100 percent on assistance. What we have is a Federal program that is not just beneficial, we have the data to prove it works, and that matrix continues to be in place.

Finally, it asks States to place a greater emphasis on building quality care settings by gradually increasing the amount of Federal dollars that can be set aside from the current law's 4 percent to 10 percent over the several years that must be used to improve quality programs.

Let me explain. Today, we say you can set aside up to 4 percent for quality. We want to extend that. We want to create an incubator that is an investment in what we can do to further enhance the quality of what these children are exposed to.

I think Senator HARKIN, Senator ALEXANDER, and Senator MIKULSKI have all pointed out that when we go from infancy to age 13, we have the majority of the learning period of a child's life. Some of it we pick up in the education system. But if they go to childcare after that or they go to childcare before it, we want to make sure the quality of that, and, more importantly, the innovation of that quality, is such that all students, all children can advance because of it.

This bipartisan legislation is the result of work in the HELP Committee. It was influenced and really ramrodded by my good friend Senator MIKULSKI. She was tireless at inviting experts. She sought practitioners in all of our States. It was that, and the leadership of our chairman and our ranking member, that brings us here today.

I believe this legislation will go a long way toward improving childcare in our country but also toward promoting self-sufficiency and independence for working parents. This is not a Federal handout. This is a partnership between the Federal Government and the opportunity for parents to have a better life. I think the way we have addressed the commonsense changes in reauthorization makes it more likely, not less likely, that more parents will succeed at that.

So I encourage my colleagues to support this bill. But I really do stress with my colleagues, now is the time to come to the floor. Bring your amendments to the floor. Let's debate the amendments. Let's vote on the amendments. Let's prove the Senate can function in a very open process because in this particular case those vulnerable parents and those children, who are the next generation, really do matter and what we do really does affect them.

I thank the Presiding Officer, I thank my colleague from Maryland, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I know we will be offering amendments throughout the afternoon, and we look forward to ample debate and discussion on them.

I want to reiterate my appreciation to Senator BURR for the way we have worked together on this bill. He was very generous in his comments to me and about me, and I appreciate it. But what I so appreciated in working with him is that his whole focus was: How do we protect these children? And his work to ensure that the children are safe when they are at the daycare, regardless of the size of the provider, was important. So, yes, we have good background checks. At the same time, we were looking at health and safety standards, making sure the staffs are at least trained in the elements of first aid, so that if the children needed help because they swallowed something—until the 911 responders could be there—they would have that training. That is really important.

Yet we had to look at it in a way in which we did not overregulate. So we wanted quality standards, but we did not want to have so many rules, so many regs—exactly what Senator ALEXANDER cautioned us about: Let's not overregulate so that we then stifle or end up shrinking the pool. So we, again, worked on what—the phrase ''sensible center'' comes from Colin Powell: that if we work hard and listen to each other, we can find that sensible center. So it was the balance between Federal standards but also local flexibility on the best way to achieve those standards, and also to help States pay

the bill for the training. One of the aspects of our bill is to set aside 3 percent of funding to expand access to improve the quality of care, especially for infants and toddlers—the most vulnerable populations because they cannot tell you things. They cannot tell you where they hurt or some of these other things.

In addition, the amounts States set aside for quality improvement also must be at least 10 percent within 5 years of enactment. And States must say what they choose to invest in. We hope not only to have reporting and accountability but to get an idea for best practices that we can circulate among providers. We think this will be important.

The other area we focused on was in the area Senator BURR talked about, providing protections for children who receive assistance. That is exactly what I heard in Maryland. This is all income based; in other words, your voucher. This is a means-tested program. But if your means change in the program, you could lose your daycare. So it was an actual disincentive from improving yourself or maybe taking a seasonal job. So if you had the opportunity perhaps to work in retail during the holiday season—exactly for your own family's holiday celebration—you were going to be tremendously disadvantaged because it would be a boost, it would look like you were going up, when actually your income might be the same if you have taken that part-time job.

We want to reward work. We want to reward personal responsibility. So we were able to provide that flexibility that when parents redetermine their eligibility, they will give them ample opportunity to do so. So if your child is in daycare, and you take that part-time job or your income goes up, you will not lose the daycare you have for that year or that determination. We thought that was important.

The other was meeting the needs of children with disabilities. This is a strong passion of Senator HARKIN, a well-known advocate for people with disabilities, and I know he will speak to that. But it will require States to examine: What are they doing to coordinate with the IDEA programs, again for preschool-age children with disabilities. Often a child who faces a disability is at a disadvantage because the daycare they are in does not promote learning.

I have a constituent in Maryland. She spoke at our press conference yesterday. Her name is Cathy Rivera. She is the mother of two children, ages 7 and 2. She is also a resource person working at the CentroNia family center, which is information services and also focuses on early childhood education.

Her little girl was born without an ear. That is rough going. So imagine being an infant, then a toddler, trying to learn a language, your family is bilingual—that could be a great asset, but when you cannot really hear, and the doctors are doing the most for you to help you, you still need to be in an environment that acknowledges that and is helping with the learning in childcare, at your pace, your way, so that your language skills are also developing because language and brain development are tied together. So without the proper environment, this little girl would have been doubly disadvantaged—one, with the physical situation from birth, but then the learning situation because of where she was.

Well, fortunately—with her mother working in the field of daycare, working at an agency that provides information and resources, with the help of the childcare subsidy—this little girl could be in the daycare that she needs, to not only look out to see that her physical needs are being met but that her learning needs are being met.

Isn't that a great story? But here is a mother who is working, a bit strapped financially, but with her own sense of motherhood and personal responsibility, she found what she needed. The childcare subsidy was able to help her pay for the daycare, and now this little girl has a chance. It is going to be a challenging future for her, but she is up for this challenge.

That is what this is. This is not only about numbers and statistics. So when we talk about improving quality, we have really tried to take into consideration these needs.

Daycare is expensive. In Maryland, the Maryland Family Network tells me that they had—with all of the licensed daycares—over 23,000 children who were on the wait list for this program—not for daycare—that is even larger—but for this program.

So this is why we want to pass this bill and really be able to move forward on it. But, again, I am going to come back to this bipartisan effort of focusing on safety, security, and also learning readiness.

Madam President, I yield the floor, and I will say more later.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, I want to take this opportunity to say to my colleagues, we are now at a point where we would like to consider amendments. So if you have improvements to this bill, it is now after lunch. Before you take a nap, come down to the Senate floor, offer your amendment. Let's talk about it, and let's process as many as we possibly can. It is our intent to consider amendments for the majority of the afternoon, at some point—with the cooperation and agreement of leaders on both sides—to set a time that we would then vote on the amendments that have been processed, hopefully continue to take some amendments early in the evening, but our intent would be not to have votes tonight so that the schedules are predictable, and to come back in the morning, with the leaders' agreement, at a specified time to consider the votes that might be stacked, any additional amendments that need to be debated and voted on, and it would be Senator MIKULSKI's and my intent, and it is our goal—and when she has a goal, let me say to my colleagues, she will achieve that goal—it is our intent and our goal to finish this bill tomorrow afternoon.

We want to make sure we have accommodated every Member who has an amendment, every Member who wants to make an improvement to this bill, but we ask Members to come to the floor, preferably today, to introduce that, call it up, debate it, let us schedule in a queue of votes, and we will feel more confident of exactly the timeline we are on as that process starts.

I remind my colleagues that the key enhancements in this bill are it improves quality while simultaneously ensuring that Federal funds support low-income and at-risk children and facilities; two, it addresses the nutritional and physical activity needs of children in a childcare setting; three, it is strengthening coordination and the alignment to contribute a more comprehensive early childhood education and care system; four, it meets the needs of children with disabilities who require childcare; five, it provides protections for children and families who receive assistance; six, it safeguards the health and the safety of children.

I cannot think of points that are more important as it relates to changes to a bill that was created in 1996 and still embraces, I might say, the context that it was negotiated in, which was welfare reform.

How do we provide the avenue for more individuals to enjoy what great things this country has to offer for those who are willing to work? Welfare reform was a pathway, bipartisanly agreed to, to lead people from unemployment to employment and hopefully to continue to whatever degree of prosperity they chose to pursue.

We all know that means you have to have a partner and you have to have flexibility, whether that flexibility is being able to meet the hours that might put you up for a promotion or to get the skills you need to consider a different career or the next level. Every parent should probably look at this as I did with mine; that they are the single most important part. There are sacrifices every parent makes for themselves because of what they provide for their children. That is the right thing to do. But through this partnership, for 1.6 million children and for 900,000-plus families, we have now provided for over two decades a Federal program that helps make that decision so it is not either/or; they can pursue a career, they can pursue advancement, they can increase their skills, they can increase their education without sacrificing that Federal subsidy that provides them the ability to drop their kids off in the morning and those kids are taken care of.

This is a win-win. It is what welfare reform was written to do. I am proud

to work with my good friend Senator MIKULSKI to make sure we get this across the finish line. Come to the floor. Bring your amendments. Make this bill better. Let's debate them, let's vote them, but we are going to finish tomorrow afternoon.

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, I reiterate Senator BURR's request. People wanted an open amendment process. We are open. Come on and amend. We are looking forward to it. While we are waiting for our Members to come careening to the floor to offer amendments—by the way, 20 have been filed, so here we are.

I wish to comment on something else.

GIRL SCOUTS

You notice I am dressed in green today. I also have on a Girl Scout pin. Do I not look like a Girl Scout standing here? I feel like a Girl Scout. I was a Girl Scout. Once a Girl Scout, always a Girl Scout.

Today we are celebrating the 102nd anniversary of Girl Scouts in America. What started out as a group of 18 girls in Georgia, organized by Juliette Low, has grown into an organization of 3.2 million girls and women.

As a Girl Scout, I knew firsthand about what it was like learning, about leadership and service. I loved working on my badges. I liked the camaraderie of working with other girls on the various challenges we had. I was a child during World War II. The Girl Scout program run out of our parish was very important. It provided important activities for girls after school. There were comparable Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, just like we had the Daisies and the Girl Scouts.

These were important activities because in my community women were working as ''Rosie the riveter.'' So these afterschool programs were critical so we could be in a safe environment. We learned wonderful skills. We learned about our responsibilities.

I cannot think enough about Ms. Helen Nimick, who was my Girl Scout leader. I wanted to grow up and be like Ms. Nimick, who seemed to know how to do 43 things with oatmeal boxes. I do not know if they did it in the days of the Presiding Officer; there is a little bit of an age difference between us.

But you know what I loved the most were our pledges. I will just say today, first of all, you know the Girl Scout promise: ''To serve God and my country, to help people at all times, and live by the Girl Scout law.'' Pretty good. But here is the Girl Scout law. I actually carried this in my wallet. I will tell you why. Because if you follow the Girl Scout law, you are in pretty good shape. By the way, I think over 90 percent of the women in the Senate were either a Daisy or a Girl Scout, but the Girl Scout law says this: ''I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and what I do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout, and a sister to every Boy Scout.''

I think this is great. To Girl Scouts everywhere, whether they are Daisies or senior leadership, we say congratulations on the 102d anniversary. But I want to do a particular shout out to the leaders, people who give of their own time and their own dime to help young women learn about their country, the world they live in, working collegially and in comradeship, camaraderie with others.

I believe the values I learned as a Girl Scout, though I smile about it today, were the lessons of a lifetime. Quite frankly, if I can live up to the Girl Scout law, I think I will be a pretty good Senator. So hats off to Girl Scouts everywhere, a big thanks to the leaders who do it, and let's eat those cookies, even if you are on a different kind of program than they are often called for.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Madam President, let me admit I was not a Girl Scout. I guess I should have assumed BARBARA MIKULSKI was a Girl Scout because scouting has made a significant difference in the lives of so many, not just in America but globally.

It is many of the qualities that come from that experience that lead to some of our most important national leaders, both in the past and in the future. So I join her in recognizing this significant milestone for the Girl Scouts. I know it must be challenging in today's nutritional environment to actually fund everything off of cookies. But as we have seen the drastic change in the way they are marketed, I will assure you we are raising a generation of Girl Scouts who are the most creative in how they market and sell their products to fund their programs of any generation I have seen today.

I think when kids are challenged at that age to be their own entrepreneurs, it is good for this country. We should be proud as parents and we should continue to support programs such as Scouting.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Madam President, I wish to pay tribute to the Girl Scouts as the organization celebrates Girl Scout Day. One hundred and two years ago, on March 12, 1912, Juliette ''Daisy'' Gordon Low founded the first chapter of the Girl Scouts of the United States of America in Savannah, GA. Today, the Girl Scouts count over 2 million girls as members, including nearly 100,000 in my home State of New Jersey.

We all know and enjoy their incredibly successful—and delicious—Girl Scout Cookie program, but beyond the cookies, this program is the largest and most successful business run by girls in the world, earning nearly $800 million a year. By participating in this program, girls are taught five essential entrepreneurial skills, including goal-setting, decision-making, money management, people skills, and business ethics. This has helped the Girl Scouts teach their members financial literacy and business skills, and has inspired generations of women business owners and executives.

The mission of the Girl Scouts has been and continues to be building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. In that respect, I commend the Girl Scouts for launching a program in 2012 known as Be a Friend First, or BFF, to tackle bullying among middle school girls. A recent study found that girls developed key relationship and leadership skills from this program, and that Hispanic girls experienced a particular benefit from the Girl Scouts' gender-specific program.

I would also like to applaud the Girl Scouts for their continuing efforts to encourage careers in the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, STEM, fields. Only 1 year after they were founded, in 1913, the Girl Scouts began awarding their first merit badges in STEM fields, the electrician badge and the flyer badge. Today, the Girl Scouts continue to encourage girls to consider pursuing careers in STEM fields. For the United States to be able to continue to remain the world's leading innovator, the participation of women in STEM fields is critical. Therefore I commend them for their efforts towards increasing the participation of women in STEM careers and education.

On this Girl Scout Day, for these reasons and for many others, I applaud the Girl Scouts for the outstanding work that they do in our communities and for girls across America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. HELLER. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

(The remarks of Mr. HELLER are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, 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. HATCH. 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. HATCH. Madam President, I rise today to discuss my disappointment in

the recent turn of events involving the sustainable growth rate formula, or what we call the SGR or the doc fix. Enacted in 1997, the SGR was conceived as a means of trying to balance the budget by restraining health care costs in Medicare, but it was deeply flawed from the start. Its reimbursement cuts to physicians would cripple seniors' ability to get the quality health care they deserve from their doctors.

Consequently, since 2002, when the SGR came into effect, Congress has patched it on a regular basis, and there has been bipartisan support for doing so. These ''patches'' have frequently been cobbled together at the midnight hour between leadership of both parties and included in larger legislation, without the input of the Members or even going through the regular legislative process. Now, this perverse annual dark-of-night ritual has to stop. Seniors and physicians understand that. Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate understand that.

For the better part of a year, Congress—to the surprise of many—worked to fully repeal the SGR and replace it with more reasonable reforms that moved Medicare's physician fee-for-service reimbursement system toward a system that rewards doctors for providing quality care based on outcomes, and we have made tremendous progress. Senator BAUCUS and I worked for months on a bill that sailed through the Finance Committee on a bipartisan basis. The two relevant House committees passed bipartisan legislation repealing the SGR as well.

Then, in a turn of events that is all too rare these days, the chairman and ranking members of the Senate Finance Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, and the House Energy and Commerce Committee worked tirelessly to come up with one unified policy that House and Senate Democrats and Republicans could all support. Believe it or not, we succeeded. We succeeded by involving all stakeholders, including the influential American Medical Association, in a fair and equitable manner that resulted in near-unanimous support across the health care community. For the first time since its enactment in 1997, the House and Senate united behind a policy that gets rid of this flawed Medicare reimbursement system.

So, Madam President, if we have moved this far, what is the problem? Why am I disappointed? Well, I am going to tell you.

Last night I was informed that the majority leader is bringing straight to the floor of this body the very policy we successfully negotiated—tacking on what are known as the health care extenders which the Finance Committee passed but which were not included in what the House and Senate agreed upon with the SGR. But—and here is the problem—the Democrats have no plans whatsoever to pay for it. So Senate Democrats want to pass a bill that has a roughly $177 billion price tag without even trying to offset any of the cost. Sadly, these same Democrats don't seem to care that they have quickly turned what was a true bipartisan accomplishment into another partisan political ploy. This is deeply disappointing.

I am very sympathetic to those who say that since Congress has never let the SGR go into effect, we should not have to pay for it. But let's be honest—there is no way that right now a bill that would add close to $200 billion to the deficit is ever going to pass the House. And I don't blame the House. This is reality.

Democrats in the Senate have blasted the House SGR repeal bill that is paid for by repealing ObamaCare's individual mandate. The Senate majority leader has said that what the House is doing has ''no credibility'' and that House Republicans ''gotta find something else'' to pay for it. But can't the very same thing be said of what the Senate Democrats are doing—that their plan has ''no credibility'' and that they have to find a way of paying for this if they are going to do it? I think we all know the answer to that.

I just don't understand how we have gotten here. I don't understand why there are these unfortunate attempts to poison a bipartisan product with needless partisanship. We all want to repeal the SGR, so let's dispense with the games and get back to work figuring out a real path forward and one that involves an offset.

What is even more astonishing is that Senate Democrats are proceeding in this manner on the very week some of my colleagues are trying to make the Senate work. Senators BURR and MIKULSKI have put forward a bill that the Senate is set to consider to reform the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program. That is an important bill—certainly to me because I was one of the few who rammed that through way back when and took a lot of flak in the process. But it has worked amazingly well.

Now Senators BURR and MIKULSKI have put forward this bill, after a lot of work by Senator ALEXANDER and Senator SCHUMER to get the Senate working again, to allow amendments and debate, and I have to say I commend them, and I think Senators BURR and MIKULSKI deserve great applause and commendation, as do Senators ALEXANDER and SCHUMER. That is what I don't understand.

Everybody here knows I have a record of working across the aisle, sometimes to the chagrin of Members of my own party and certainly sometimes to the irritation of some of our very far-right people in Utah. Why turn this bipartisan proposal into a partisan exercise when so many Senators want to work together to fix the problems the American people face each and every day?

Let me be clear. I support what House Republicans have proposed. It is a reasonable approach to paying for a full repeal of the doc fix. Almost every week, the White House delays or repeals another part of ObamaCare, so it is time for the American people to get a reprieve as well. It is the right thing to do. But I am interested in a result.

I want to fix the SGR system once and for all, and I hope that after this pointless exercise designed for political cover we can come together to do what is right. Let's go back to our winning formula and get our bipartisan, bicameral negotiations underway to find a responsible path forward.

Look, I like both of our leaders. They are strong people. They have differing philosophies. There is much to commend both of them and I suppose some would say much to criticize in each case. But there is no reason for this type of ramming something through that has no chance of passing the House. Frankly, it doesn't have much chance of having any Republican support at this point because we believe this kind of a program has to be offset to literally be valid and to be viable. I think everybody here knows that, and so we have to find an offset to do it. If we can't find an offset, we have to keep the SGR alive until we do. But to make it into a partisan game at this point, after all the bipartisan work that has been done, is really a tragedy.

We were on the verge of getting this solved. I hope that doesn't happen this time because a lot of us have worked our guts out to get this to this point, on both sides of the aisle. It would be an absolute tragedy if we can't get the cooperation to get this through.

The Democrats, if they do not like the offset the House has come up with, although it seems to make sense to me, they control this body, can come up with an offset both sides can agree to. But we have to have an offset and we have to do this the right way or we will be right back at base one after all the work that has been put into it in a bipartisan way to get this done.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). The Senator from Wyoming.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2812

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendment be set aside and I be allowed to call up my amendment No. 2812.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Wyoming [Mr. ENZI] proposes an amendment numbered 2812.

Mr. ENZI. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, to conduct a review of Federal early learning and care programs and make recommendations for streamlining the various programs)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. REVIEW OF FEDERAL EARLY LEARNING AND CARE PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services, in conjunction with the Secretary of Education, shall conduct an interdepartmental review of all early learning and care programs in order to—

(1) develop a plan for the elimination of duplicative and overlapping programs, as identified by the Government Accountability Office's 2012 annual report (GAO-12-342SP); and

(2) make recommendations to Congress for streamlining all such programs.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of Education and the heads of all Federal agencies that administer Federal early learning and care programs, shall submit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, a detailed report that outlines the efficiencies that can be achieved by, as well as specific recommendations for, eliminating duplication, overlap, and fragmentation among all Federal early learning and care programs.

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, when the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program was first created in the 1990s, it was seen primarily as a way to help parents enter the workforce or get job training.

The program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, gets about $5.2 billion a year in Federal funding plus State matching funds, although the fiscal year 2014 appropriation is approximately $2.4 billion.

The last reauthorization of this program took place nearly 20 years ago. This bipartisan CCDBG reauthorization, the Mikulski-Burr-Harkin-Alexander bill, puts a greater emphasis on the quality of the childcare programs children are entering. The bipartisan bill would refocus the program on quality, not just access.

The legislation emphasizes the protection of vulnerable populations, incentivizing self-sufficiency and individual responsibility. The bill also improves coordination among Federal early childhood education programs.

As a block grant, States have a great deal of flexibility in how they administer child care and development block grant funds but are generally required to set health, safety, and quality guidelines, promote parental choice, assist parents in becoming independent through work promotion, and provide consumer information so parents can make decisions about their child's care. The money helps States provide grants to low-income parents to cover the cost of childcare and afterschool care, typically through a voucher which parents can use at the home-based program or childcare center of their choice.

My amendment requires the Secretaries of Health and Human Services and Education to carry out an interdepartmental review of all early learning and childcare programs administered by the Federal Government—and we have lots of them.

We all agree the funding invested in early education programs saves taxpayers money down the road. So for a long time the Federal Government has been doing a lot to increase access to these important programs. Federal support for early learning and childcare developed over time to meet emerging needs, but at this point multiple Federal agencies administer this important investment through numerous programs.

What my amendment does is ask Health and Human Services and the Department of Education to report back to Congress with a plan for eliminating duplication and overlap, as well as a plan with ways we can streamline these programs.

Every year the Government Accountability Office, GAO, submits a report to Congress with recommendations for ways to reduce duplication, overlap, and fragmentation in Federal Governmental programs. In its 2012 annual report to Congress, GAO recommended the Department of Education and Health and Human Services should extend their coordination efforts to other Federal agencies with early learning and childcare programs to combat program fragmentation, simplify children's access to these services, collect the data necessary to coordinate operation of these programs, and identify and minimize overlap and duplication.

GAO identified 45 early learning and childcare programs funded by the Federal Government. Twelve of these programs explicitly provide only early learning or childcare services. These 45 programs are administered by multiple agencies, including the Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Agriculture, Department of the Interior, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of Housing and Urban Development, the General Services Administration, and the Appalachian Regional Commission. When I was chairman of the HELP Committee, the late Senator Ted Kennedy and I worked to eliminate duplication and overlap in programs under our jurisdiction—we got it down from about 119 to 69—but could not look at any of the programs administered by other agencies. We knew there was room for streamlining programs at other agencies, but we couldn't work on it, which was frustrating and shows how far-flung some of these programs are. Let me report again: the 45 programs administered by multiple agencies, including not only Education but Health and Human Services, Agriculture, Interior, Justice, Labor, Housing and Urban Development, General Services Administration, and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

We have to believe we ought to be able to do some consolidation there and save some money and improve the quality of programs while we are at it.

In a recent GAO report issued on February 5, 2014, GAO noted that as of December 2013, Education and Health and Human Services has taken initial steps toward greater coordination but had not yet included all Federal agencies which administer these early learning and childcare programs in their established interdepartmental workgroup.

This amendment takes a further step in identifying fragmentation, overlap, duplication, and inefficiencies in the Federal Government's delivery of numerous learning and care programs beyond the Government Administration Organization's report. Streamlining programs to eliminate duplication is essential for program integrity and good governance but also for eliminating service gaps for eligible children.

We are doing a lot. We can do better with less through coordination and getting it down to where there are less sources and less places where there has to be permission, regulation, and oversight. We can do better for the kids, and all we are asking for with this is to come up with a plan. It doesn't force anything, but hopefully it is a plan we will pay attention to and not just put it on the shelf.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I first thank Senator ENZI again for working with us for a long time on the committee to put this bill together, and I thank him for this amendment.

Basically, GAO's 2012 annual report noted the Department of Education and Health and Human Services should be increasing their coordination efforts in dealing with childcare and early learning programs. This amendment would require them to collaborate and conduct a comprehensive review of the 45 programs which currently support early learning and childcare across the country. This would ensure better coordination, reduction in duplication, and effective programming for children.

I say to my friend from Wyoming, on Monday I was in my home State of Iowa, in Des Moines, visiting an early learning center. On Saturday, I was in Ames visiting an early learning center in preparation for this bill to be on the floor. Monday, I was meeting with everyone there. With all of the different funding streams which come through and all of the different cross-purposes, I finally said: Stop a minute. I am confused.

They said: If you are confused, so are we.

Even the people running the programs—everything has some different

thing they have to fill out paperwork for to qualify.

So I am particularly sensitive to the Senator's amendment, having just tried to wade through all of that just a couple days ago in Iowa.

I thank my friend from Wyoming. It is a good amendment and should be adopted. We certainly support the amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I also applaud my colleague Senator ENZI. This is a needed amendment. It makes the bill better.

I will note for my colleagues, most recently the 2014 Omnibus appropriations legislation created two new programs, including the Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships Program funded at $500 million and the Race to the Top pre-K program funded at $250 million.

I point these out because both of these further underline the interactions which might exist with the current programs. I would think any attempt of this would be an administrative responsibility to find ways to consolidate, but clearly this is a case where more is not better.

This requires the Secretary to look at all these programs and find ways to consolidate in a way which provides a better outcome for those who are the beneficiaries. So I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I also say to my colleagues, through their staffs, it is probably the intent of the Senate to have some votes about 2:30. I think there are notifications going out on both sides, but I just want Members to be aware. We are trying to accommodate the afternoon schedules of both sides of the aisle on commitments they have, one at the White House and a Member's meeting on Ukraine this afternoon. So it is our intent right now to have up to two votes by 2:30 this afternoon.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, might I ask the Senator from Iowa and the Senator from North Carolina, is it not also likely, given the good progress we are making, we may be able to have another vote or two between 5 and 5:30 this afternoon so as not to interfere with meetings or the briefing many Senators are attending at 5:30?

Mr. BURR. I would say, it is our intent probably right before the Ukraine briefing to hopefully be in a position to dispose of about two additional amendments.

Mr. ALEXANDER. So that would be two votes at 2:30 and perhaps two more at probably about 5:15.

Mr. HARKIN. I concur.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senators from Iowa and North Carolina.

I also thank the Senator from Wyoming for his leadership. For a number of years he was the ranking member of the Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee, and while he was there he focused on trying to help us spend our money more efficiently—which all of us want to do.

Sometimes we forget that Head Start is not the only early learning program we have in the country. It is the most famous. It is best known. It is very popular with most people. It is about $8.6 billion, but the bill we are debating today, the child care and development block grant, is another $5.3 billion. It is two-thirds the size of Head Start and affects 1.5 million children. And then there is another of $5 billion or so of Federal funding for early learning and early childhood. Without getting into a debate about whether we should have new programs, I think there is a consensus among most of us that we should at least start by taking the money we are spending for early childhood and spend it wisely.

One step we took a few years ago was to create centers of excellence for Head Start. This was, I believe, in 2007. The idea there was that the Governor of each State would be permitted to pick at least two communities or cities where they were doing the best job of spending money in a coordinated way for early learning and childhood development. Not only are these 18 billion Federal dollars being spent, but many States have additional funding for early childhood, most States have kindergarten programs, and many States have programs for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds. The idea was to see if we could encourage Nashville or Denver or Des Moines to take a look at all the children between 0 and 6 and all the dollars being spent—public, private, Federal, State and local—and see who is doing the best job of putting that all together. It is always a problem with a big, complex country such as this when you have a decentralized government and there are several layers. There are lots of silos, and children don't live in silos. They are by themselves needing help and we need to find a way of getting the money to them. So the centers of excellence was a modest beginning to try to encourage better spending of what is up to $18 billion of money already being spent.

I think Senator ENZI's amendment, which I strongly support, would give us more information about how to better spend the Federal dollars we already spend for early childhood. I simply wanted to call the attention of the Senate and others who may be paying attention to that centers of excellence program. In the committee chaired by the Senator from Iowa, we had excellent testimony from the representative from Denver who had one of the first centers of excellence. She talked about the progress they have made in taking all the available money and using it in the most effective way to help children.

I hope as we move along through the process of dealing with the debate about how do we do a better job of early childhood education that we consider centers of excellence, and I hope Senator ENZI's amendment is adopted today because it will help us. It will make us a better steward of taxpayer dollars, and that means doing a better job of helping children.

Thank you, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

AMENDMENT NO. 2818

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator LANDRIEU, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment and call up her amendment No. 2818.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Iowa [Mr. HARKIN], for Ms. LANDRIEU, for herself and Ms. MIKULSKI, proposes an amendment numbered 2818.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To require a statewide child care disaster plan)

On page 98, strike line 15 and insert the following:

view.

''(U) DISASTER PREPAREDNESS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The plan shall demonstrate the manner in which the State will address the needs of children in child care services provided through programs authorized under this subchapter, including the need for safe child care, during the period before, during, and after a state of emergency declared by the Governor or a major disaster or emergency (as such terms are defined in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122)).

''(ii) STATEWIDE CHILD CARE DISASTER PLAN.—Such plan shall include a statewide child care disaster plan for coordination of activities and collaboration, in the event of an emergency or disaster described in clause (i), among the State agency with jurisdiction over human services, the agency with jurisdiction over State emergency planning, the State lead agency, the State agency with jurisdiction over licensing of child care providers, the local resource and referral organizations, the State resource and referral system, and the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care as provided for under section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b(b)).

''(iii) DISASTER PLAN COMPONENTS.—The components of the disaster plan, for such an emergency or disaster, shall include—

''(I) guidelines for the continuation of child care services in the period following the emergency or disaster, including the provision of emergency and temporary child care services, and temporary operating standards for child care providers during that period;

''(II) evacuation, relocation, shelter-in-place, and lock-down procedures, and procedures for communication and reunification with families, continuity of operations, and accommodation of infants and toddlers, children with disabilities, and children with chronic medical conditions; and

''(III) procedures for staff and volunteer training and practice drills.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 2822

Mr. HARKIN. On behalf of Senator FRANKEN, I call up his amendment No. 2822.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Iowa [Mr. HARKIN], for Mr. FRANKEN, for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. THUNE, proposes an amendment numbered 2822.

Mr. HARKIN. I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To reserve not less than 2 percent of the amount appropriated under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 in each fiscal year for payments to Indian tribes and tribal organizations)

On page 136, strike lines 8 and 9 and insert the following:

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking ''The Secretary'' and inserting the following:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary'';

(ii) by striking ''1 percent, and not more than 2 percent,'' and inserting ''2 percent''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) LIMITATIONS.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall only reserve an amount that is greater than 2 percent of the amount appropriated under section 658B, for payments described in subparagraph (A), for a fiscal year (referred to in this subparagraph as the 'reservation year') if—

''(i) the amount appropriated under section 658B for the reservation year is greater than the amount appropriated under section 658B for fiscal year 2014; and

''(ii) the Secretary ensures that the amount allotted to States under subsection (b) for the reservation year is not less than the amount allotted to States under subsection (b) for fiscal year 2014.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:30 p.m. today the Senate proceed to votes in relation to the following pending amendments, in the order listed: Enzi amendment No. 2812 and Franken amendment No. 2822; further, that no second-degree amendments be in order to either amendment prior to the votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there an objection to the request?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I would like to modify my request for unanimous consent that the second vote be a 10-minute vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Thank you.

AMENDMENT NO. 2822

I rise in strong support of the child care development and block grant, or CCDBG, and to urge my colleagues to support the amendment Senator MURKOWSKI and I put forward.

Our amendment would help strengthen CCDBG by making sure we are addressing some of our Nation's communities that will benefit most from it, the people who are members of tribes or tribal organizations all over this Nation. American Indians experience exceptionally high unemployment levels compared with the rest of the Nation. Furthermore, American Indian children and youth experience some of the poorest educational outcomes in America. These are exactly the sort of challenges CCDBG is designed to address. Our amendment would lift the current ceiling on tribal childcare funding so CCDBG can go to where the funds are needed most. This would enable more funds to flow to tribes and tribal organizations but without reducing the amount that goes to States. The amendment specifies that the amount of CCDBG funds reserved for tribes only rises if the overall funding level for CCDBG goes above its current levels.

I thank our cosponsors, Senators MURRAY, THUNE, HIRONO, BALDWIN, and HEITKAMP, for their support of this amendment. I thank Senators HARKIN and ALEXANDER and Senators MIKULSKI and BURR for working together to bring this bill to the floor.

Thank you very much.

I would yield for my colleague from North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of the amendment, and I urge my colleagues—this is a reasonable improvement to the bill, and I think Senator FRANKEN stated it very well.

This amendment increases the amount of CCDBG funding set aside for tribes from not more than 2 percent to not less than 2 percent. It sounds like not much of a difference, but this has a tremendous impact on the predictability to tribes of the dollars that are going to be available to them.

So I would urge my colleagues to support the Franken-Murkowski amendment.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. I wish to join with Senator BURR in supporting the amendment.

AMENDMENT NO. 2812

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2812.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 72 Leg.]

YEAS—98

Alexander	Franken	Moran
Ayotte	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Baldwin	Graham	Murphy
Barrasso	Grassley	Murray
Begich	Hagan	Nelson
Bennet	Harkin	Paul
Blumenthal	Hatch	Portman
Blunt	Heinrich	Pryor
Booker	Heitkamp	Reed
Boozman	Heller	Reid
Boxer	Hirono	Risch
Brown	Hoeven	Roberts
Burr	Inhofe	Sanders
Cantwell	Isakson	Schatz
Cardin	Johanns	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Scott
Casey	Johnson (WI)	Sessions
Chambliss	Kaine	Shaheen
Coats	King	Shelby
Coburn	Kirk	Stabenow
Cochran	Klobuchar	Tester
Collins	Landrieu	Thune
Coons	Leahy	Toomey
Corker	Lee	Udall (CO)
Cornyn	Levin	Udall (NM)
Crapo	Manchin	Vitter
Cruz	Markey	Walsh
Donnelly	McCain	Warner
Durbin	McCaskill	Warren
Enzi	McConnell	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Menendez	Wicker
Fischer	Merkley	Wyden
Flake	Mikulski	

NOT VOTING—2

Rockefeller	Rubio

The amendment (No. 2812) was agreed to.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Madam President, for the benefit of Senators, I wish to ask something about the schedule. I would like to ask the Senator from Iowa, the Senator from North Carolina, and Senator MIKULSKI about the schedule of this bill. We are off to a fast start. We have the Franken amendment to be voted on now. This is my understanding of the schedule, and I want to see if I have it about right and then ask the chairman and the floor managers if it is right.

We expect there to be a colloquy from 3 o'clock until about 4 o'clock involving several Senators on the child care and development block grant. Then at 5:15 we expect to have a vote—at least one vote—and may accept others by voice and maybe have some nominations. Senators who have other amendments are free to come and

speak between 4 o'clock and 5 o'clock. We would expect to have other votes tomorrow before lunch and finish the bill, it is my understanding, if we don't run into a snag, right after lunch tomorrow, about 2:00 or 2:15. That is the course we hope to be on.

I thank Chairman HARKIN and Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR for getting us off to a fast start. We have had about 20 amendments from both sides brought forward. We have been able to deal with them all.

Is that about right in terms of the schedule?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. Yes, that sounds exactly how we are proceeding.

I thank the Senator from Tennessee for all the good work and the cooperation we have had on both sides. I think we are on a good path.

I reiterate and reemphasize that if anyone has amendments they want to offer and speak about, I would say between 4 and 5 is a good time to do it today. Then we will have two votes probably around 5:15. We are hoping maybe one can be voice voted at that time.

AMENDMENT NO. 2822

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2822.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 6, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 73 Leg.]

YEAS—93

Alexander	Fischer	McConnell
Ayotte	Flake	Menendez
Baldwin	Franken	Merkley
Barrasso	Gillibrand	Mikulski
Begich	Graham	Moran
Bennet	Grassley	Murkowski
Blumenthal	Hagan	Murphy
Blunt	Harkin	Murray
Booker	Hatch	Nelson
Boozman	Heinrich	Portman
Boxer	Heitkamp	Pryor
Brown	Heller	Reed
Burr	Hirono	Reid
Cantwell	Hoeven	Risch
Cardin	Inhofe	Roberts
Carper	Isakson	Rockefeller
Casey	Johanns	Sanders
Chambliss	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Coats	Johnson (WI)	Schumer
Coburn	Kaine	Scott
Cochran	King	Shaheen
Collins	Kirk	Stabenow
Coons	Klobuchar	Tester
Corker	Landrieu	Thune
Crapo	Leahy	Udall (CO)
Cruz	Levin	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Manchin	Vitter
Durbin	Markey	
Enzi	McCain	
Feinstein	McCaskill	
Walsh	Warren	Wicker
Warner	Whitehouse	Wyden

NAYS—6

Cornyn	Paul	Shelby
Lee	Sessions	Toomey

NOT VOTING—1

Rubio

The amendment (No. 2822) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, now, for the next hour, you are going to see the women of the Senate, on a bipartisan basis, speaking up on the issue of childcare. We have worked long and hard together.

I am going to withhold my time and turn to the Senator from Nebraska. What you need to realize is we are not a caucus. We disagree on many things, but on childcare we are united that this bill is a good bill. It could be improved through the amendment process. We recognize that.

So here we are, as a force trying to change the tone, trying to change the tide, and really help America's children.

I yield to Senator FISCHER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska.

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program. I thank the Senator from Maryland for her courtesy. In addition, I would like to address an amendment I have proposed to the underlying bill.

Promoting policies that enable job creation is a basic duty of the people's government. This bill we have on the floor before us now provides low-income, hard-working mothers and fathers with the opportunity to have quality childcare while they earn a steady paycheck or as they go back to school.

Americans work hard. They work hard to provide for their families and to make a better life for their children. As a mother and a grandmother I understand that knowing your children are safe and secure is essential to maintaining a steady job. We need to encourage responsible adults to enter and to maintain their presence in our workforce. That is why I appreciate my colleagues' work and their compromise on this bipartisan legislation. I also appreciate how this effort has helped to bring some regular order back to the processes of the Senate. I especially want to recognize Senators BARBARA MIKULSKI, LAMAR ALEXANDER, and RICHARD BURR, who I know worked very hard in a collaborative and bipartisan fashion in order to get this bill to the floor.

As part of that process, I filed a proposed amendment that I have with Senator KING and Senator RUBIO to the child care and development block grant reauthorization. Our bipartisan amendment is a commonsense solution to the FDA's overregulation of low-risk health information technology. That includes mobile wellness apps, scheduling software, and electronic health records. Under current law, which was established in 1976, the FDA can apply its definition of a ''medical device'' to assert broad regulatory authority over a wide array of health IT, including applications that do not pose any threat to human safety.

Our amendment allows the FDA to keep its focus on regulating medical devices, while creating a modernized oversight framework for low-risk categories of health IT. Since proposing this amendment, I have had the opportunity to speak with Senator ALEXANDER, the ranking member of the Senate HELP Committee. I am happy to say he has expressed an interest in that amendment. That is identical to the language introduced as a stand-alone bill called the PROTECT Act.

I look forward to having the opportunity to work with him and committee members to advance the core ideas included in the PROTECT Act, because I believe with the guidance of the committee, and with the guidance of other Senators, we will be able to achieve another bipartisan success in this Chamber.

At Senator ALEXANDER's request, and in response to his kind offers to work collaboratively on the PROTECT Act, I have agreed not to formally offer this amendment to the bill on the floor, but I do look forward to working with the Senator from Tennessee and others to improve upon that.

Again, I thank the leadership of Senator MIKULSKI, Senator ALEXANDER, and Senator BURR on the important legislation before us today. I thank them for their work. I thank them for their courtesies in allowing me to rise and speak on this very important amendment. I also thank them and look forward to working with them on the PROTECT Act in the future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I now yield 5 minutes to the Senator from New York, another cosponsor of the bill, Senator GILLIBRAND.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I wish to start by thanking Senator MIKULSKI for championing the reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, which is a bipartisan bill that reflects the values of this country. It serves more than 1.5 million children nationwide every month, including over 120,000 children in New York State alone. I also thank Chairman HARKIN for his leadership in bringing this important legislation through the committee and to the floor.

Everywhere I go in my State of New York I listen to families. I hear the exact same sense of struggle from every single one of them, that they are doing everything they can do to get by,

to provide for their kids and give them the best possible chance to succeed. But no matter how hard they work, making ends meet is difficult. Their day-to-day expenses keep going, while their paychecks either stay the same, or, sadly, are diminished.

As a result, too many families feel they cannot get ahead. So for our economy to get going again, it has to face the reality that the face of the American workforce has changed. We still have workplace policies that reflect the realities of decades ago, in the 1950s and 1960s. But in fact, today, 48 percent of the workforce in my State are women.

In order for us to unleash the full potential of our economy, we have to recognize that women are the new more often breadwinners of too many families. They are the primary income earners for a growing share across America. For that reason, we have to focus on an immovable reality for working mothers. That is childcare.

Today, more women are going back to work sooner after having a child, creating a greater demand for affordable childcare that allows them to stay in their jobs. In 2012 New York ranked the second least affordable State in the Nation for full-time daycare for an infant, according to a report by Child Care Aware.

A two-parent family in New York spends an average of 16.5 percent of their annual income to care for an infant. For a single mom in New York, the cost was greater than 57 percent of her income. If you cannot afford childcare, as many middle-class families cannot, and you do not have a family option, the choice you are left with is to leave your job and stay home to care for your child. That means less income for working families, more women leaving the workforce and a weaker middle class. It does not have to be this way. We can keep more working mothers in their jobs and more children in quality daycare when we make it affordable.

Our policies must reflect today's reality that women have to work for a living. It is not a lifestyle choice for most working mothers, it is a fact of survival. That is why I support Senator MIKULSKI's outstanding bill, because it will make daycare more affordable for millions of children every single year. It is also why I am a cosponsor of Senator BOXER's amendment that will double the childcare tax credit families can take to cover the cost of childcare and make it refundable.

Making the tax credit refundable would help those who are working and struggling the most but do not earn enough to use the tax credit. It means more savings going right back into the pockets of working families.

I also have an amendment that will make middle-class tax cuts better for childcare expenses. It will let them deduct the cost of childcare as a business expense.

This proposal, called childcare deduction, will allow you to deduct up to $14,000 for two kids or more. That makes perfect sense, because in New York, the average daycare for a toddler is $12,000; for an infant it is almost $15,000. This will go a long way to making sure our hard-working middle-class families have the funds they need to provide for their kids.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I yield 5 minutes to the Senator from Michigan, also a sister social worker and a real advocate for good nutrition for children.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first, as everyone else, I congratulate our leader on this issue and on so many issues, including having the right kind of appropriations process to invest the dollars that Americans work hard to earn, to make sure they are invested in ways that help families, children, and to help the middle class to be able to succeed in this country.

I thank Senator MIKULSKI, the senior Senator from Maryland. Her work on this issue, the child care and development block grant, has been extraordinary and bipartisan, as is all of her work. She is laser focused on creating opportunities for children and families to succeed.

I think all of, certainly, the women who are speaking today and hopefully all of our colleagues understand that quality, affordable childcare is not a frill. I realize the Presiding Officer has wonderful children as well and understands this is a necessity.

We care for our children. We want to make sure we are able to work, put a roof over their heads, food on the table, to be able to buy their school clothes and get them what they need, to be able to pay for college, and to be able to do all the things we want to do for ourselves, our children, and our families. The costs of childcare are part of that equation, being able to do those things for our families that we need to do.

The average cost of childcare for 2 children is $14,872 a year. I have heard from my friend and colleague from New York that it was higher in New York. I am sure it is higher in many places. But, on average, across the country, families are having to come up with almost $15,000 a year which equals, if they are working minimum wage, a 40-hour workweek, working full time for a year. Think about that. If someone is in a minimum-wage job—and hopefully we are going to change that by raising the minimum wage—trying to make it and they work for 1 year, that is the average childcare cost for two children. That is why this investment in children and families is so important. This is the highest household expense for many families.

In most States 1 year of daycare is more expensive than 1 year of tuition at a public university. We are all talking to parents. They are all worried about saving for college. With three small grandchildren, I think how can I help be part of that process of saving for college. Yet 1 year of daycare is more expensive than 1 year of tuition at a public university. This is too much for many of our families to afford. Very difficult choices are being made, choices that families are agonizing over.

This is especially unaffordable for so many hard-working families who are trying to climb the ladder of opportunity, trying to get into the middle class or maybe holding on by their fingertips and trying to stay in the middle class. That is why we have child care and development block grants to be able to help families afford a necessity and something that is critical for our society, which is having safe, affordable, quality childcare for our children.

This is a critically important program signed into law by President George H. W. Bush that 1.6 million children every month rely on; 1.6 million children in our country and their parents rely on this every month.

States use this funding to help low-income families gain access to quality, affordable childcare and afterschool programs. These families are trying to make ends meet and make sure their children have the opportunities they need to be successful. I want to stress that this funding goes to parents who are working—are working—are training for work or are enrolled in school.

I believe the reason we have strong bipartisan support is people understand how critical it is to hard-working families. This is an investment in our families. It is an investment in America's moms and dads. Sixty-five percent of moms work outside the home. In fact, if they go back to work, they are earning, in Michigan, only 74 cents on every dollar. They don't get a discount on their childcare, just because women are only getting three-quarters of a salary. Somehow, they are still paying the full price, but this is particularly critical for women across America.

This program helps millions of families, as I indicated, especially moms—especially moms getting back to work without having to worry about whether their children are going to be safe. Talk about peace of mind, this is peace-of-mind legislation for moms and dads to make sure their children will have a quality place, affordable place, and a safe place to be while they are working to earn a living for their families.

It has now been 24 years since this law was signed by President Bush, 18 years since it was last reauthorized. It is time to update it to reflect the changing conditions and challenges for our families.

This bipartisan reauthorization addresses issues facing families who need childcare. It improves program quality, making sure funds go to families in need; ensures children and childcare get the things they need to succeed: good nutrition, which is so critical for

their growth, physical activity, well-being by developing guidelines and incorporating health and wellness training for professional development; making sure children's needs are addressed when children have disabilities. It is very important for them and their families, making sure all childcare providers are properly trained to care for children and have been screened. That means first aid, CPR, how to prevent sudden infant death syndrome, child abuse, and undergoing a background check.

The bottom line is this is a bill that we need to pass. I am grateful and appreciative of the bipartisan support that has gotten us to this point, and the 45 national organizations that support it, including the Afterschool Alliance, the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, the National Association for Family Child Care, Teach for America, United Way Worldwide, and so many others.

I am pleased to join with all of my colleagues and urge them that we pass this bill as quickly as possible.

Again, congratulations to our leader, the senior Senator from Maryland, who has gotten us to this point. I know we will get it all the way through the process.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I yield the floor to Senator BALDWIN of Wisconsin, one of our newest Members but not new to this issue. Her record in the House on advocacy for children is well-known and respected.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. In America, we know that quality education and a fair shot at work is the path to the middle class, economic security, and getting ahead. Today we have an opportunity to make an important bipartisan action to help strengthen that path to the middle class.

For many families in this country, quality, affordable childcare is a challenge they struggle with every morning. This is why President George H. W. Bush signed the child care and development block grant law in 1990, to ensure that working families have access to quality, affordable childcare.

Today I join a bipartisan group of my Senate colleagues in calling for reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act because of the support it provides working families across this country and across the State of Wisconsin, my home State.

I thank HELP Committee Chairman HARKIN and Ranking Member ALEXANDER, and Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR for their working across party lines to move this important legislation forward.

This bipartisan work is an endorsement of our shared responsibility to build a shared path to the middle class that begins by investing in affordable childcare and high-quality early learning programs.

I am proud to say that Wisconsin has long been a leader in investing in our children early. Education for 4-year-olds was part of Wisconsin's Constitution in 1845, and the first kindergarten in the United States was founded in Watertown, WI, in 1856. Wisconsin is nearing universal 4K, with over 90 percent of school districts offering kindergarten for 4-year-olds.

My State has also recognized the importance of effective collaborations to support early childhood care and education. Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners is a statewide partnership representing over 50 public and private agencies, led by Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction, with the goal of providing every child access to a comprehensive delivery system for high-quality education and care.

I am proud that my State has undertaken a community approach to implementing high-quality childcare and early education. More work remains to be done, however, both in Wisconsin and nationwide to ensure high-quality childcare and education is accessible to every family.

Our Nation continues to recover from the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression. As our country continues this recovery, families have had to get by with less. Americans are in need of affordable childcare now more than ever. My home State of Wisconsin is no exception to this trend. Today, many parents are in the workforce, including over 70 percent of mothers in Wisconsin. For many hardworking middle-class families, childcare is necessary but also expensive. For millions of families in the United States, childcare is their single largest household expense at nearly $15,000 per year.

In Wisconsin, the cost of childcare for an infant is approximately 40 percent of a single mother's median income. Two-parent families can expect to spend more than 10 percent of their income on childcare.

Further, in Wisconsin, nearly one-third of children receiving the child care and development block grant funding are under the age of 3, making this a truly sound investment in those crucial years of early life.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Act is a bipartisan effort to reauthorize, reform, and revitalize the block grant program by strengthening Federal safety standards and placing a greater focus on the quality of childcare programs.

This investment in affordable quality childcare will help more than 1.5 million children, including over 30,000 children in Wisconsin.

I once again thank my colleagues for working in a bipartisan manner to guide us in reauthorizing this vital legislation. High-quality childcare and education is essential to the future success of our children and our overall success as a nation.

I am proud to support this legislation as it focuses on improving the quality and safety of childcare programs, focuses on supporting infants and toddlers with high-quality care, and reflects the realities of working families in this difficult economic environment. But, as importantly, I am proud to join a bipartisan effort in Washington that is squarely focused on both parties working together to build a stronger future for our middle class.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2813 AND 2814 EN BLOC

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent to make pending Landrieu amendments No. 2813 and No. 2814.

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

The clerk will report the amendments en bloc.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Maryland [Ms. MIKULSKI], for Ms. LANDRIEU, for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. INHOFE, proposes an amendment numbered 2813.

The Senator from Maryland [Ms. MIKULSKI], for Ms. LANDRIEU, for herself, Mr. BLUNT, and Mr. INHOFE, proposes an amendment numbered 2814.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendments be dispensed with.

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

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 2813

(Purpose: To allow children in foster care to receive services under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 while their families (including foster families) are taking necessary action to comply with immunization and other health and safety requirements)

On page 82, lines 9 and 10, strike ''to receive services under this subchapter while their families'' and insert ''and children in foster care to receive services under this subchapter while their families (including foster families)''.

AMENDMENT NO. 2814

(Purpose: To require the State plan to describe how the State will coordinate the services supported to carry out the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 with State agencies and programs serving children in foster care and the foster families of such children)

On page 93, strike lines 3 and 4 and insert the following:

11432(g)(1)(J)(ii));

''(VII) State agencies and programs serving children in foster care and the foster families of such children; and

''(VIII) other Federal programs

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I note that on the floor are three outstanding Senators who wish to speak on this bill: Senator CANTWELL, Senator MURKOWSKI, and Senator COLLINS. They come as the deans of the Republican women. I ask unanimous consent that they each be allowed to speak for 5 minutes in the order in which I stated: Senator CANTWELL, Senator MURKOWSKI, and then Senator COLLINS.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I thank Chairman HARKIN and certainly

Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR for their leadership on this bipartisan issue but especially Senator MIKULSKI for her constant leadership in making sure families in America are cared for.

This is important bipartisan legislation, and the reauthorization of this legislation—the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014—will help ensure that families have access to quality, affordable childcare.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant Program serves more than 1.6 million children per month nationwide. In my State it serves more than 39,000 children per month. With the support of these grants, parents can work, look for work, and participate in job-training programs while their children receive affordable childcare at quality centers or in the child's home.

The child care and development block grants are a primary source of Federal support for childcare assistance, and they play a key role in promoting healthy development of children, especially at young ages. Research on the effects of early childhood development has continually shown that the foundation provided by early learning and childcare networks can prevent the achievement gaps at a young age. This bill enables States to invest in the programs that have proven to work for children and families.

In Washington more than half of the children served by the child care and development block grants are younger than 4 years old, so in my State these grants are vital for preparing our youngest children with the support and skills they need to stay ahead once they enter into kindergarten.

Professor Cathryn Booth-LaForce, at the University of Washington, said:

> Child care affects so many children that for society at large, even small effects are important.

This bill would provide an additional 22,000 children across our Nation with childcare. That is a major effect. Expanding access to quality care can help thousands more children across the Nation get a running start on school. By preventing achievement gaps for our youngest children, we are creating successful students and building a skilled workforce for the future.

This bill allows Washington to make the important investments in our youngest learners and in our future economy. So I am so proud to be here in support of this bipartisan effort, and again I thank Senator MIKULSKI, Senator BURR, and others for working together at a time when people didn't think this level of compromise would result in such an important piece of legislation moving forward.

Once again I particularly wish to thank the dean of the women Senators, Senator MIKULSKI, for this effort and encourage my colleagues to support this bill, S. 1086, and make sure we get it passed before the end of this week.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I, too, am pleased to rise today to join my fellow women Senators on the floor this afternoon to speak in support of the bipartisan Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. I also commend Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR on their leadership in developing a truly bipartisan bill as we are moving forward. They have worked diligently and they have worked in a positive and constructive manner that does credit to the Senate operations. I also would like to recognize and commend Senator HARKIN and Senator ALEXANDER, as they have brought this bill through the committee and onto the floor.

I believe this legislation walks that line between asking the States, our tribes, and providers to plan ways to improve childcare quality without actually dictating the who and how and the what of every aspect of childcare. What the bill really does is it strengthens the ways in which providers can combine CCDBG, Head Start, title I, and IDEA funds to serve more kids, and if we can serve more kids, that is all good. It asks them to take an updated look at how they serve children with disabilities and how they will address nutrition and fitness and health and safety issues, but it will continue to let them figure out the best ways to achieve the goals, and that really does make sense.

In addition, as a result of the bipartisan nature of how this bill has come together, Alaskan voices were heard on this, and Alaskan concerns about several provisions in the original draft of the bill were addressed. For example, States that will be required to perform health, safety, and fire inspections may delegate to qualified agencies those inspections that require specialized expertise. That helps us in Alaska.

The committee report clarified that States' disaster preparedness standards include specific mention of children with disabilities and family reunification.

I was pleased to work with my colleague from Hawaii, Senator HIRONO, to make sure the bill managers included the technical amendments she had requested, which ensured that Native Hawaiian children were not inadvertently left out.

I again thank Senators MIKULSKI, BURR, ALEXANDER, and HARKIN for accepting those amendments that have made this bill that much better.

Mr. President, ensuring that families and children are well served by the childcare they pay for, in part with CCDBG assistance, is an important task before the Congress because this is not just about daycare or early learning, as important as those topics are. The fact is that access to high-quality, safe, and affordable childcare is really the key component when we are talking about those things that build strong economies and strong American communities.

This assistance allows parents to get the education or the training they need to qualify for a good job. It allows them to accept and keep a good job that will help pay those bills. It helps employers hire qualified employees who are then able to work. It helps the children get the foundation they need both academically and socially to be prepared to succeed in school and life.

Getting CCDBG-funded childcare up to speed with the 21st century is a key element in addressing income inequality and the deep recession that is still present for so many low-income American families. This is especially true for American Indian and Alaska Native families. American Indians and Alaska Natives experience exceptionally high unemployment levels compared to the rest of the Nation. I think the Presiding Officer knows this from his State, but in many regions of Alaska unemployment among our Native people is more than double our statewide rate. In the lower 48, unemployment on our Indian reservations was at approximately 50 percent in 2012.

We also know that high-quality early education can have an important and positive effect on the often very difficult academic and social outcomes we can see with our American Indians and our Alaska Native children if they do not have some of these foundational opportunities before them. So increasing these families' access to quality early education can have an important, positive effect on these children by improving their academic outcomes and their economic opportunities and really bringing hope to the community.

I thank the Senators on the floor for supporting the amendment we just had in front of us. Senator FRANKEN and I had offered the tribal set-aside. This change, which moves the set-aside from a ceiling to a floor, will provide tribes with an opportunity to work with HHS to receive additional support for the childcare opportunities that are so needed in Indian Country.

I am proud of the work we are doing in the Senate this week. We could have hotlined this bill and passed it by unanimous consent, but I think the path we have taken is the right one in bringing the bill to the floor and giving each Member the opportunity to be heard on ways to improve the bill. Holding votes on amendments in the regular order is the right thing to do. I applaud the chairwoman and those who have worked so hard, and I look forward to supporting this bill as we see its conclusion.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased to join my colleagues this afternoon in expressing support for the

reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, and I too commend Senator MIKULSKI, Senator BURR, Senator HARKIN, and Senator ALEXANDER for crafting this bipartisan bill and bringing it to the Senate floor for debate and amendment.

Childcare for working parents is essential to families throughout the Nation, and Maine is no exception. For years the CCDBG Program has assisted low-income parents in affording childcare. The support provided by this important program enables parents to obtain needed care for their children so they may work or improve their own skills and education.

Mr. President, 2,600 children from 1,800 Maine families receive Federal childcare subsidies through this program. Particularly during these difficult economic times, this program goes a long way in helping families in Maine and across the country.

I have seen firsthand the impact of high-quality early learning on a child's ability to succeed and grow. Educare Central Maine, located in Waterville, which I visited a few years ago, is a state-of-the-art early learning center that serves more than 200 mostly low-income children from birth to age 5. Almost half of these children come from families that are eligible for assistance, and many rely on the CCDBG voucher to help cover the cost of their attending Educare. Educare is a great example of quality childcare in my State and of the real impact of this program's funding at work in our communities.

As I saw at Educare in Waterville, the vouchers provided under this program allow parents to choose the best childcare setting for their children. That is a critical aspect of this program. Vouchers give parents the flexibility they want and need to make the best choice for their children about the kind of care that best serves their needs, whether it is at a childcare center, at a family care home, or with a relative or friend. The voucher program helps to keep the decisions in the hands of parents.

I am also pleased this reauthorization requires coordination among the early learning advisory councils and Head Start and the IDEA programs that serve children with special needs. Aligning these programs will help to improve the quality of all services offered for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children.

High-quality early learning experiences help ensure that children are well prepared for school. This bill improves the current program by making sure those providers receiving funding are qualified, receive training, and are regularly inspected and monitored.

I also express my gratitude to the members of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee for including in this legislation provisions from the Child Care Infant Mortality Prevention Act. That is a bill I introduced with the Senator from California, DIANNE FEINSTEIN. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as the American Academy of Pediatrics, half of the approximately 4,500 sudden infant death syndrome cases in the United States are entirely preventable with effective training and implementation of correct sleep practices. I am very pleased this reauthorization includes sudden infant death syndrome prevention and safe sleeping practices among the new health and safety training topics for providers.

Childcare is not only important to the developmental health of our children but also to the well-being of their parents. When parents know their children have a place to go where they will be safe and where they will learn, then parents have the peace of mind to earn a living to support their families.

Balancing the need to work with the need for childcare can be very difficult. At times, a parent's salary would be almost completely offset by the cost of childcare in a low-income family. This bill will help more parents get the support they need while reinforcing the requirement for high-quality care in healthy, stimulating, and safe environments.

Mr. President, I urge all of my colleagues to support this reauthorization bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I thank the Senators from Maine and Alaska for their comments, as well as the Senator from Washington State. Wasn't it impressive that for the last hour, from both sides of the aisle, the women of the Senate have spoken out. Yet this bill is not a woman's bill. This is a family bill, where the men and women of the Senate came together on a bipartisan basis and have developed a framework for a sensible, affordable reauthorization of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act.

I am so pleased to be a part of this with Senator HARKIN, chairman of the health and education committee, Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, and Senator RICHARD BURR, my counterpart on the subcommittee, where we worked so hard to do this.

We the women of the Senate often joke, but it is no laughing matter when we say we work on the macro issues of our economy and of our national security. But we also work on the macaroni and cheese issues affecting America's families, and there is no bigger macaroni and cheese issue than general education, and of course early childhood education, which occurs both in the home—remember, the first teachers are always the family—and then childcare. With now more than 40 percent of American women in the workforce, childcare is indeed a compelling issue.

Childcare is one of the most important decisions a parent can make in raising their child. Yet when one asks who is worried about childcare or when there is a single mom working double shifts because she might make the minimum wage and she is trying to hold body and soul together or a married couple where the wife is working in the marketplace as a lab technician and the father has a job which might have him commuting more than 2 hours a day one way, they need to be able to have affordable childhood care. What about the police officer who works the night shift? When we say ''police officer,'' it could be female or male.

Our bill helps lift the burden, giving families and children the childcare they need. This is why I am so proud the Senate women have joined me to support this bill. Many families want childcare which is reliable, undeniable, safe, affordable, and accessible. This bill does just that.

So how does it work? The Federal Government provides States and Indian tribes with funding. This funding is used to help lower-income families afford childcare while their parents work or train for work. Families are given vouchers based on their income level to help cover the cost of care. These vouchers can be used by parents for care in a childcare home, care in a relative's home or in a child care center.

Every month the CCDBG Program helps more than 1.5 million American children. In my own home State of Maryland, 20,000 children are served monthly; 20,000 families benefit from this.

So why is the program important? Childcare is expensive. Even when parents are contributing to childcare, it is often one of their highest expenditures. On average, Maryland families spend 20 percent of their family income on child care. Maryland has 54,000 working moms with infants under the age of 1 year. The childcare for this is $13,000 a year. We have 148,000 single moms with children under the age of 18. We have 200,000 working moms with children under the age of 6. Childcare for them for a 4-year-old is about $9,000 a year. This is more than what it costs to go to a community college. This is what it costs to go to more than some of the campuses at the University of Maryland.

Childcare is expensive. Taking care of children who are preschool is expensive because in order to do the right thing they have to have trained staff who not only provide a safe environment for the children, but the kind of environment which nurtures their development, develops their mind, and prepares them for school. This is why we focused on high-quality childcare.

Safeguarding their health and safety, ensuring children have a continuity of care, making sure their nutritional concerns are also addressed. We have done this, again, on a bipartisan basis to make sure when we provide childcare, and we also provide local flexibility.

The needs in a rural State like Utah or Montana are different than Maryland or New York. Look at the lead sponsors of this bill: Tennessee, North Carolina, Iowa, Maryland. So we provide the local flexibility which is so important.

This bill will make sure we have strong background checks to make sure the children are safe. We are going to make sure they meet certain basic health requirements where the staff knows basic first aid. We are also going to make sure there is money for training and curriculum development so each child benefits in a safe learning environment.

There is much more I could say about this bill, but the most important is this. Let's get our amendments done and let's move it. I am proud of what we have done, and I really think that if we work together, we can offer our amendments and be done by sometime tomorrow.

So I again reach out to all of my colleagues. We have a good bill. It is a bill which helps families and, at the same time, it does not really increase bureaucracy.

I yield the floor and look forward to a continuing debate on the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

AMENDMENT NO. 2824 AND AMENDMENT NO. 2809

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the pending amendments be set aside, and call up the following amendments: Bennet-Isakson No. 2824; and, Boxer-Burr No. 2809.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Iowa [Mr. HARKIN], for Mr. BENNET and Mr. ISAKSON, proposes an amendment numbered 2824;

The Senator from Iowa [Mr. HARKIN], for Mrs. BOXER and Mr. BURR, proposes amendment numbered 2809.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendments be dispensed with.

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

The amendments are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 2824

(Purpose: To require States that elect to combine funding for early childhood education and care to describe the manner in which they use the combined funding)

On page 91, line 17, insert ''efficiently'' before ''coordinate''.

On page 93, strike line 9 and insert the following:

''(ii) OPTIONAL USE OF COMBINED FUNDS.—If the State elects to combine funding for the services supported to carry out this subchapter with funding for any program described in subclauses (I) through (VII) of clause (i), the plan shall describe how the State will combine the multiple sets of funding and use the combined funding.

''(iii) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing with this subchapter.

''(5) after consultation with the Secretary of Education and the heads of any other Federal agencies involved, issue guidance, and disseminate information on best practices, regarding use of funding combined by States as described in section 658E(c)(2)(O)(ii), consistent with law other than this subchapter.''; and

On page 128, line 16, strike ''chapter; and'' and insert ''chapter;''.

On page 128, strike line 22 and insert the following:

AMENDMENT NO. 2809

(Purpose: To amend the Crime Control Act of 1990 to improve the quality of background checks for Federal agencies hiring, or contracting to hire, individuals to provide child care services)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. SAFE CHILD CARE ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Safe Child Care Act of 2014''.

(b) BACKGROUND CHECKS.—Section 231 of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13041) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''subsection (b)(3)'' and inserting ''paragraph (3)''; and

(B) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (4);

(2) by moving paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (b) to subsection (a), and inserting them after paragraph (1) of that subsection;

(3) in subsection (a)(3), as redesignated by paragraph (2) of this subsection, by striking ''subsection (a)(1)'' and inserting ''paragraph (1)'';

(4) in subsection (b), by striking paragraph (1) and inserting the following:

''(1) A background check required by subsection (a) shall be initiated through the personnel programs of the applicable Federal agencies.

''(2) A background check for a child care staff member under subsection (a) shall include—

''(A) a search, including a fingerprint check, of the State criminal registry or repository in—

''(i) the State where the child care staff member resides; and

''(ii) each State where the child care staff member previously resided during the longer of—

''(I) the 10-year period ending on the date on which the background check is initiated; or

''(II) the period beginning on the date on which the child care staff member attained 18 years of age and ending on the date on which the background check is initiated;

''(B) a search of State-based child abuse and neglect registries and databases in—

''(i) the State where the child care staff member resides; and

''(ii) each State where the child care staff member previously resided during the longer of—

''(I) the 10-year period ending on the date on which the background check is initiated; or

''(II) the period beginning on the date on which the child care staff member attained 18 years of age and ending on the date on which the background check is initiated;

''(C) a search of the National Crime Information Center database;

''(D) a Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint check using the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System;

''(E) a search of the National Sex Offender Registry established under the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (42 U.S.C. 16901 et seq.); and

''(F) a search of the State sex offender registry established under that Act in—

''(i) the State where the child care staff member resides; and

''(ii) each State where the child care staff member previously resided during the longer of—

''(I) the 10-year period ending on the date on which the background check is initiated; or

''(II) the period beginning on the date on which the child care staff member attained 18 years of age and ending on the date on which the background check is initiated.

''(3) A child care staff member shall be ineligible for employment by a child care provider if such individual—

''(A) refuses to consent to the background check described in subsection (a);

''(B) makes a false statement in connection with such background check;

''(C) is registered, or is required to be registered, on a State sex offender registry or the National Sex Offender Registry established under the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006; or

''(D) has been convicted of a felony consisting of—

''(i) murder, as described in section 1111 of title 18, United States Code;

''(ii) child abuse or neglect;

''(iii) a crime against children, including child pornography;

''(iv) spousal abuse;

''(v) a crime involving rape or sexual assault;

''(vi) kidnapping;

''(vii) arson;

''(viii) physical assault or battery; or

''(ix) subject to paragraph (5)(D), a drug-related offense committed during the preceding 5 years.

''(4)(A) A child care provider covered by paragraph (3) shall submit a request, to the appropriate State agency designated by a State, for a background check described in subsection (a), for each child care staff member (including prospective child care staff members) of the provider.

''(B) In the case of an individual who is hired as a child care staff member before the date of enactment of the Safe Child Care Act of 2014, the provider shall submit such a request—

''(i) prior to the last day of the second full fiscal year after that date of enactment; and

''(ii) not less often than once during each 5-year period following the first submission date under this subparagraph for that staff member.

''(C) In the case of an individual who is a prospective child care staff member on or after that date of enactment, the provider shall submit such a request—

''(i) prior to the date the individual becomes a child care staff member of the provider; and

''(ii) not less often than once during each 5-year period following the first submission date under this subparagraph for that staff member.

''(5)(A) The State shall—

''(i) carry out the request of a child care provider for a background check described in subsection (a) as expeditiously as possible; and

''(ii) in accordance with subparagraph (B) of this paragraph, provide the results of the background check to—

''(I) the child care provider; and

''(II) the current or prospective child care staff member for whom the background check is conducted.

''(B)(i) The State shall provide the results of a background check to a child care provider as required under subparagraph (A)(ii)(I) in a statement that—

''(I) indicates whether the current or prospective child care staff member for whom

the background check is conducted is eligible or ineligible for employment by a child care provider; and

''(II) does not reveal any disqualifying crime or other related information regarding the current or prospective child care staff member.

''(ii) If a current or prospective child care staff member is ineligible for employment by a child care provider due to a background check described in subsection (a), the State shall provide the results of the background check to the current or prospective child care staff member as required under subparagraph (A)(ii)(II) in a criminal background report that includes information relating to each disqualifying crime.

''(iii) A State—

''(I) may not publicly release or share the results of an individual background check described in subsection (a); and

''(II) may include the results of background checks described in subsection (a) in the development or dissemination of local or statewide data relating to background checks if the results are not individually identifiable.

''(C)(i) The State shall provide for a process by which a child care staff member (including a prospective child care staff member) may appeal the results of a background check required under subsection (a) to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in the criminal background report of the staff member.

''(ii) The State shall ensure that—

''(I) the appeals process is completed in a timely manner for each child care staff member;

''(II) each child care staff member is given notice of the opportunity to appeal; and

''(III) each child care staff member who wishes to challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information in the criminal background report of the child care staff member is given instructions about how to complete the appeals process.

''(D)(i) The State may allow for a review process through which the State may determine that a child care staff member (including a prospective child care staff member) disqualified for a crime specified in paragraph (3)(D)(ix) is eligible for employment by a child care provider, notwithstanding paragraph (3).

''(ii) The review process under this subparagraph shall be consistent with title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000e et seq.).

''(E) Nothing in this section shall be construed to create a private right of action against a child care provider if the child care provider is in compliance with this section.

''(F) This section shall apply to each State that receives funding under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.).

''(6) Fees that the State may charge for the costs of conducting a background check as required by subsection (a) shall not exceed the actual costs to the State for the administration of such background checks.

''(7) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent a Federal agency from disqualifying an individual as a child care staff member based on a conviction of the individual for a crime not specifically listed in this subsection that bears upon the fitness of an individual to provide care for and have responsibility for the safety and well-being of children.

''(8) In this subsection—

''(A) the term 'child care provider' means an agency of the Federal Government, or a unit of or contractor with the Federal Government that is operating a facility, described in subsection (a); and

''(B) the term 'child care staff member' means an individual who is hired, or seeks to be hired, by a child care provider to be involved with the provision of child care services, as described in subsection (a).''; and

(5) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

''(c) SUSPENSION PENDING DISPOSITION OF CRIMINAL CASE.—In the case of an incident in which an individual has been charged with an offense described in subsection (b)(3)(D) and the charge has not yet been disposed of, an employer may suspend an employee from having any contact with children while on the job until the case is resolved.''.

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on October 1 of the second full fiscal year after the date of enactment of this Act.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 5:15 p.m., the Senate proceed to vote in relation to the following amendments in the order listed: Landrieu No. 2818; Landrieu-Grassley No. 2813; Landrieu-Blunt No. 2814; and Bennett-Isakson No. 2824; further, that no second-degree amendments be in order to any of these amendments prior to the votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HARKIN. For the information of all Senators, it is our understanding that only one of these four amendments will be subject to a rollcall vote, Landrieu No. 2818, and the others will hopefully be done by voice votes at 5:15.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that upon disposition of the Bennet-Isakson amendment, the Senate proceed to executive session for consideration of the following nominations en bloc: Calendar Nos. 682, 617, 614, 545; that the Senate proceed to vote in the order listed without intervening action or debate on the nominations; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, would the Senator yield 2 minutes?

I thank the Senator from Iowa for his generosity spirit, and I rise in strong support of the bill.

Since 1990 this important block grant has helped States provide vouchers to our low-income families to help them afford quality childcare programs. We all know how important that is.

With over 70 percent of moms in today's workforce, it certainly is a critical issue for our children and their families and for our economy.

I have been involved in this issue both when I was a young mom and now as an older grandmother. Childcare can be very expensive. The average low-income family spends over 32 percent of their income on childcare every month and about the same for their rent. They don't have much left over. It is very difficult. In California we have almost 6 million children whose parents are working, and in our State we were able to help over 100,000 children through this very important program.

I commend the sponsors of this bill, the HELP Committee, for the great work they have done. I have a couple of amendments, and I will finish in just a moment.

Senator BURR and I have proposed amendment No. 2809, which simply ensures that all childcare programs on Federal facilities, such as military bases, conduct the same comprehensive background checks the bill already requires of childcare providers on State land. So it is like a little bit of an oversight that was left out.

So we make sure if there is a childcare center on Federal lands—and, by the way, there are many—it is taken care of. Unfortunately, we have had experiences of all kinds of assaults on Federal lands, and I don't need to go into that.

Amendment No. 2810 would help more parents afford quality childcare by increasing the child and dependent care tax credit from $3,000 to $6,000 per child, and making it refundable.

I do hope we all support the underlying bill, and I thank the Senator from Iowa for his generosity.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in the last few weeks I have come to the floor many times to speak about how the Senate has deteriorated from being the deliberative body it is supposed to be. Considering the comity on the floor on this bill under the direction of Senator HARKIN, my colleague from Iowa, and other people, this is probably not the most appropriate time to give a speech like this. But we still have problems in the Senate and I wish to address them.

We need to restore the Senate as a deliberative body. I am very concerned the Senate is no longer living up to its reputation as the ''World's Greatest Deliberative Body.''

I have outlined how the Senate ought to function by quoting at length the writings of the primary architect of the U.S. Constitution James Madison. When trying to understand what the authors of the Constitution intended the role of the Senate to be, we can't do any better than James Madison, the father of the Constitution.

The writings of Madison, along with Hamilton and Jay, in the Federalist Papers comprise the most comprehensive and detailed explanation of what the framers of the Constitution intended. This provides an important and

very nonpartisan frame of reference about the role the Senate is supposed to play in our system of government. By going back to our founding document and first principles, we can rise above petty partisan squabbling and start working on how to restore the Senate as the deliberative body it is supposed to be.

I will start by recapping some of the lessons from the Federalist Papers where the Senate has gone off course. Then I will talk about solutions to restore the Senate. I am introducing this solution today with cosponsorship of other Senators, which I will get to in a minute.

In Federalist No. 62, this new creation of a Senate is being explained to the people of New York to convince them to ratify the Constitution. It tells of the lessons Americans learned in the first years of independence under the Articles of Confederation, which had a unicameral legislature, as did most of the States at that time. Based on lessons learned from practical experience then of these State legislatures, James Madison lists four problems that a republic such as ours could face if it doesn't have a properly functioning Senate.

The first problem Madison recounts is a tendency for a group to form in a legislative body that pushes its own agenda as opposed to what the people elected them to do. Madison explains that having a second Chamber like a Senate makes such ''schemes of usurpation or perfidy'' less likely because they would have to capture both Chambers at the same time. The Senate, with longer staggered terms as the Constitution spells out, makes that even less likely.

The second lesson is that a single-chamber legislature with lots of Members tends to ''yield to the impulse of sudden and violent passions and to be seduced by factious leaders into intemperate and pernicious resolutions.''

If that sounds like the House of Representatives today, that is because it is supposed to work that way. The House is supposed to reflect the immediate passions of the day, even if those passions take on a partisan pen. However, when laws are made only by factious leaders, you end up with what Madison calls, ''intemperate and pernicious resolutions.''

So that is where he says the function of the Senate as a deliberative body comes into play.

Madison's third lesson has to do with a need for a body with longer terms that is serious about doing the hard work of legislating, instead of pushing short-term agendas, such as might be the case in a House of Representatives.

To quote Madison:

> 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 people, of the value of those aids which may be expected from a well constituted senate?

In other words, what Madison was saying: It is better to take the time to get it right the first time than to have to constantly go back and fix ill-conceived laws. That is what the Senate is composed to do under our Constitution, to make sure we do not get sudden changes or bad legislation out of the other body.

In the fourth and final point, Madison explains that if a legislature is constantly churning out new laws, even if they are good ideas, it causes chaos because no one knows what the law says from day to day. It changes constantly, in other words.

To this point Madison says: ''A continual change even of good measures is inconsistent with every rule of prudence and every prospect of success.''

Madison also points out a problem caused by overactive legislating that we tend to think is unique in modern times; that is, special interest groups that are hired as lobbyists and lawyers. To quote Madison: ''Another effect of public instability is the unreasonable advantage it gives to the sagacious, the enterprising, and the moneyed few over the industrious and uniformed mass of the people.''

That is a criticism we still hear today.

Just to recap, the Senate was specifically written into our Constitution to solve certain problems; namely, but repetitively, to prevent an agenda that does not reflect that of the American people, to prevent legislation based upon short-term partisan passions, and to pass fewer but better thought-out laws. Of course, starting in 2007, we had a House and a Senate controlled by the same political party and intent on enacting the President's agenda, top of which was his health care law. The deliberative process was cut short and the legislation was rammed through the Senate over the objections of Senators representing 40 percent of the States. The President's health care law is practically the poster child for what Madison called ''intemperate and pernicious resolutions,'' reflecting a partisan agenda that did not enjoy broad support among the American people when it was passed. You know what. It enjoys less support today.

The fact that Congress didn't take the time to think through every aspect of that important health care legislation and work out a consensus that could attract broad support of the Senate has resulted in the need of a series of, as Madison said, ''repealing, explaining and amending laws.''

Of course, the President claimed for himself the authority to unilaterally suspend or amend parts of the law that aren't working rather than come back to Congress that under the Constitution is supposed to be the legislative body. Of course, what the President is doing now is not what the authors of the Constitution intended either. We wouldn't be in this predicament, with a deeply flawed health care law, if the Senate had been allowed to function as it was intended.

Now with neither party today having 60 votes needed to steamroll Members of the minority party, the Senate should go back to functioning as it was intended. Yet that hasn't happened. Instead we have seen an unprecedented abuse of Senate rules to block Senators from participating in the deliberative process. These abuses of Senate rules threaten to fundamentally transform the Senate from the greatest deliberative body in the world into a purely partisan rubberstamp for the agenda of the majority and its leadership. If we allow that to happen, we will see even more of the problems Madison warned about.

The Senate was intended to be a deliberative body and only functions properly when deliberation is allowed. That means we must have debate and amendments.

I hear frequent complaints from Iowans about Congress passing huge bills without Members of Congress having the opportunity to understand all the provisions, much less the people they are supposed to represent having a chance to understand the bills and to weigh in on them. It is now routine for cloture to be filed immediately upon bringing up a matter for consideration. That is not the deliberative process or how the Senate is supposed to operate.

Cloture was invented to allow the Senate to end consideration of a matter after the preponderance of Senators had concluded it had received sufficient consideration. Even that part was a compromise. Before cloture was invented, there was no way to end debate as long as at least one Senator thought a matter needed further consideration.

Cloture was introduced to balance the desire to get things done with the principle that each Senator, as a representative of his or her State, has a right to participate fully in that legislative process. The threshold was later adjusted down from two-thirds of Senators voting to three-fifths of all Senators. That is the famous 60 votes we have to have if we want to end debate. Each time this matter has been revisited, the balance has tilted more in favor of speeding up the process at the expense of allowing Senators to fully represent the people of their States.

At the beginning of the current Congress, the Senate passed changes to the Senate rules to shorten the amount of debate time after cloture is invoked for certain nominees and to expedite consideration of legislation in some situations. These changes were agreed to in exchange for a promise—a real promise—that the so-called nuclear option would not be used.

Notwithstanding that commitment, just a short 10 months later, the nuclear option was used, setting a new precedent that debate on nominations can be cut off by a simple majority of Senators, ignoring the plain text of the cloture rule that is still on the books.

At the end of the day, Members of this body agreed to extinguish certain rights in exchange for the promise not

to use the nuclear option only to have additional rights stripped away 10 months later by a simple majority vote. Taken together, those two episodes represent a dramatic shift toward domination of the Senate by one faction, contrary to Madison's stated intent.

I say all that by way of background, but that is history and the other side will have to learn to live with the ramifications of changes to the nomination process that they forced upon this body.

I would like to turn the focus now to the legislative process and what can be done to restore the Senate to the role envisioned by the authors of the Constitution before it is too late and the idea that I have and some of my colleagues have joined me in a rule change along this line.

When it comes to legislating, we have gotten off track from how the Senate was designed, but we have an opportunity to restore the Senate as a deliberative body. That was an understanding at the beginning of this Congress, that there would be some return to regular order. In exchange for rule changes that expedite the legislative process, the majority leadership would turn to the longstanding tradition of an open amendment process.

In other words, there was an understanding that the Senate would take its time to consider legislation and Senators from both sides would be free to propose amendments and have them voted on. That understanding lasted until Republicans submitted amendments that some on the other side were nervous to have to take a position on. It is no secret the majority leader has gone out of his way to keep Members of his caucus from having to take votes that may hurt them with the people back home.

The Senate rules provide that any Senator may offer an amendment to a bill being considered. Therefore, in order to shield Members from having to take tough votes, the majority leader now routinely moves to shut down all consideration of a bill before amendments are considered.

As I said at the beginning, maybe today isn't the time to give this speech because we have great comity on the bills before the Senate, but we still have a major problem.

Cloture is supposed to be used after the Senate has considered a measure for a period of time and a preponderance of the Senate think it has deliberated enough. Cloture should not be used to prevent any meaningful deliberation from taking place. The average number of cloture motions filed under each session of the Congress under this majority leadership is more than double what it was in prior sessions of Congress under majority leaders of both parties going back to 1987. This alone is an indication that cloture is being overused, even abused, by the majority.

The majority leader will tell you he is forced to file cloture because of Republican filibusters. He might have a point if—and that is a big if—if it was true that after extensive debate and plenty of opportunity to consider amendments Republicans were dragging out debate purely for the sake of delay. However, we can hardly claim that the Senate's deliberation has dragged on too long when it hasn't even begun consideration of the matter in the first place.

We are now at the point where the overwhelming number of motions to cut off debate are made before debate has even started, much less than in response to a filibuster because, obviously, we have to have debate before we have a filibuster.

Let's look at a chart I have that was put together by the Congressional Research Service on cloture motions in relationship to legislative business filed the same day a matter is brought before the Senate—in other words, before debate starts—because we have to have debate before we have a filibuster.

I have color-coded each Congress based on which party controlled the Senate. You will notice that use of same-day cloture averages out to 29 times per Congress up until the 110th Congress when this majority leadership takes over. Then there is a huge jump to 98 same-day cloture motions. That is more than three times the previous average. You will notice a trend toward slightly more use of same-day clotures in the years leading up to 2007 and, of course, that makes both parties guilty.

You can see an unprecedented use of same-day clotures starting when this majority leadership took over. The trend has continued at more than double the previous average in each Congress since this majority leadership took over.

There were 65 same-day cloture motions in the 111th Congress and 67 in the 112th Congress compared to 29 the last time Republicans controlled the Senate, which coincidentally is also the previous average I have talked about.

The last line on the chart shows the total as of January, when we were only halfway through the current Congress. At that time we were already up to 30 same-day cloture motions. That is more than we saw for the entire Congress the last time Republicans were in the majority. We are back to an unprecedented use of cloture to end deliberations before deliberations have even begun, and that is clearly abusive and cannot be justified.

Some people might argue that same-day cloture motions on the motion to proceed should not be counted because the motion to proceed can't be amended. That is debatable, but I will point out that the last column shows same-day cloture filings excluding the motion to proceed, and the trend is exactly the same.

What do we do about this abuse of cloture to end consideration of a bill before it has been considered? Today I am introducing the Stop Cloture Abuse Resolution. That appropriately spells out the acronym SCAR because cloture abuse threatens to scar the body of the Senate. The Stop Cloture Abuse Resolution will amend Senate rules to prohibit the filing of cloture until at least 24 hours after the Senate has proceeded to the matter. That means you will have debate before you file cloture. Debate could be a filibuster, but you have to have debate to have a filibuster. This reform will end, once and for all, the practice of attempting to shut down debate and amendments before the debate has started.

It is important to keep in mind that when Senators are blocked from participating in the legislative process, the people they represent are disenfranchised. By that I don't mean the citizens of the 45 States who elected Republicans. The citizens of States who elected Democratic Senators also expect their Senators to offer amendments and engage with their colleagues and different parties. Forcing a cloture vote before any deliberation prevents even Members of the majority party from offering amendments that may be important to the people they represent. Voters have a right to expect the people they elect to actually do the hard work of legislating, not just be a rubberstamp for the leadership's agenda.

Senators who go along with the tactics that disenfranchise their own constituents should have to explain to those who voted them into office why they are not willing to be full-fledged Senators. The Senate is the world's most deliberative body, and constituents rightfully expect their Senators to be able to vote. They should explain why their loyalty is to party leadership and not to the people of their State.

A Senator's job includes offering amendments. Being a Senator also means sometimes you have to take tough votes on other Senators' amendments that reveal to your constituents where you stand on various issues. It is the job of Senators, quite plainly, to deliberate and to legislate.

The Stop Cloture Abuse Resolution will make it clear that deliberation is the rule, not disenfranchisement. It would establish that a deliberative process is expected, and at least some deliberation must occur before any attempt to silence the voices of Senators and by extension the voices of the people of their respective States.

This is just one reform idea I am proposing for the Senate to consider as we work to restore the Senate as a deliberative body, and that will be introduced today. It would only address, I have to admit, part of the problem. The Senate will also have to address the abuse of filling the tree to block amendments.

The ability to block Senators from offering amendments is actually not found in the Senate rules. Filling the tree is an abuse of Senate precedents. In some ways that makes it the easier problem to address; whereas, a cloture

abuse is an abuse of the Senate cloture rule. The practice of filling the tree to block amendments can be eliminated simply by establishing a new precedent.

As everyone remembers from the nuclear option, establishing a new precedent is a simple process that only requires a majority vote. However, like the nuclear option which established a precedent that the Senate would ignore, the plain text of a rule is still on the books. Ending the ability of a majority leader to block amendments would simply involve replacing the old precedent with a new precedent.

For now, the Stop Cloture Abuse Resolution—going by the acronym SCAR—would be a good start. It would eliminate the scar on the Senate. Adopting the Stop Cloture Abuse Resolution would send a strong message that the Senate will once again deliberate over issues rather than ramming through all of them without careful consideration.

This reform will reduce the urge to force legislation through the Senate based on a short-term partisan agenda and result in fewer but better laws just as James Madison and the other Framers of the Constitution intended. Amending the Senate rules should not be a last resort, and this move should not be necessary.

We have been told the bipartisan child care and development block grant bill will be considered—and is being considered—under an open amendment process. If that happens, and if that marks the beginning of a return to regular order where all Senators are allowed to represent their States to the best of their ability once again, then perhaps this move will not be necessary.

Given the record of the past three Congresses, I don't think anybody should hold their breath on that happening.

It is a good day in the U.S. Senate that this legislation is being considered under the process the Senate was set up to perform—to deliberate, offer amendments, and debate.

If a fully open amendment process is not permitted after all, and if this rare instance of bipartisanship proves to be an exception to the rule, it will prove that the Senate is fundamentally broken and only significant reforms, such as the Stop Cloture Abuse Resolution, can restore the Senate as the world's greatest deliberative body.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 2837

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment so I may call up my amendment numbered 2837, which is at the desk.

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

The clerk will report the amendment.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from South Carolina [Mr. SCOTT], for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU, proposes an amendment numbered 2837.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To clarify parental rights to use child care certificates)

On page 140, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 10A. PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Section 658Q of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858o) is amended—

(1) by inserting before ''Nothing'' the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) PARENTAL RIGHTS TO USE CHILD CARE CERTIFICATES.—Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed in a manner—

''(1) to favor or promote the use of grants and contracts for the receipt of child care services under this subchapter over the use of child care certificates; or

''(2) to disfavor or discourage the use of such certificates for the purchase of child care services, including those services provided by private or nonprofit entities, such as faith-based providers.''.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, I offer amendment No. 2837 to S. 2086, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. My amendment seeks to clarify that the statute does not favor or promote the use of grants or contracts over the use of childcare certificates, nor does it adversely impact the use of certificates in faith-based or other settings.

What we are talking about today boils down to parental choice and State flexibility—two issues the Federal Government should be thinking a lot harder about on a constant basis.

I ask my colleagues to support my bipartisan amendment to ensure low-income working parents have a choice and that States have the flexibility they need to find the childcare that best suits their child.

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. WYDEN. 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. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business for up to 20 minutes.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise this afternoon to talk about the Medicare Program, which of course, is a lifeline—a guarantee for 50 million older Americans. In particular what the Senate wants to do is make sure that those older people have access to primary care doctors, nurse practitioners, specialists, and other providers in their local communities because they provide critically needed care to our seniors day in and day out.

Many of those seniors have no idea that by March 31—just a few weeks from now—Congress has to act on their behalf to preserve access to the care that seniors depend on. Suffice it to say those providers would much rather be delivering the care than waiting for this Congress to act.

Now, fortunately, there is a roadmap for getting this done—getting good care to seniors not just for a short period of time but, I say to my colleagues, once and for all. And I wish to this afternoon urge my colleagues to seize this opportunity.

Beginning my remarks, I declare I can take little credit for the opportunity before us. The path that got us here, that got us started in the effort to make the needed reforms to protect our seniors, is a direct result of the leadership of my friend and colleague Senator ORRIN HATCH. Just as Senator HATCH has done so many times over the course of an illustrious career, he was key to forging a bipartisan solution to a challenging, longstanding problem.

So what I would like to do in the beginning is to recognize that effort by Senator HATCH; my predecessor as chairman of the Finance Committee, Senator BAUCUS; House Ways and Means chairman DAVE CAMP; House Ways and Means Ranking Member SANDER LEVIN; House Energy and Commerce chairman FRED UPTON; and House Energy and Commerce Ranking Member HENRY WAXMAN. The work they have been doing over the last few months is exceptional. In effect, they have given us the opportunity to take this flawed system of setting a kind of Medicare budget known as SGR—sustainable growth rate—they have given us the opportunity to repeal and replace this flawed system with one that I think is going to make a huge difference in the days ahead by pushing up the goal of good-quality affordable care and doing it in a bipartisan way. I hope these colleagues will take it as a compliment that the SGR bill now before the Senate incorporates all of that good bipartisan work they have been doing, along with the work that was done on the Senate Finance Committee.

I see our colleague from North Carolina, who has contributed mightily to that effort, as well as, of course, the Presiding Officer of the Senate Senator BROWN, who has been such an eloquent spokesperson, particularly for those without political power and political clout. I thank both of them for their efforts.

To be specific, the legislation I introduced last night incorporates what those six Members agreed to—the six

Members I just named, the three Democrats and the three Republicans—in S. 2000. In effect, that legislation, along with the health extenders passed by the Senate Finance Committee in S. 1871, is essentially what we have the opportunity to move in the days ahead. Every single item in this bill has strong bipartisan support, and I hope we can all come together and with resounding bipartisan support get this bill passed before March 31.

There are a variety of reasons why Democrats and Republicans, in my view, can band together and repeal and replace what I have characterized as a flawed, really dysfunctional system we have today known as the SGR, but before I go through the list of reasons, I wish to make clear to my colleagues—colleagues who know me—that I am interested in sound, sensible policy and that we move in a bipartisan way—not politics, not message, but sound policy.

That is why I am here on the floor today. I have always tried to make it possible for both sides to secure their principles—principles that are important to them—and still allow us to go forward in a bipartisan and innovative fashion to get things done.

I will say to my colleagues, it is not possible any longer to just put one patch or another up and say we are going to fix the Medicare challenge. It is not going to work.

For the last 10 years Congress has always blocked these cuts. So I say it is time to stop pretending these upcoming cuts—fittingly scheduled for April Fools' Day—are any more real than the 16 times the Congress has intervened. What we ought to do, I say to my colleagues, is stop playing Medicare make believe. It is time to set aside a flawed formula that prevents the Congress from really moving ahead constructively on Medicare and to start with a clean slate.

I thought the Wall Street Journal editors really summed it up very well on February 19. In talking about the bipartisan bill I laud tonight, the editors of the Wall Street Journal said: ''Simply pass the bill as is and forgo the pretense of fake-paying for it.'' We need to think about those words. The editors of the Wall Street Journal basically said this is all a bunch of fakery because the cuts aren't going to be made, the savings aren't going to be realized, because we have tried that route. So the Wall Street Journal said pass this good bipartisan bill.

If the Congress fails to fully repeal the flawed Medicare payment formula now, I believe there will be cuts to other providers—hospitals, home health care providers, drug companies, skilled nursing facilities. Make no mistake about it. Those providers are going to be the ones who pay for yet another patch. So a lot of this budget fakery isn't real, but the people who are going to pay for the patch are going to face very real cuts.

In total, the 16 bandaid patches have already cost $150 billion. That is the same cost as fully repealing and replacing the flawed SGR plus taking care of the health extenders. Those cuts, as I have indicated, have largely been paid for in the past by cuts to other providers. In the last 2 years alone, the hospitals have been forced to produce nearly $30 billion to pay for the temporary patches.

Under the status quo, the SGR will always call for cuts that are too steep for providers to bear and Congress will step in with yet another patch paid for by still more cuts to other providers. How can we make a case for more of the same, especially when we have an opportunity to not only repeal the flawed formula but also to enact reforms that finally move Medicare away from the flawed fee-for-service approach that rewards quantity instead of quality and value?

Second, I offered the Medicare SGR Repeal and Beneficiary Access Improvement Act of 2014 in order to eliminate the ongoing threat to our seniors and the providers who serve them. Under this legislation, which reflects the bipartisan, bicameral legislation Senator HATCH and Senator BAUCUS offered last month, physicians would receive annual payment increases of .5 percent for 5 years. The following 5 years physicians would not receive automatic increases but, rather, would be eligible for payment increases based on performance. Medicare would transition to a new focus—on greater equality, value, and accountability.

This legislation would strengthen Medicare physician payments in a number of ways. It would reward the quality of care. It would improve payment accuracy. It would expand the coordination of care for patients with chronic care needs. It would encourage participation in alternative models of payment.

The bill addresses other critical Medicare and Medicaid issues. They are known as health care extenders. With these extenders, it would be possible for the Congress on a bipartisan basis to ensure that low-income seniors can have affordable Medicare premiums and guarantees that beneficiaries will have access to the therapies they need.

Under the bill, rural beneficiaries will have the security of knowing the hospitals and physicians will be there when they need them. I know rural health care, for my friend from North Carolina, my friend from Iowa, and the Senator from Ohio, is a priority. If we pass this bill, which was put together by the bipartisan group in the House and Senate, we give a big boost for rural health care and the services seniors depend on under Medicare.

Finally, something I am especially proud of because Senator GRASSLEY was good enough to work with me for a number of years on it is this would significantly expand Medicare transparency. This legislation would open Medicare's treasure trove of payment data and patients would have the information they need to make informed choices about their care. Researchers and professionals will have the data needed to develop evidence-based methods. So this afternoon, in addition to thanking the colleagues I have already mentioned, I thank Senator GRASSLEY for all of those years working with me. Senator HARKIN knows Senator GRASSLEY has been a strong advocate for transparency in health care and other vital services, and we see his good work in this bill.

This bill is bipartisan. It doesn't cut providers or increase cost-sharing for seniors. I defer to my colleagues to decide if it is better to offset the costs of SGR repeal by reducing future war spending or unpaid for, but the bottom line is the same: We ought to act now. We should act now and put this flawed formula known as the SGR, which has produced Medicare migraines for frustrated providers and seniors alike, behind us.

Every single thing in the bill I offer today has strong bipartisan support, and it represents a compromise.

I know this isn't an easy vote for colleagues on either side of the aisle, but I submit that it sure means we will be able to accomplish what we were sent here to do—to find a way to do what is best for seniors and the doctors who care for them. With that clean slate—and I have enjoyed talking to the Presiding Officer about this because I think what this bill is all about is doing what is right for seniors, doing what is right for the doctors, setting in place a plan for the future that ensures seniors are going to get better care that in many instances will cost less. That is what I hope Senators will take home after we break tomorrow for the work period.

This is a chance to do what is best for seniors, what is best for doctors, and what is going to pay off for taxpayers in the long run.

Nobody wins with Medicare make believe. After these 16 patches, when we have the Wall Street Journal editors joining with seniors and providers and we have a bill that has strong bipartisan support, I think this is the kind of measure Senators ought to flock to.

I will close by saying we all know the public is frustrated with a fair amount of what happens in the Congress, and there is a fair level of disappointment. The Senator from North Carolina and I were talking about a variety of issues on this point this morning. But I look around this Chamber and I see Senators who have spent a significant amount of time in public life, and a number of colleagues who are on the floor, I am old enough to remember joining them in the other body before we came to the Senate, and we are here for a purpose. We are here to get things done. On this Medicare issue, which suffice it to say has been one of the most polarizing in the American public debate—in fact, I would venture to say that on the domestic side of the budget, there are few issues that have been

as divisive and polarizing as Medicare—this is an opportunity, colleagues, to check the partisanship at the door, come together, and set in place a new system of paying providers under Medicare that is going to produce better quality at lower costs. We ought to support it in a bipartisan manner.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The Senator from North Carolina.

AMENDMENT NO. 2821

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to call up Lee amendment No. 2821.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from North Carolina [Mr. BURR] for Mr. LEE, proposes an amendment numbered 2821.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To prohibit States from providing the Secretary with reports containing personally identifiable information)

On page 136, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

(e) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—Section 658K(a)(1) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858i(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(D) PROHIBITION.—Reports submitted to the Secretary under subparagraph (C) shall not contain individually identifiable information.''.

AMENDMENT NO. 2821, AS MODIFIED

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be modified with the technical correction which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the modification?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

On page 136, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

(e) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—Section 658K(a)(1) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858i(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(E) PROHIBITION.—Reports submitted to the Secretary under subparagraph (C) shall not contain individually identifiable information.''.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I believe this amendment is agreeable on both sides, and I know of no further debate on the amendment. I would ask for the question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there further debate?

If not, the question is on agreeing to the amendment, as modified.

The amendment (No. 2821), as modified, was agreed to.

Mr. BURR. I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 5 minutes.

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

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss one of the most concerning issues our country faces today, an issue that Chairman HARKIN particularly has been outspoken on, and that is the growing retirement crisis.

A couple weeks ago I chaired in the Finance Committee the first congressional hearing on the MyRA retirement plan for low- and middle-income workers that President Obama proposed in his 2014 State of the Union Address. We will explore some of the issues, especially the Harkin legislation, later. But I want to talk for a moment about that hearing.

We know for many Americans, the traditional three-legged retirement system—Social Security, defined pension benefit, and personal retirement savings—that three-legged stool is simply no longer working. For many, two of those legs are gone, and the third leg—the Social Security monthly payment for low-income workers—is, frankly, way too short.

We know that Social Security remains the safeguard of retirement security for working-class families. But, as I said, it was never meant to be the only method of saving for retirement.

As we emerge from the greatest recession since the Great Depression, the private retirement system is not working.

Over the last 30 years, the defined pension benefit has, for far too many people, disappeared. The new system of tax incentives for 401(k)s and IRAs only works if you are middle income, typically, or wealthier. The top fifth—the top quintile, if you will—of households hold three-quarters of all 401(k) and IRA assets. The average worker nearing retirement—believe this—has $12,000 in savings.

So the question our subcommittee asked was: What do we do?

One point of bipartisan agreement is that Social Security works. Witnesses from Vanguard to senior advocates agree on that point. We heard testimony from the left and from the right, from the private sector and from the Treasury Department. Everyone agreed that for low-income workers, Social Security is the most important and the most reliable way to guarantee a secure retirement. But it is not enough.

An upper income worker, once receiving Social Security, may get as much as $2,000 or more a month in Social Security earned benefits, while a low-income worker, who is used to receiving $9 or $10 or $11 an hour or less—even though working as many as 25 or 30 years—may get less than $1,000 a month in Social Security. That is the only wealth, that is the only income, so often, those in the bottom half have.

The only question, obviously, is whether the benefit is adequate. Too often it is not.

Two-thirds of low-income families are at risk of not having enough income to maintain anything close to their standard of living in retirement. Expanding Social Security could be the difference between a modest retirement—an earned modest retirement—and living in poverty.

The hearing discussed the administration's new MyRA accounts. ''MyRA'' stands for ''my retirement account''—a play, obviously, on the words of the IRA, the individual retirement account. It represents a small but important first step. Access to tax preferenced retirement accounts must not be something workers receive when they cross the threshold into the middle class but a tool that helps them start their journey into the middle class.

There is no easy fix to retirement savings. But in a system where we primarily administer our programs to encourage private retirement accounts through the Tax Code, we need to make sure the incentives are going to the people who need them.

So what we are doing through the Tax Code, as Senator CARDIN from Maryland, who has been a long-time advocate of stronger, better retirement security for seniors—and he attended our subcommittee hearing; he is a member of the Finance Committee—are the issues we need to work on.

When President Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act, he said: ''This law represents a cornerstone in a structure which is being built, but is by no means complete.''

The same could be said, maybe even more so, for our retirement system today. That structure is still being built. It is up to this body to ensure that it is built, that it does not collapse in the meantime, and that we can bring more retirement security to far more Americans who have worked their entire work lives.

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

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

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2818

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the Landrieu amendment No. 2818.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

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

The result was announced—yeas 98, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 74 Leg.]

YEAS—98

Alexander	Gillibrand	Murkowski
Ayotte	Graham	Murphy
Baldwin	Grassley	Murray
Barrasso	Hagan	Nelson
Begich	Harkin	Paul
Bennet	Hatch	Portman
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Pryor
Blunt	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Heller	Reid
Boozman	Hirono	Risch
Boxer	Hoeven	Roberts
Brown	Inhofe	Rockefeller
Burr	Isakson	Sanders
Cantwell	Johanns	Schatz
Cardin	Johnson (WI)	Schumer
Carper	Johnson (SD)	Scott
Casey	Kaine	Sessions
Chambliss	King	Shaheen
Coats	Kirk	Shelby
Cochran	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Landrieu	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Corker	Lee	Toomey
Cornyn	Levin	Udall (CO)
Crapo	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Cruz	Markey	Vitter
Donnelly	McCain	Walsh
Durbin	McCaskill	Warner
Enzi	McConnell	Warren
Feinstein	Menendez	Whitehouse
Fischer	Merkley	Wicker
Flake	Mikulski	Wyden
Franken	Moran	

NOT VOTING—2

Coburn Rubio

The amendment (No. 2818) was agreed to.

Mr. HARKIN. I move to reconsider the vote.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2813

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, we have no objections to this amendment. We agree to it and urge its adoption.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Landrieu-Grassley amendment No. 2813.

The amendment (No. 2813) was agreed to.

Mr. HARKIN. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2814

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the Landrieu-Blunt amendment No. 2814.

The amendment (No. 2814) was agreed to.

Mr. HARKIN. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2824

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the Bennet-Isakson amendment No. 2824.

The amendment (No. 2824) was agreed to.

Mr. HARKIN. I move to reconsider the vote and to lay that motion on the table.

The motion to lay on the table was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF HEATHER L. MACDOUGALL TO BE A MEMBER OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

NOMINATION OF FRANCE A. CORDOVA TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

NOMINATION OF JAMES H. SHELTON III TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

NOMINATION OF BRUCE HEYMAN TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO CANADA

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations en bloc, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Heather L. MacDougall, of Florida, to be a Member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission; France A. Cordova, of New Mexico, to be Director of the National Science Foundation; James H. Shelton III, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of Education; and Bruce Heyman, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Canada.

VOTE ON MACDOUGALL NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Heather L. MacDougall, of Florida, to be a Member of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON CORDOVA NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of France A. Cordova, of New Mexico, to be Director of the National Science Foundation?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON SHELTON NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of James H. Shelton III, of the District of Columbia, to be Deputy Secretary of Education?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON HEYMAN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Bruce Heyman, of Illinois, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Canada?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are made and laid upon the table, the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate will resume legislative session.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014—Continued

AMENDMENT NO. 2837

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I understand the Scott amendment No. 2837 and the Boxer-Burr amendment No. 2809 have been cleared on both sides of the aisle; I know of no further debate on either amendment, and I urge adoption of these two amendments.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Scott amendment No. 2837 is pending.

The question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2837) was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2809

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment 2809 is the pending amendment.

If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the amendment.

The amendment (No. 2809) was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senator from North Carolina.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, we have had a very productive day on the child care and development block grant bill, and we have processed a number of amendments, some by voice, some with record votes. All Members have had the opportunity to come to the floor during the day and offer their amendments, and we continue to have amendments that are either filed or talked about. It is still the intent of Senator HARKIN, Senator ALEXANDER, Senator MIKULSKI, and myself that we finish this bill tomorrow afternoon. We see no reason why we can't do it with the level of cooperation all Members have shown.

Let me try to sketch out for my colleagues what our intent will be. We intend hopefully to go to a period of morning business, a length to be determined by the leaders, when we conclude our remarks. At some point in the morning, probably 10:30, we would resume consideration of amendments and we would process those amendments until shortly before lunch. It is our hope Members would take the opportunity to file those amendments tonight so that our staffs can work with them to make sure as many amendments as possible can be adopted with the support of both sides of the aisle.

We certainly can't force everybody to do so, but I implore Members on both sides of the aisle, file those amendments tonight, work with our staffs.

They will be here as late as they need to be. By 10:30 tomorrow morning we should be able to move to amendments, have debate on those where there is additional debate needed; hopefully, start any votes by 12:15 and finish the amendment process before both sides break for lunch. It would be my hope we could come back right after lunch, with the leader agreements, and have passage on the child care and development block grant bill.

Let me just say, Mr. President, that I want to thank Chairman HARKIN, Ranking Member ALEXANDER and Senator MIKULSKI. I think we have gone into this and we have tried to urge our colleagues, if they can make this bill better, to come to the floor and to do that. I think we have seen, by the action of people who have done this in a responsible way, that we have worked in a bipartisan way to make sure we could present to the Members of the Senate amendments that didn't cause a great deal of concern, and, in fact, they did improve the bill.

So I encourage my colleagues to file those amendments tonight, to be prepared to finish this bill before the middle of the afternoon tomorrow, and we can expect to have a successful passage of this bill.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. HARKIN. First, Mr. President, I concur in everything the Senator from North Carolina just said. This is a very good bill. It is a great bill. The Senator from North Carolina has put a lot into this bill over the last couple of years, and we are close to seeing the finish line. So I hope Senators and their staffs who may not be present but who are watching will do just as the Senator suggested. If they have amendments, get them over to the floor tonight during morning business; we will take those up, our staffs can work those out, and, hopefully, we will be on track to finish the bill tomorrow.

Again, I thank the Senator from North Carolina for all the hard work he has put in over a long period of time.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider the Landrieu amendment No. 2818 be laid upon the table.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to a period of morning business until 7 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today in support of the bipartisan Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014. I thank Senator MIKULSKI for her great leadership, Senator BURR for his leadership, and Senators HARKIN and ALEXANDER. We have had a great afternoon.

We also had a number of people confirmed today, which I am very pleased about, including the Ambassador to Canada. I think it is pretty important we have an ambassador to Canada because Canada is our biggest trading partner. We haven't had one now for months, and this is a very good outcome.

But back to the bill. It has been almost 20 years since the Senate last reauthorized CCDBG. Since that time we have learned if we want strong communities, a robust workforce, and students who are ahead of the curve, we need to ensure that every child has access to high-quality childcare.

As the country's primary Federal childcare program, CCDBG provides millions of families with the assistance they need to ensure working parents can keep their jobs or finish schooling knowing their children are safe and receiving quality care. We know that a child's early years are critical to building a strong foundation for their lives. Up to 90 percent of brain development happens before age 5. Just think about that: 90 percent of brain development happens before age 5. That is why it is so important to invest in quality care and education. When we do, it pays off for the rest of us by giving us better informed citizens and a more productive workforce.

Investments in the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program also give parents the option of affordable childcare. Research indicates that higher childcare costs have a negative impact on a mother's employment because women are more likely to leave their jobs when childcare costs are high. That can have a lasting negative impact on families' finances and women's future earnings.

As the Senate chair of the Joint Economic Committee, I released a report last year that looked at the critical role mothers play in the financial well-being of their families. My report found that lower income families are especially dependent on the money earned by mothers who work outside the home. In families in the lowest 10 percent of the income distribution, mothers account for over half of family income. The high price of childcare these days—it averages over $14,000 each year for two children—means the child care and development block grant assistance makes a big difference between families rising into the middle class or falling further behind.

Working families across the country are counting on us to get this done. Since the child care and development block grant was last reauthorized in 1996, families have seen the cost of childcare increase while access to quality care has become more difficult to find.

This bipartisan legislation would provide the opportunity for Congress to make critical improvements to the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program to ensure that children are safe and healthy in their childcare setting, that families have access to quality programs, and that States have a coordinated system of early care and education for children from birth to age 13.

One of the primary updates in the 2014 reauthorization is the requirement that all childcare providers receiving this assistance must go through comprehensive background checks. It is unbelievable that currently only 13 States require comprehensive background checks for childcare providers. We have had a number of incidents in our State where children have had tragic injuries and tragic ends because of the lack of background checks. As a former prosecutor, I saw firsthand how abuse harmed young children, tore families apart, and challenged local law enforcement agencies, our court system, and our social service and health care providers. Our kids deserve better. We need to do everything we can to make sure people caring for our kids undergo comprehensive background checks before receiving child care and development block grants.

The bill also requires States to conduct regular health and safety inspections of the childcare settings so we can make sure kids are learning and developing in safe environments.

The legislation cuts redtape by giving families more flexibility around enrollment procedures.

These changes will not only strengthen the program's integrity but also improve transparency so that the 1.5 million children being served through this program every month get the best care possible.

Raising the next generation has always been a difficult job, and it has never been more expensive. The future of our Nation rests on making sure parents have the support they need to give their children a strong start.

I urge the Senate to reauthorize this bipartisan bill and ensure children and working families get the quality care and education they need to thrive. It is the best investment we can make.

I see the Senator from North Carolina Mr. BURR just came in. I thank him for his great work not only on this bill but also in allowing for this amendment process, which I believe is very important for the future of the Senate.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to talk about two amendments I will call up on S. 1086, the child care and development block grant bill. The first one I will speak to is amendment No.

2834, which Senator MURKOWSKI and I are offering in relation to tribal childcare facilities.

As my colleagues know, I recently took over as chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, and 2 weeks ago I held my first hearing. This hearing focused on early childhood development and education in Indian Country. This hearing was timely, as some of the testimony the committee received related to the child care and development block grant. At that hearing a childcare program director from the White Earth Nation—who is also the chair of the National Indian Child Care Association—testified about the needs of her program and the needs of all Indian childcare providers. One of the needs she highlighted was improving the condition of tribal childcare facilities in Indian Country.

According to the Administration for Children and Families, of the 260 Indian tribe or tribal organizations that receive CCDBG funds, only 14 of them constructed new tribal childcare facilities in the last 10 years.

In an effort to improve and replace facilities, my amendment allows tribes more flexibility in the use of their grant funds. Renovation and construction of tribal facilities is already an allowable activity under this legislation, but the law explicitly states that Indian tribes or tribal organizations cannot reduce services—even temporarily—to improve or replace their facilities.

This amendment allows the Secretary to grant a waiver to an Indian tribe or tribal organization, permitting them to temporarily reduce services if they can prove the outcome will improve capacity or improve services as a result of the construction. It is a simple, commonsense amendment that will improve the quality of life in Indian Country, and I urge its adoption when it comes up.

I will now speak to amendment No. 2835. Under current law, a parent who suffers the tragedy of the death of a child has to rely on their employer's compassion for time off to grieve. Many times this is not an issue. There are thousands of compassionate employers out there who give parents the space they need. But not everyone is so fortunate. Some folks who just aren't ready to come back after a few days end up having to choose between returning to work while struggling with the aftermath of their child's death or losing their job.

This amendment would fix the Family and Medical Leave Act to include the death of a child as a trigger for benefits provided under the FMLA. The FMLA currently allows parents to take time off to care for a child battling a serious health issue. But children between the ages of 1 and 14 are more than twice as likely to die suddenly from an accident than from cancer, flu, and pneumonia combined.

The FMLA protects parents who are caring for their children; it should support parents who are grieving for their children as well. This is a small amendment, but it will mean so much to parents who suffer the unimaginable loss of a child. I urge my colleagues to stand for compassion, and I urge adoption of this amendment when it is brought up.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I rise somewhat reluctantly today to speak about an intelligence committee matter.

Allegations in the past 24 hours have been discussed rampantly in the halls of Congress and in the press. Based on press reports today, yesterday, and even last week, allegations have been made regarding the Central Intelligence Agency's actions toward the committee, as well as staff and Members' actions on the Senate intelligence committee toward the CIA.

The reason I feel compelled to speak on this matter is the following: Although people speak as though we know all of the pertinent facts surrounding this matter, the truth is we do not. The Republican committee members on the Senate intelligence committee and staff were not involved in the underlying investigation of the detainee and interrogation report. We do not know the actual facts concerning the CIA's alleged actions or all of the specific details about the actions by the committee staff regarding the draft of what is now referred to as the ''Panetta internal review document.''

Both parties involved have made allegations against one another and have even speculated as to each other's actions, but there are still a lot of unanswered questions that must be addressed. No forensics have been run on the CIA computers—or, as my colleagues refer to them, ''the SSCI computers''—at the CIA facility to know what actually happened regarding the alleged CIA search or the circumstances under which the committee came into possession of the Panetta internal review document.

Given that both of these matters have now been referred to the Department of Justice, it may take us a while before any accurate factual findings can be reached and a satisfactory resolution of these matters can be achieved. It may even call for a special investigator to be named to review the entire factual situation. Eventually, we will get to the bottom of this, but today I cannot make a statement that will reflect what actually occurred and therefore what recommendations we ought to make as we move forward.

Right now our committee members are conducting an internal assessment of the facts and circumstances involved in both of these matters. This will be an ongoing process which should not be described or discussed in the public domain but, like all other intelligence committee matters, should remain within the purview of the confines of the intelligence committee.

Today I simply wanted everyone to know where I stand on this matter and how we need to get to the ground truth of these very important matters.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

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

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

(The remarks of Mr. CASEY are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, we know it is well past time—and that is an understatement—to take up the reauthorization of this important legislation, the Child Care and Development Block Grant Program, which has not been reauthorized since 1996. It is hard to comprehend that, but that is true.

In the nearly two decades since, our understanding of early childhood development and the importance of high-quality childcare in early learning has expanded dramatically. Investing in high-quality early learning opportunities, such as childcare and prekindergarten, sets children on the path to success.

I like to say if children learn more now, they will earn more later, and that is why there is a direct nexus with the quality of the childcare we provide. The quality of early learning connects directly with our economic growth.

Our gross domestic product—our future economic growth and success as a country—is substantially dependent on the quality of early learning and the quality of childcare. It is good we are focused in a bipartisan way on the childcare aspects of this challenge.

We must update the Federal standards that relate to childcare to ensure that the Federal Government is supporting high-quality childcare—not just any quality childcare—for low-income children.

The bill we are considering sets a new standard for childcare in America. It makes sure Federal dollars are going to providers who are committed to providing childcare that meets certain criteria, such as health and safety standards.

Many of these changes reflect proposals I put forth in previous Congresses to improve the child care and development block grant. The Starting Early Starting Right Act was legislation I introduced.

I am encouraged we are able to reach consensus on many of the provisions I supported in the past and that they are represented in this bill. I, and I know many others, would have liked to have gone further to provide more of an investment both by way of dollars and

more of an investment by way of quality, but these are significant changes and we should all support them.

In terms of the increase in incentives that I would hope we can do at a future date, I described them in this way: incentives for States to invest in quality ratings and improvement systems. We know a lot of acronyms. This is QRIS, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems, which encourages childcare providers to make continuous improvements in the care they provide and the facilities they use often through financial incentives, such as higher reimbursement rates, when a certain quality level is reached.

However, I still believe the bill we have in front of us represents a substantial and significant improvement over the current law. We owe our most vulnerable children nothing less.

For the first time we are requiring all States to develop a robust health and safety set of standards and to institute a consistent background check for childcare providers. We are requiring States to formally coordinate their early learning programs to improve service coordination and delivery. We are allowing children who qualify for a subsidy to receive 1 year of care before their eligibility is redetermined. This will help promote stability and continuity for the entire family and encourage the child to develop strong relationships with his or her teachers and peers in childcare.

Finally, we are increasing the investment in quality from the 4-percent quality set-aside per year—currently required in law—to 10-percent within 5 years, including a separate set-aside for infants and toddlers. Quality is a continuum and continual investment. It is not a one-time purchase. It is something we need to support and sustain.

This bill is about investing in our children's future and supporting working parents. I urge all of my colleagues to join us in supporting the CCBDG reauthorization—a nice acronym for a long bill.

I mentioned earlier that if children get quality early care and learning, they will learn more now and earn more later when they are in the workforce. There is no question about that. All the studies indicate that. We know that. There is no disagreement about that.

We also have to recognize that there are so many families—somewhere in the millions—that have two parents working, and we know the stress and challenge that creates. In addition, we have just come through the worst economic downturn since the 1930s. Climbing out of that hole and having all of the economic pressures on these families, they are often also heavily burdened or even crushed by the cost of childcare.

We have an opportunity with this legislation to move forward and make needed changes on issues, such as health and safety standards and making sure we are setting aside more dollars for infants and toddlers.

There are a whole range of actions we are taking, but we still have a ways to go to speak directly to the needs that working families have in terms of the cost of childcare and ensuring the kind of quality they have a right to expect.

Finally, on a related topic, we need to make sure we are making a national and substantial commitment to early learning. The President has talked about this issue. People from both parties and CEOs tell us about it all the time. We need to get together on these other issues even as we pass this bipartisan legislation.

I wish to commend the work of Senator HARKIN and Ranking Member ALEXANDER, who are working to get this done, and the good work over several years now done by Senator MIKULSKI and Senator BURR.

We need to get this done and then get to work on some of the childcare and early learning challenges our country faces and families are often burdened with.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

NEVADA SESQUICENTENNIAL

Mr. REID. Mr. President, throughout this year, my home State will celebrate the 150th anniversary of its path to Statehood, on October 31, 1864.

Next week, while I will be home visiting my family and constituents, the Battle Born State will celebrate the day that Congress passed and President Abraham Lincoln signed legislation paving the way for Nevada to become the 36th State. At that time Congress was in a rush to welcome Nevada into the Union. It was during the Civil War; it was raging.

The only other State admitted to the Union during the war was West Virginia, which seceded from Virginia to remain part of the Union in 1863.

Congress didn't want to wait until the next session to admit another new State—a new State that could swing the Presidential election in Lincoln's favor and provide crucial votes for the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery. Nevadans had already rejected one proposed State constitution, so there was no time to waste.

On March 21, 1864, in the waning hours of the 38th Congress, a law was passed allowing Nevada to enter the Union whenever voters finally passed and President Lincoln approved a State constitution.

It wasn't during the normal course of business, but this wasn't the normal course with the Civil War going on. Typically Congress would get the final word on admission of a new State to the Union.

But these, as I have indicated, were certainly not normal times. Even today we acknowledge Nevada's unique path to Statehood on our State flag with the words: ''Battle Born.''

Throughout this year, we will celebrate Nevada's 150th birthday with events in every corner of the State. From my hometown of Searchlight to Virginia City to Elko, there is a 150th anniversary event to match every interest.

Nevada is a very large State. Area wide it is the seventh largest in the country. It is a unique State with more mountains than any place other than Alaska. We have 314 separate mountain ranges. We have one mountain that is 14,000 feet high. We have 32 mountains over 11,000 feet high. We have wide-ranging land, and we have some of the coldest places in the Nation and some of the hottest places in the Nation.

We have all kinds of wildlife. Theodore Roosevelt created an antelope range that is large and sparsely populated. We have not only the antelope, we also have desert bighorn sheep. In Nevada we have mountain goats; we have almost 3 million acres of wilderness. It is a very beautiful State. It is more than the bright lights of Las Vegas, Reno, and Lake Tahoe—even though we are very proud of sharing the stewardship of Lake Tahoe with the State of California—as Mark Twain said: ''the fairest picture the whole earth affords.''

We will mark Nevada's second constitutional convention, the day Nevada voters finally approved its constitution and the day, Halloween, October 31, 1864, that Lincoln proclaimed Nevada's Statehood. The 150th anniversary of our admission to the Union provides a wonderful opportunity to study Nevada's history. It is also the birthday of my young brother, so it is easy to remember—admission day, Halloween, and my brother's birthday all occurred the same day.

It is also a chance to reflect on Nevada's unique pioneer spirit—a spirit that continues to make our State very special.

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, I rise to recognize the great State of Nevada, as we celebrate 150 years of statehood. It is a remarkable opportunity to speak on the floor of this Chamber about this milestone, given the role the Congress played in the formation of the Silver State. The movement to make the Nevada Territory a State began within the territory, but the first attempt to formulate a Constitution failed.

Shortly after, the 38th Congress passed an enabling act for Nevada statehood. Signed by President Abraham Lincoln on March 21, 1864, this bill

made it possible for Nevada to eventually adopt a State constitution. Lincoln proclaimed Nevada a State on October 31, 1864.

The guarantee of statehood was given to us by Abraham Lincoln, who, without assistance, would go on to pass the 13th amendment, win the Civil War, and heal our broken Nation.

Marking the 150th year of Nevada's statehood takes me back to Carson City when I was just 4 years old. It was Nevada's centennial celebration, the date was October 31, 1964. I remember being with my family, sitting on the lawn, listening to the Carson City Municipal Band lead the festivities at the State capitol.

During that same year, 1964, Lyndon Johnson was reelected over Barry Goldwater and would go on to declare a war on poverty. In 1964, race riots broke out in Harlem. Across the Nation, President Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law. The 24th amendment to abolish the use of poll taxes was ratified. In 1964, the Summer Olympics were held in Tokyo, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, which ultimately allowed for increased military action in Vietnam. The James Bond film ''Goldfinger'' began its run in the United States and ''Bewitched'' premiered on television.

So much has changed in these past 50 years, but the character of Nevada has not. From its first birthday to its 100th, to its 150th, Nevada continues to be shaped by its people, people who are entrepreneurial, fiercely independent, and as diverse as our terrain. We are molded by the grit, hard work, and pioneering spirit of individuals determined to succeed.

The list of men and women who have molded our State is long. Where some saw impossibility, a Nevada Senator by the name of Newlands saw opportunity. To this day, his legacy lives on in the hay, the cattle, and the very fields that were made possible by the waters he brought to this desert.

Standing among our Nation's great, frozen in bronze, greeting visitors to the Nation's Capitol is another Nevadan, Sarah Winnemucca. She, similar to many Nevadans, challenged the status quo. She refused to accept the injustices brought on her Native American brothers and sisters.

Instead of fighting with a weapon, she fought with her pen. Through her words, the plight of our fellow Americans living on reservations was heard.

Of course, in Nevada, Mark Twain was born. Samuel Clemens adopted the famous pen name while covering the news for the Enterprise in Virginia City. Twain wrote eloquently about Nevada, from the rough-and-tumble attitude of the Wild West to the beauty of Lake Tahoe, dubbing it ''surely the fairest picture that the whole earth affords.'' Any visitor to this pristine landscape would also agree.

More recently, I think of Paul Laxalt, the former Lieutenant Governor, Governor, and U.S. Senator from Nevada. Among other things, he was instrumental in preserving Lake Tahoe and establishing our State's first community colleges and our medical school; or former Representative Barbara Vucanovich, who will be recorded in the history books as the first woman to represent Nevada in the U.S. House of Representatives. This alone is a remarkable achievement, but the integrity and determination with which she fulfilled her duties makes her achievement even grander.

Former State Senator Bill Raggio also comes to mind. He was a true statesman and the longest serving member in the history of the Nevada State Senate. These individuals have left their mark, but it is the people of Nevada who have forged the Silver State.

During the formation of our State's constitution, Nevadans demanded that our State's mothers and sisters be heard. The women of Nevada were granted the voice of a vote before the 19th Amendment was ratified by our Nation. We helped pioneer the vote for all.

During World War II, when our brave soldiers fought for peace and prosperity, Nevadans who were not able to fight abroad brought forth minerals such as magnesium from the ground. Magnesium, harvested near the township of Henderson, was considered a miracle metal for the munitions and airport parts which would help lead to us victory.

The residents of Boulder City built the Hoover Dam, a government infrastructure project which holds back 26 million acre-feet of water. The dam was completed early and under budget. With an expected 2,000-year lifespan, the Hoover Dam supplies clean energy to the grid, water to thirsty cities across the Southwest, and protection to downstream communities.

Ever since we were borne into the battle to mend our broken Nation, Nevadans have been willing and able. Although our population is small, our caliber is high. From all walks of life, brave Nevadans have heard and responded to the call to arms. At Naval Air Station Fallon, we host the Navy's top gun school. The elite men and women of our Armed Forces who train here push the limit, compete, and set the tone for global air superiority.

Welcoming tourists from across the globe, farming, mining, engineering, ranching, and serving in the Armed Forces, these are just a few things we Nevadans do. And as our State motto goes, all of these are done ''all for our country.''

Recent times have been tough in Nevada, but our pioneer spirit lives on. We continue to move forward. We have seen the booms and now, more than most, we continue to feel the most recent bust. Like many in our great Nation, Nevadans have lost homes, livelihoods, and the promise of a steady paycheck, but this will not deter us. Our State is battle born. We will continue to fulfill our 150-year-old promise of being willing and able to give all for our country.

I am a proud Nevadan, and as the son of a auto mechanic from Carson City, it is a privilege to stand on this Senate floor to recognize our State's 150 years of Statehood.

Before I close, I thank Lieutenant Governor Brian Krolicki, chair of the Nevada Sesquicentennial Commission, for the hard work he has put into recognizing this important milestone. Over the course of this year, the commission has planned and overseen many events and activities, providing Nevadans an opportunity to reflect on where we have been and where we are going.

SYRIA

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise tonight to talk about Syria and the humanitarian crisis this conflict has created. This week we mark a very grim anniversary: the third anniversary of the beginning of the conflict in Syria. So we are entering our fourth year.

There is much to cover and talk about. I will be brief tonight, but it is important that we don't forget what is happening to the Syrian people and especially to the children in Syria.

Over the past 3 years the brutal Assad regime has unleashed a campaign of unspeakable violence against its own citizens, with 9.5 million people now needing humanitarian assistance in Syria. Syria's neighbors are overflowing with 2.5 million refugees. This week Amnesty International and Save The Children released reports that underscore the atrocities the Syrian people have suffered and continue to suffer. These reports describe the regime's use of starvation tactics against its own citizens: Syrian children dying from preventable diseases and newborns, newborn babies freezing to death in underequipped hospitals. UNICEF reported this week that Syria is now one of the most dangerous places on Earth to be a child.

These unspeakable horrors confirm my worst fear about the conflict: that the most vulnerable and innocent are at the center of President Assad's siege against his own people.

I want to share the story of a 10-year-old Syrian boy when he recounted his experience with the conflict, this 10-year-old boy in his account from Save The Children's 2012 report entitled ''Untold Atrocities, The Stories of Syria's Children.'' Here is one of the stories in his own words:

> When the shells started to fall I ran. I ran so fast. I ran and I cried at the same time. When we were being bombed we had nothing. No food, no water, no toys, nothing. There was noway to buy food—the markets and shops were bombed out. After that we came back home. To make our food last we ate just once a day. My father went without food for days because there wasn't enough. I remember watching him tie his stomach with a rope so he would not feel hungry. One day men with guns broke into our house. They pulled out our food, threw it on the floor, stamped on it, so it would be too dirty to eat. Then we had nothing at all.

That is the recollection of a 10-year-old boy in Syria. And you go through the report, the catalog, really, of misery that was compiled by Save the Children from young boys and young girls of all different ages and every one of them has a tale of horror just as he outlined. Some are worse and more graphic than what I read.

This most recent report by Save the Children is entitled ''A Devastating Toll,'' and it describes the impact this conflict has had on children in great detail.

I commend the report to my colleagues.

In an article in the New York Times, in this case by Nicholas Kristof, he said, ''Syria is today the world capital of human suffering.''

Anyone who knows the work done by Nicholas Kristof knows he has seen a lot of places in the world where there is terrible misery and suffering. So for him to say that is a substantial indication of how bad the conditions are in Syria. Of course, when he made that statement it was back in September, many months ago. As bad as it was then, it is even worse now.

So today I call on all Senators, both parties, and the international community to support the efforts to bring this terrible chapter in Syrian history to a close. Peace talks could be a way to end the conflict. However, I am disappointed that the talks this past month did not lead to any tangible progress. The Assad regime has refused to negotiate in good faith.

Diplomacy is part of the solution, but what we need now is to change the momentum on the ground. Peace talks and diplomacy are fine, but unless something changes on the ground, unless we can take some action or take a series of steps to affect what is happening on the ground, all the talks in the world will be to no avail.

The Assad regime and their supporters calculate that they can defeat the opposition and remain in power. The United States should be working with our international partners to tip the balance in favor of the opposition. If we do, not another round of talks will yield the same result: No change.

The international community took a good step in ushering in the passage of U.N. Security Resolution 2139 on February 22. With U.S. leadership, Russia and China—which have obstructed other such resolutions—finally joined the international community in demanding an end to attacks on civilians and that the Syrian regime facilitate humanitarian aid to the besieged areas.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 2129 also condemned detention of journalists. We do not talk enough about this issue. Both international and Syrian journalists have bravely gone into areas of Syria that many other noncombatants would not dare, and many have paid the ultimate price. So far 60 journalists have reportedly been killed inside Syria. These courageous individuals have given us a window into the devastation inside of Syria.

I know myself from reading news reports or columns by journalists in this country how much information we can glean from what is happening inside the country where very few people can go to get information. So we need to focus on that aspect of the problem in the crisis as well.

But we shouldn't allow this crisis to continue worsening before our eyes. We need to act. I have been working on a bipartisan basis to put legislation and legislative support behind efforts to bring this conflict to an end.

In 2012 I worked with Senator RUBIO to introduce S. Res. 370, which called for democratic change in Syria, and S. 3498, the Syrian Humanitarian Support and Democratic Transition Assistance Act of 2012. In 2013 I traveled to Turkey where I met with opposition political and military leaders to discuss the situation inside of Syria. They asked for aid to help build the capacity of the political opposition as well as support to the military opposition in the form of communications gear, night vision goggles, and bulletproof vests.

A year ago Senator RUBIO and I proudly introduced S. 617, Syria Democratic Transition Act of 2013. This bill would, among other things, first increase U.S. assistance to victims of the conflict, both inside of Syria and outside of the country; No. 2, support a political transition by authorizing bilateral assistance to build the capacity of the moderate political opposition to prepare for a transition; No. 3, provide nonlethal equipment to vetted elements of the armed opposition; and fourth, expand sanctions against the Central Bank of Syria and designated individuals, especially any foreign entities that continue to do business with the Assad regime.

After picking up 10 bipartisan cosponsors to our bill, we worked to ensure that the important aspects of S. 617 was incorporated into another bill, S. 960, the Syria Transition Support Act, which then passed the Foreign Relations Committee in a substantial bipartisan manner last year, last summer.

I sent a letter to Secretary Kerry earlier this year urging him to resume nonlethal aid in order to help bolster the opposition before the talks in Switzerland. I was pleased to see that aid resumed not long after I sent the letter. We know Senators KAINE and RUBIO are working on many of the principles that I and others have been pushing for the past 3 years, reiterating the need for unfettered international aid for those in need in Syria and the surrounding region, emphasizing the neutrality of medical professionals and aid providers working inside Syria. Their legislation would support civilians who have suffered during this conflict, particularly women and children. I commend Senators KAINE and RUBIO for their leadership on this resolution. I intend to support this resolution when it is introduced and I urge all my colleagues to do the same.

I believe we can agree on a bipartisan basis that this kind of horrific human suffering is both unconscionable and unacceptable, and we have a national security interest in ending this conflict and countering the influence of Iran and Hezbollah in the region. It is one of the reasons it is in our direct national security interests to make sure we play a substantial role in ending the conflict. Every day the conflict goes on the regime in Iran strengthens to export terrorism and all the trouble the regime imposes upon the region, and secondly, Hezbollah and other extremist elements are empowered the longer the conflict goes.

We need to send a clear message from the Senate that we support efforts to bring Assad's tyrannical rule to an end and to respond to this devastating humanitarian crisis which threatens to destabilize the region and scar a generation of young Syrians.

When we talk about this, we are talking now about millions of children—by one estimate 5.5 million children—being adversely impacted. Thousands—by one estimate more than 10,000—of those children have already been killed. And the ones who have not been killed have seen the kinds of horrors no human being should ever see, even as adults. It would be very difficult to recover from some of the horror and some of the trauma these children have seen. It will be with them for the rest of their lives. We have an obligation to do everything we can to provide pathways to help them, but also to change the dynamic on the battlefield so those children will never have to see this kind of horror again.

Before I wrap up this segment of my remarks, I do want to note that despite the challenge here, the dynamic on the ground that hasn't gone very well, the opposition and the extremist elements within the opposition make it very difficult for us to be helpful even when our government is trying.

The humanitarian crisis that I just outlined is substantial, and the refugee issue in the region is substantial. Just imagine this: In Lebanon alone there are almost 1 million refugees in a country that cannot handle that kind of number. In Jordan, the number is just below 600,000. Most people think the number is a lot higher than that in Jordan. Lebanon, as I said, is almost 1 million; Turkey is 600,000—that number may be low, as well; more than 224,000, by estimates, in Iraq; 134,000 in Egypt. These are the numbers of refugees in just those five countries. Millions of people are being impacted, millions more within the country. If you subtract the refugees who have left the country and subtract the numbers I talked about with regard to children, just the adults within Syria who have been affected are in the millions.

Despite all that horror I think it is important for us to point out that our government has helped enormously. The Obama administration deserves a lot of credit, commendation for what

they have done already. They get criticized a lot, but we should highlight some of the good things they have done. The humanitarian assistance provided by the administration, paid for by U.S. taxpayers, is substantial and should be noted. It is now more than $1.7 billion. No country comes even close when it comes to the support our taxpayers and our government have provided. About half of that $1.7 billion has been to help within the country. By one USAID estimate, about $878 million is for help within Syria. The balance of that, something on the order of a little more than $850 million, of course, is helping refugees in neighboring countries. So substantial help by the American people should be noted. I think we need to figure out ways to do more. There is probably not a lot of room for more dollars and humanitarian aid, but we should consider that if we can. But there are lots of ways we can help here without directly engaging any of our troops or any of our military might on the ground.

There are lots of ways to help and we urge the administration to keep focus on a new and more substantial strategy, which I know they have been working on. They should consult with Congress and work with us as we move forward.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID KESSLER

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, earlier this year, after 39 years of public service, most recently as the National Zoo's keeper for the Small Mammal House, David Kessler turned in his keys and turned toward retirement. He has dedicated two-thirds of his life to caring for the howler monkeys, lemurs, and shrews living at the zoo.

In addition to feeding the animals and cleaning out their enclosures, Kessler spent his days watching, closely observing any changes in appetite or behavior that might suggest something was amiss. He remembers the endless hours he spent with William, a gibbon, after William's traumatizing experience at the hospital that left him afraid of humans and ostracized from his parents. Kessler holds on to a photo of William sleeping on his shoulder.

At the zoo, it wasn't just about Kessler caring for the animals; it was about connecting with them. They kept him as much as he kept them. He admits he wouldn't be the same person if it weren't for the animals. Their connection has kept him in the moment and happy.

I was touched to read a moving profile of David's career and of his last day in the Small Mammal House. His love for the small mammals for which he cared is evident. Health may have rushed his retirement, but by any measure his was a career spent in service to some of the most interesting creatures visited at our Nation's zoo. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD this touching profile from the Washington Post of a career well worth celebrating.

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

[From the Washington Post, March 6, 2014]

NATIONAL ZOO'S LONGEST-SERVING KEEPER BIDS FAREWELL

(By Rachel Manteuffel)

On his last night as the longest-serving keeper at the National Zoo, David S. Kessler checks and rechecks the locks on the enclosures in the Small Mammal House. He collects his farewell gifts and mementos and softly narrates to himself what needs to be done. ''Okay, lights out here, good. Hi, babies!'' he says to Reuben and Jolla, the howler monkey couple. ''Aagh, g'night, sweetheart. Did I wake you up? I'm sorry.'' He checks the seven timers on the lights, saying ''timer'' aloud at each. He's not thinking, he says, about how this January night is the last time after 39 years, two-thirds of his life, at the zoo. Now Gus the rock hyrax—who looks like a four-pound guinea pig but is more closely related to the elephant—catches his attention in the dark. It's as if the little guy knows something is up.

Considering the personal magnitude of the occasion, everything is going fine as Kessler prepares to walk away from the animals who he says rescued him, who might just have saved his sanity.

''Gus is sticking his head out—'' Kessler notes, then stops. He sobs once, his knees buckle, and he drops face-down on the floor of his House.

Earlier in the day, Kessler talked about his career. ''I like to work with animals that nobody thinks about,'' he said. Small mammals, it's true, are not headliners. Hey, kids, let's go see the shrews! In the past few years, Kessler has been lavishing his attention on the naked mole rat, an animal that resembles a flaccid penis with buck teeth. He always has a favorite weirdo. He has been the red panda guy, the house shrew guy, the Prevost's squirrel guy and the moonrat guy. Moonrats have no natural predators, Kessler says with admiration and a little pride, because they smell so bad.

There aren't a lot of jobs like zookeeper. Technically, Kessler's job has been biologist, but the caretaking—the keeping—is what he loves best.

''It's the care of living things. To keep, that's a beautiful thing. The longer you watch an animal or a person just doing their thing, the more you feel connected to them.''

A keeper feeds the animals and mucks out their enclosures, but the real work is observation, watching their bodies and behavior closely for subtle changes that mean something is wrong. And figuring out how to fix it.

Take the lemurs, smallish primates with doglike faces, some of the most social creatures in the Small Mammal House. Cortes and Coronado are recent acquisitions—Kessler drove them down from the Bronx Zoo in his Honda Civic—who are being carefully phased in with Molly, who has been the sole lemur at the Small Mammal House since her mate died. The keepers noticed the new lemurs were keeping low to the ground, unlemurlike behavior. Lemurs are at home in treetops, and the damp ground was irritating one of Cortes's paws. Perhaps Molly was being territorial. They would wait and see, maybe give Molly more attention. And keep watching.

Kessler and his colleagues would eventually determine Molly wasn't behaving aggressively toward the other two lemurs. A volunteer noticed it was the rock hyraxes antagonizing Cortes and Coronado. The rock hyraxes were moved to a different exhibit and, voila, the lemurs returned to the trees.

Lemurs are comparatively easy to read. You can spend less than half an hour watching Molly and feel as if you almost understand her thought process. You can become so absorbed you forget who and what you are, and that you are watching. It can become like reading a novel, the closest humans can get to having someone else's consciousness for a change.

It took a year and a half in the reptile house, but eventually Kessler could tell when something was wrong with a snake.

He's about average height, and he has had a beard most of his 59 years, but not now. He wears khakis and polos to work, with big rubber boots, disposable gloves and face masks. Primates can pass each other disease easily, he says. A keeper's herpes cold sore can kill a gorilla.

In conversation, Kessler tosses out bits of philosophy, science, novels, plays—knowledge you should have, if you had time to read, and he acts as if you probably know them, too.

He knows each of the hundred-odd residents of the Small Mammal House by their six-digit reference number. He has also published or co-written about a dozen research papers. Written three unpublished novels. He once went on a radio show to compose sonnets on demand. He mentors high school students and oversees their research projects. Every year Kessler takes off work to see as many shows in the Capital Fringe Festival as possible, since they often run past midnight and his work would start at 6:30 a.m. He spends an hour a day on the treadmill. He lives in Silver Spring and has been married for 30 years—he still writes his wife, Patricia, sonnets. He smiles when he happens upon a picture of her unexpectedly. They have a grown son, Ben, who co-owns an urban farming company in Charlottesville.

When friends asked, he officiated their 2006 wedding, working with them to write a personalized service, complete with sermon. Kessler took lessons from an actor friend on how not to cry. He always cried at weddings but didn't want to distract while performing one. He was asked to officiate another wedding in Rockville, even though he was racing to New Jersey and back to be with his dying father. His father died. Kessler made the arrangements so his mother and sisters wouldn't have to, then drove from New Jersey to the rehearsal dinner that night. When another friend needed him to, he was the one to officially identify her husband's body.

For a while he fronted a calypso-reggae band. He is universally beloved among colleagues and friends—suspiciously so, if you are a person suspicious of that sort of thing.

Kessler's last ''Meet a Mammal'' demonstration for zoogoers, on his last day at work, was attended by Linda Hopkins, a zoo electrician who'd known him 11 years and brought him a bottle of wine, and Susie Kane, who had never met him, but she had heard he was leaving, and in 2005 he had kindly answered her e-mailed question about building a naked mole rat habitat for her dorm room.

In December, Scientific American declared the naked mole rat Vertebrate of the Year. He is a happy man who's leaving the job he loves.

He's retiring young because of his psoriatic arthritis. It's much better these days——he gets injections of monoclonal antibodies. But it is progressive. ''I only have so much health left,'' he says, and zookeeping is physically taxing. He wants to travel with his wife, and write.

A loved one once told him that he would probably be happier as a hermit. He wasn't insulted.

''I'm more comfortable by myself and with animals than I am with people,'' he says. ''I

don't feel like I fit around people.'' Around people, he is giving a sort of performance. ''But an honest performance.'' Sometimes he loves it, performing, fronting a band, officiating at weddings. ''There's tension, but fun tension, like scary movies. I like the attention and the tension.''

So ask to watch him work, ask him to ignore you, and it doesn't work. That's a private part of him, reserved for himself and the animals. He'll start offering you books or telling you stories, and if you patiently sit around, pretending to use a computer in his office until he forgets you're there, he will not forget you're there. He will grow slightly agitated and need some alone time with the lemurs after you're gone.

His last day is a whirl of well-wishers, friends, leftover food from the party the day before, paperwork, gifts, tears and hugs. ''I don't like to be touched,'' he says to one hugger, ''but being hugged is fine.''

He hadn't been assigned to do the lines that morning—the shift that starts before sunrise, when the animals get their breakfast and their enclosures are cleaned out. He had e-mails to read, but people kept coming by for hugs and predicting he'll be back. He says no, never coming back. He seems to mean it.

Even friends who aren't physically present are distracting him. ''Happy birthday to you,'' he sings into a friend's voice mail, gargling the last line. ''Happy Jimmy Page's birthday, happy your birthday, happy your aunt's birthday yesterday.'' He attends to the needs of the humans for hours, their need to say goodbye, to say they would miss him. He almost always has a specific memory or thought for each, as he thanks them and assures them he won't miss this place and, after some time, they won't miss him.

He's proudest of his work with William the gibbon in 1978. William was a juvenile living with his parents when he got stuck in the enclosure and broke his arm. He was in the hospital so long—so long in the company of humans—that his parents rejected him when he got back. And because his hospital experience was scary and painful, people now made William fearful and angry. He was kept out of the exhibit for a while, off by himself.

Kessler sat in his enclosure each day, doing nothing except being nonthreatening. No mask, no gloves. Back then, this was acceptable zookeeper behavior—interaction not initiated or welcomed by the animal.

William would brachiate around in the farthest corner from Kessler, swinging limb to limb, elaborately ignoring the 130-pound human in the room. Over the course of a week, William came closer and closer, until his feet would brush his keeper's head as he swung by. Eventually he would put his head on Kessler's sweatshirt and go to sleep. There's a picture with William's arms around Kessler's head.

One thing he will miss from the zoo: watching the howler monkeys eat. Jolla likes beets but not the squiggly end of the taproot. She will pick it up, put it down, eat something else, return as if to see if the bit she doesn't like is still there. Maybe it got better! You can learn so much about optimism from her, Kessler says. ''People tell me she's just stupid,'' he says, shaking his head at that human stupidity.

Twelve years ago, Kessler walked with a cane, couldn't turn his head and could sleep only an hour and a half at a time because of his arthritis.

Thirty-six years ago he called his psychiatrist to say he had everything ready to commit a tidy, no-fuss suicide, just a hose and towels in a car exhaust pipe. His doctor had him hospitalized for four days.

Then, at 27, he taught himself to be happy. ''You learn from evolution, from animals. If you have a strategy that doesn't work, change your strategy.''

His new strategy was to avoid introspection. Completely. ''Working with animals made me start thinking about other things more. And when I was able to start thinking about other animals more, I was able to include humans in that group.'' Understanding William the gibbon, for example, and building his trust, was a big ''breakthrough with myself.''

''The real change was Patricia,'' he says. ''But I probably couldn't be with her if I hadn't been working with animals.''

According to dominant psychology and philosophy, introspection is the key to living right. But Kessler's unexamined life is the only kind he wants to live.

For obvious reasons, it's difficult for him to explain how he stopped being introspective. Working with animals is one way, but there were others. When he worked alone off-exhibit, he narrated his novels in his head. He noticed that closing certain doors in the building was musical, producing two notes, a seventh interval: the first two notes of a song from ''West Side Story'': ''Somewhere.''

Sometimes he needs to go alone to see if Molly wants a belly rub. Lemurs and Reuben the howler are the only ones in the Small Mammal House to much enjoy the touch of a human. But lemurs are not pets. They did not evolve to be companions for humans, to cheer us up or give us something to love. Molly indicates if she wants a belly rub, not unlike a dog, and a keeper may administer it, but the belly rub is entirely for the animal. That's important to Kessler.

It turns out Molly wants a belly rub on Kessler's last day, after he has finally gotten rid of all the people and sneaks off to see her.

Afterward, he keeps putting off leaving, until his shift stretches to 11 hours. And because the rock hyraxes have been moved away from the lemurs they were scaring, here's Gus, too present-focused to understand ''goodbye'' but seeming to say goodbye, popping his head up, watching the keeper leave for the last time, and the keeper—finished with crying, hugs and goodbyes with people—goes down, face first.

Suzanne Hough, the volunteer coordinator, is leaving with him, and she joins him on the floor. ''I'm sorry, I'm sorry,'' he says. ''No. No, no, it's okay.''

After a moment, Hough speaks. ''The floor can be tricky this time of night,'' she says, generously. She helps him up. He's fine, as far as he lets anyone know.

Moments later he is calm again, and performing. ''Well, that was a surprise!'' he says breezily. Hough and Kessler walk out into the cold night.

Inside the House, the hundred-odd residents have no sense that their time as keepers of David S. Kessler has come to an end.

TRIBUTE TO KATHERINE PATERSON

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I come to the Senate floor today to talk about a treasured Vermont author, Katherine Paterson. Her award-winning prose has won alcolades near and far, but her writing has reached more than just those who have read her published words. In 2004, she started a letter exchange with an American soldier based in Afghanistan. Upon his return, she helped him launch his writing career.

Trent Reedy of the Iowa Army National Guard was enthralled with Paterson's master work, ''Bridge to Terabithia,'' while deployed to Farah, Afghanistan. Reedy's wife Amanda sent him the book, and he loved it so much that he read it in one sitting and sent a thank you note to the author.

Katherine's husband John, whom I knew as a gentle soul, sorted her mail and made sure that his wife saw the letter from Trent. A correspondence began between the two, and Trent finally revealed his intent to become a writer. Upon his return, Trent visited Katherine and John in Vermont and at Katherine's urging, and with her recommendation, studied writing at the Vermont College of Fine Arts and later wrote his first novel, ''Words in the Dust.''

As someone who considers Katherine and her late husband to be special friends, I was thrilled to read Sally Pollak's article in the Burlington Free Press, ''Soldier finds lifeline in letter exchange with Vermont author.'' In fact I was so pleased, I called Katherine the day the story was published.

In addition to being a Vermont treasure, Katherine is an acclaimed author whose stories will be read for generations. Marcelle and I have enjoyed them, our children have enjoyed them, and now our grandchildren enjoy her stories. Katherine's influence is also felt through the many writers she has mentored, including Trent Reedy.

In honor of Katherine Paterson, I ask that Sally Pollak's story from the February 23, 2014, edition of the Burlington Free Press be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Burlington Free Press, Feb. 23, 2014]

SOLDIER FINDS LIFELINE IN LETTER EXCHANGE WITH VERMONT AUTHOR

(By Sally Pollak)

While serving in Afghanistan Trent Reedy wrote Katherine Paterson to say thank you; the friendship that emerged changed his life.

The truck pulled into the U.S. Army base in Farah, Afghanistan, on another scorching desert day. This July, 2004, delivery promised exciting things: The cook was expecting a load of steak. He had rustled up some potatoes to serve with the meat.

The soldiers in the unit, housed in a stable with a well that often ran dry, were eager for a real meal. They'd been eating field rations called MREs, meals ready to eat. Yet when the cook opened the coveted steak he almost vomited. The meat had gone rancid en route, recalled Trent Reedy, a soldier in the unit. The meal was scrapped.

The truck also carried the mail. In it was a package for Reedy, sent by his wife in Iowa. She had mailed him a book by Katherine Paterson, ''Bridge to Terabithia.''

Paterson, who lives in Barre, is an acclaimed novelist who writes books for children and teenagers. She is a former National Ambassador for Young People's Literature whose honors include two National Book Awards and two Newbery Medals, the first for ''Bridge to Terabithia,'' published in 1977.

Reedy's wife, Amanda, read ''Bridge to Terabithia'' in sixth grade. She sent her husband the book after he mentioned to her that the stories he was thinking about concerned young people. Reedy had never read a Paterson book.

The day it arrived at the army base, he read ''Bridge to Terabithia'' in one sitting. It

would become a kind of lifeline for a frightened young man in a faraway place with dreams of writing. Reedy read Paterson's book in the place that would be the setting for his first novel. ''Bridge to Terabithia'' was also the starting point of a friendship between Reedy and Paterson.

''It was amazing,'' Reedy said the other day by telephone from his home in Spokane, Wash. ''I needed that reminder that there was still hope and still beauty in the world. At that time in my life there was none. There was nothing except guns and fear. I was really not at all sure that I was ever going to get out of that place.

''This book gave me a little bit of beauty at that time, and I needed it. Not the way I need a new app for my iPad. I needed it to keep my soul alive.''

EVERYTHING WAS DIFFERENT

Reedy, 35, was an English major at the University of Iowa when he enlisted in the Iowa Army National Guard. Clinton was president. Reedy never imagined he'd be deployed to fight in a war. He had graduated from college and was working two jobs: substitute teacher and monitoring a security camera at a store.

Ten years ago, on a shift at his security job, Reedy got a phone call from his sergeant.

''Stampede,'' the commanding officer said, using the code word that signaled the guard soldiers were activated for war, Reedy said.

''With one phone call, everything was different,'' he said.

After basic training at Fort Hood, Texas, Reedy was sent to western Afghanistan. Paterson's book reached him about six months after the word ''stampede'' altered his life. The day ''Bridge to Terabithia'' arrived, Reedy had a rare break from his three-part routine: the unit's mission (providing security for reconstruction efforts), guard duty, sleep. He read the book.

''Bridge to Terabithia'' is about two friends—a boy and a girl—who create an imaginary forest world where they play together and share adventures. The world is shattered by an accident: the girl drowns in the river the friends cross by rope swing to get to Terabithia. Paterson wrote the book after her son David's close friend was killed by lightning when the children were eight.

After reading the book, even as he carried his loaded M16 ''scanning my sector to make sure there weren't any hostiles in the area,'' all he could think about was Paterson's novel.

''I thought maybe I can keep going if I remember kids are still having friendships,'' he said. ''And the adventures of growing up.''

On Aug. 1, 2004, from Farah City, Afghanistan, Reedy wrote Paterson a letter. He sent it through her publisher—unsure if it would reach her. The letter begins with an apology that he didn't type it. Reedy explains that he is writing from Afghanistan, where he is on a mission ''in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.''

He thanks Paterson for a book that ''mesmerized'' him.

''You wrote an absolutely beautiful novel and I, like Jessie Aarons, fell in love with Leslie Burke,'' Reedy wrote, referring to characters in Paterson's book. '' . . . Maybe it was because she was a spark of beauty in a land and a war where beauty is of so little importance.''

In Vermont, where Paterson moved with her family 28 years ago, Reedy's letter made its way to her Barre home. It arrived in a batch of mail sent from her publisher. Paterson, 81, estimates she gets hundreds of letters a year, many from students who are encouraged by their teachers to write.

(Paterson described a humorous note: ''You're the best writer in the world,'' the student wrote. ''Sometime I'm going to read one of your books.'')

A WRITER ON MY HANDS

Paterson was married for 51 years to John Paterson, a pastor who died in September. They raised four children together, and have seven grandchildren. After John Paterson's retirement in 1995 from the First Presbyterian Church in Barre, he took up the practice of reading Katherine Paterson's mail. Each year, he passed on to Katherine Paterson a handful of letters among the hundreds he read. John Paterson selected Reedy's letter and gave it to his wife.

''You just read it and weep,'' Katherine Paterson said. ''And you think this poor, lonely kid out there, not knowing what was going to happen to him.''

She was struck by another aspect of his letter: ''By the time I finished that letter,'' Paterson said, ''I knew I had a writer on my hands.''

The two became pen pals, a friendship whose beginnings remain a source of happy amazement for Reedy.

''I didn't need to hear back,'' Reedy said. ''I just wanted to thank her for letting me keep going. And I thought she should know that what she's doing is really important.''

Yet he received a response in October, 2004.

''She talked about how special it feels for a reader to appreciate this story she had written that seemed, at the time of her writing it, to be almost too personal to share,'' Reedy recalled.

The next month, on leave in Iowa, Reedy bought all the Katherine Paterson books he could find and brought them back to Afghanistan with him.

''I read those and loved them,'' he said. ''There were some Afghans who were learning English, and I passed along the books to them and talked about how much I enjoyed her books.''

What Reedy initially kept to himself in his correspondence with Paterson was that he aspired to be a writer. He decided to share this when it occurred to him he might not make it home alive. But he never sent her any writing (apart from the letters), mindful of imposing on her.

Reedy did seek Katherine Paterson's advice about graduate writing programs, and she recommended Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier. Paterson is a trustee of the college, whose low-residency programs include children's and adult literature.

''I said 'impose,'" Paterson recalled. '' 'Plenty of people impose on me that I don't like nearly as much as I like you.' ''

Based on his letters, Paterson offered to write a letter of recommendation for Reedy. He accepted only after a letter he expected fell through, she said.

Reedy was accepted at Vermont College of Fine Arts, the only MFA program he applied to. It was there that he wrote the manuscript for his first novel, ''Words in the Dust.'' The book, published by Arthur A. Levine Books, tells the story of an Afghan girl and her family. It concerns the girl's love for words; and her search for a connection to her dead mother, and for beauty in a place where it's not so easy to find that.

Reedy's story was inspired, in part, by a girl he met in Afghanistan. Like the character in the novel he would write, the child had a cleft lip. Soldiers in Reedy's unit pooled their money to pay the girl's transportation to a hospital, where a U.S. Army doctor performed surgery to repair her face.

''She faced this whole thing with this wonderful sort of quiet courage, this incredible dignity,'' Reedy recalled. ''I promised her that I would do whatever I could to tell her story. She couldn't understand me, but that's what I told her. In the army, we have to keep our promises, so you don't make many. I think if I hadn't made that promise, I wouldn't have been able to stick through to the end to write that book.''

He was also encouraged by Katherine Paterson to continue writing the book. Her support came amid concerns about cross-cultural writing: a white man from Iowa writing a novel about a disfigured girl in war-torn Afghanistan.

''I asked her if this made any sense, and if she thought it was a good idea to write this,'' Reedy said. ''And she said, 'Well, I think you should try.' And that was all the permission I needed.''

Paterson, who was born in China, has written books set in Japan and China. The notion that a writer can't write about a foreign culture, its people and places, essentially says imagination is worthless, she said.

''Ideally, she could write her own story,'' Paterson said of Reedy's protagonist. ''But she can't yet. And somebody needs to tell it for her. And I do believe in the power of imagination. Tolstoy can write about women very well, and he has never been one.''

TO BE A WRITER

Reedy's book, with an introduction by Katherine Paterson, was published three years ago. He dedicated it to Paterson and his father.

''I loved the book,'' she said. ''And if my name was going to call attention to it and my name was going to help promote it, I'd write an introduction.''

In her introduction, Paterson wrote in part: ''I am profoundly grateful for an introduction to a land and culture that are foreign to me through this beautiful and often heartbreaking tale of one strong and compassionate girl. She will live on in my heart and, I feel sure, the heart of every reader of this fine book.''

Before his first trip to Vermont, Reedy wrote once more to Katherine Paterson. He said he'd be honored, should he be accepted to Vermont College, to buy her a cup of coffee. Sure, she said, but Paterson also had an idea: Why don't you come and stay at our house the night before your residency begins?

In July, 2006, Katherine Paterson ''and Mr. Paterson,'' to use Reedy's words, picked him up at the airport in Burlington and drove him to their Barre home.

He was very nervous about meeting Katherine Paterson, Reedy said, expecting her to show up in an expensive car and drive him to her rich mansion. But he found that Paterson, ''arguably the most successful middle-school author who is really around,'' drives a regular car and lives in a ''normal house.''

The MFA program at Vermont College ''gave me my dream,'' Reedy said. Yet Katherine Paterson taught him what it means to be a writer.

''Nobody has taught me more about how to be the kind of writer I want to be than Katherine Paterson has,'' Reedy said. ''No one has taught me more about how to live as a writer. She has, I think, modeled the need for humility and generosity.''

Once, feeling he didn't belong at Vermont College of Fine Arts and that he was ''hopelessly outclassed,'' Reedy conveyed this in a letter to Katherine Paterson. He wanted to steal lines from Emily Dickinson and walk around campus saying: ''I'm nobody. Who are you?''

Paterson wrote back that she, too, is nobody. If she ever forgets that, she's in big trouble.

VERMONT COFFEE COMPANY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Vermont is known for its small and large businesses alike. Vermonters take pride in

buying locally, and as a result, businesses like the Vermont Coffee Company have been able to expand and become forces in their respective industries.

When Paul Ralston started the Vermont Coffee Company over 30 years ago in the small town of Middlebury, VT, he did so based on the belief that coffee creates community. Today, he continues his commitment to a high-quality farmer-friendly coffee blend by using only fair trade, certified organic coffee beans from around the world.

Paul's passion for coffee has created an opportunity for him to forge his own path to success, and he has expanded Vermont Coffee Company's distribution to retail outlets throughout the Northeast and along the Atlantic coast. His business continues to expand, and his success is just one hallmark of the respected Vermont Brand. I congratulate his success, and I ask that the text of an article appearing in the Burlington Free Press on February 20, 2014, about his success be printed in for the RECORD.

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

[From the Burlington Free Press, Feb. 20, 2014]

MIDDLEBURY COFFEE ROASTER STILL GROWING AFTER 30 YEARS

(By Melissa Pasanen)

MIDDLEBURY, VT.—Vermont Coffee Company in Middlebury was ahead of the curve when it started roasting organic, fair trade beans 30 years ago. Its continued success is based on a simple philosophy.

In the front hall of Vermont Coffee Company's offices and production facility, dozens of photos of happy people, some with coffee cups in hand, smile down from the wall.

In keeping with the company's longtime tagline—''Coffee roasted for friends''—these are not just customers, founder-owner Paul Ralston clarified on a recent tour: They are friends.

''Before there was Facebook,'' Ralston, 61, said. ''We had our friends' wall.''

Ralston has always been a little ahead of the curve, since his first foray into roasting coffee beans some 30 years ago as a tiny bakery-based operation.

There have also been plenty of curves in the road he has traveled since then, but this year Ralston expects Vermont Coffee Company to purchase half a million pounds of green coffee beans, which will be roasted in its recently doubled 15,000-square-foot facility and shipped to accounts ranging from a small, highly regarded group of New York City coffee shops to Costco.

COFFEE CULTURE

It was during his ownership of Bristol Bakery from 1977 to 1983 that Ralston first stumbled upon the smoky and aromatic process of coffee-roasting in Manhattan's Bowery neighborhood while shopping for used bakery equipment. The smells conjured up memories of the strong espresso his Italian grandmother carefully brewed every Sunday when he was a child.

When he came back to Bristol, Ralston serendipitously found a classic turn-of-the-20th-century roaster, installed it in the bakery's front window and began roasting batches of green coffee beans well before the trend of small, local coffee roasters swept the country.

After selling the bakery, Ralston returned to school at Burlington's Trinity College to study business administration and planned to pay some of his tuition bills by running a Church Street espresso cart. But Starbucks was just opening its first Seattle coffeehouse and most people didn't know what to make of his cart. ''It was a huge flop,'' he said ruefully.

More than a decade went by, during which Ralston spent time in the San Francisco Bay area working in nonprofit arts management and appreciating the region's vibrant cafe culture before he and his wife, Deb Gwinn, returned to Vermont where he helped grow the cosmetics and skincare company Autumn Harp to $6 million in annual sales. That led to a job with The Body Shop in England where, he noted, ''There was a coffee drought, so I drank tea.''

BROWN-BAGGING IT

In 1997, Ralston and Gwinn returned again to Vermont and to the antique Royal Roaster #4, which had been gathering dust in their Bristol garage. ''I hooked it up in the garage and started roasting and taking the coffee to gatherings for feedback,'' Ralston said. As he developed his new business idea over the next few years, he kept things simple, both by design and by default.

Like back in the Bristol Bakery days, Vermont Coffee Company used brown paper lunch bags to package the coffee and a friend made a rubber stamp to label the bags. ''The brown bag was the starting principal,'' Ralston said. ''When you would get something fresh and from a local shop, there wouldn't be a lot of packaging.''

''We started with just dark and decaf,'' he said. ''What else do you need?'' And the coffee was available only as whole bean. ''We refuse to grind coffee. As soon as you grind it you start the staling process,'' Ralston explained.

Ralston's approach was also influenced strongly by his former boss, Body Shop founder, Anita Roddick, who he described as ''a pioneer in trade, not aid,'' cultivating mutually beneficial trade relationships with developing countries and communities to help them become self-sufficient rather than simply providing financial or other aid. When he first told Roddick he was thinking of getting back into coffee, he recalled that she said to him, ''Your coffee should be 100 percent organic and 100 percent fair trade.'' There wasn't a brand like that at the time, ''and it turned out there was a good reason for that,'' Ralston said. ''Everyone thought I was nuts. At the time, organic was just gnarly vegetables.''

WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

Count Vermont coffee expert Dan Cox among those who thought Ralston was a little nuts. Cox had been the first full-time employee of what was then Green Mountain Coffee Roasters. He worked there for a dozen years before he founded his own Burlington-based coffee-testing business, Coffee Enterprises, which does analysis for many major national coffee companies. ''Paul came to me and said, I want to learn everything about roasting,''' Cox recalled. ''He told me he wanted to be like Peet's [a leading San Francisco Bay area coffee roaster], which is like the Guinness of coffee. I said, This isn't the Bay area. The East Coast is not into dark roast. Like with Guinness, for every customer you turn on, you'll turn four off.'''

In addition, Cox remembers Ralston outlining his ''folksy'' marketing plan with the brown bags and emphasis on selling to friends. ''I said, That's a little far-fetched, pal.' And he said, That's all I've got.'''

Ralston spent six months learning how to evaluate green coffee beans, blend, roast and control quality and despite Cox's initial concerns, he carved out a niche and grew steadily. ''He was still there in five years and then another five,'' Cox said. ''He was very savvy, always asking for a better way to do something . . . and he has stayed true to his style. His packaging is still relatively unsophisticated but it works for him. He makes a respectable coffee and a pretty darn good decaf.''

A few other factors worked in Ralston's favor, Cox added: ''Number one, he had a passion for it, and number two, nobody really came right after him. He had a window of opportunity that doesn't exist today.''

SOLID FOCUS

As Cox noted, the competitive frame is very different today with new micro-roasters popping up regularly, but Ralston has stayed focused on his initial vision.

Since its official launch in 2001, Vermont Coffee Company has expanded to retail outlets all over Vermont, as well as New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire with distribution growing at a healthy clip around the Northeast and down the Atlantic coast. The company has about 23 employees, about half of those full-time and many part-time by choice, older and partly retired or younger with children. ''Part of our business model is a flexible workforce,'' Ralston explained.

Ralston, who is sole owner, would not share sales figures but Vermont Coffee Company projects 20 percent growth in 2014. The flagship line of retail packaged whole beans remains simple and straightforward in its descriptors: Dark, Medium, Mild and Decaf. The down-to-earth brown bag packaging remains, although it takes the form of a brown box for Costco.

With the exception of one line from the Dominican Republic, rather than emphasizing single-sourced coffees from specific regions like many other small roasters, Vermont Coffee Company has always led with its blends.

''We are blenders. There's nothing magical about our beans,'' said Ralston. ''The goal is to keep our blends tasting the same, month to month, year to year.''

Vermont Coffee Company buys certified organic beans following principles set by the International Fair Trade Federation, Ralston said. The annual coffee harvest occurs at different times in different climates and over a year beans could be sourced from Ethiopia, Indonesia, Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala and Nicaragua, among other countries.

The beans are stacked high in burlap bags in a large storage room in Middlebury all tagged with their country, producer, and lot number. As he demonstrated how the beans are pulled for evaluation through a long hollow spiked tool that can dig deep into each bag, Ralston explained how different beans contribute to the overall blend. Coffee from Guatemala, for example, he said, ''We call them our spice beans. They add fruity and floral notes.''

The company's modest marketing budget still emphasizes grassroots relationship-building (now via social media), coffee sampling and offering loyal customers Vermont Coffee Company merchandise such as t-shirts and mugs for returning proof-of-purchases, which they do by weaving strips of brown bags into quilts, folding them into origami and even, in one case, using them to craft a collage of Johnny Cash drinking coffee ? black, of course.

Another thing that has not changed, Ralston noted with a smile: ''We always smell like coffee. When we go to the bank, they know who we are . . . It's a sensory business. We're in it for what it smells and tastes like.''

SLOW ROAST, SLOW GROWTH

Changes have come gradually, many in the form of process improvements such as the

adoption of the Japanese production scheduling system, Kanban; new pieces of equipment to mechanize jobs previously done by hand like bag-folding; and increased roasting capacity.

In the roasting room recently, a brand new, shiny stainless steel roaster with capacity of 150 pounds was in the process of being installed. It cost about $350,000 to purchase and install and would double Vermont Coffee Company's roasting capacity, Ralston said.

''The thing that makes it big, bold coffee is how we roast it,'' Ralston explained, pausing in front of one of the company's two smaller roasters where a small circular window gave a peek into the pre-roasted, dull grey-green beans while the glossy dark brown, roasted beans swirled below. Vermont Coffee Company roasts its beans about twice as long as many other larger roasters, Ralston said. He believes the longer, slower roast is key to building rounded flavors, similar to slowly caramelized onions or the depth of a long-cooked Cajun or Creole roux sauce base. ''It's a long, slow caramelizing roast,'' he said, ''which results in coffee with more body and sweeter, chocolate, caramel notes and a smoky tang and lower acidity.''

With a similar careful approach, Ralston has planned and budgeted for growth. Over his varied career, Ralston said, ''I've made all the mistakes you can make.'' He has seen firsthand, he said, that ''growth offers new ways to screw up.''

''We follow a model called bootstrapping,'' he said. ''We use yesterday's cash flow to finance growth. We're not extravagant.'' The company's credit line, he said, usually has a zero balance. An additional challenge these past four years has been Ralston's commitment to the Vermont legislature to which he was elected in November of 2010. He ran, he said, because ''I think there is a need for more people with active business experience in the legislature.''

He feels good about what he has accomplished there, he said, but it's been ''very hard'' balancing the four-month, four-day-a-week commitment with running an actively growing business. ''I think we would be further ahead if I hadn't done it,'' he said.

Looking ahead 15 years, Ralston said with a smile, ''I hope to still be grooving on coffee.'' He also hopes to be able to spend more time ''at origin,'' in countries where coffee is grown. ''It happens to be warmer than here,'' he added.

At home in Vermont, Ralston imagines a slightly bigger office ''with a wood-burning stove, a couch and a bigger coffee table where friends will come by to visit and sit to have a coffee.''

TRIBUTE TO BOB KLEIN

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the more than three decades of contributions by Bob Klein, one of the greatest conservationists in Vermont history, on the occasion of his retirement after 35 years as State Director of the Vermont Nature Conservancy.

Bob Klein is the founding Director of the Vermont Nature Conservancy, and under his guidance, its mission has been to protect Vermont's unique and rare landscapes, important wildlife habitat and biodiversity. Parcels are selected for their natural attributes, not necessarily for size, and in total, the Vermont Nature Conservancy has helped to conserve an incredible 188,000 acres during Bob's tenure. I followed his example, and one of my priorities through my work in the Senate has been to add approximately 200,000 acres to the Green Mountain National Forest. Bob has accomplished this scale of conservation within the framework of a relatively small private organization.

The Vermont Nature Conservancy has transferred most of the conserved land to the State and other land managers, while retaining ownership of the gems, to ensure their careful stewardship. These parcels included 55 natural areas dispersed across the State and open to visitors and naturalists. Bob has guided the Nature Conservancy in protecting forever iconic Vermont landscapes such as Camel's Hump, Hunger Mountain, Shelburne Pond, Alburgh Dunes, the Maidstone Bends of the Connecticut River and the Green River Reservoir.

Bob's contributions to conservation go well beyond lands that the Nature Conservancy has purchased. His leadership within the State was instrumental in the 132,000 acre Champion Lands conservation project when he helped bring together the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Vermont legislature and multiple private partners. At the Nature Conservancy, Bob has carefully assembled a team of conservation biologists, geographers and naturalists whose work has transformed conservation thought and practice. Vermont State agencies, recreational trails organizations, Federal agencies and private developers look first to the Nature Conservancy when seeking a better understanding of Vermont's ecosystems and how to protect them.

Other Nature Conservancy Chapters across the United States have been modeled on the Vermont office that Bob created. Bob's patient, generous and kind work with members and the general public is reflected in the fact that the Vermont has, by far, the highest per-capita Nature Conservancy membership of any State. I have often looked to Bob for advice on national conservation policy and he has led national Nature Conservancy visits to Washington, D.C.

Bob is retiring as the State Director of the Vermont Nature Conservancy but I know that he will continue to pursue his passions of botany, photography and exploration of nature. Bob's photographs have graced national publications and gallery walls. I will continue to look to Bob as an advisor on conservation policy and wish him all the best as he begins this new chapter.

TRIBUTE TO AUGUST SCHAEFER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, on February 28, 2014, August Schaefer, better known as Gus, stepped down from his post as chief safety officer of Underwriters Laboratories, after dedicating 41 years to the company.

Underwriters Laboratories is an independent safety certification organization that tests products, conducts factory inspections, and writes standards for safety. Gus has served in many leadership roles during his time at UL, but in all capacities he has been dedicated to promoting public safety.

Under his leadership, UL launched the Firefighter Safety Research Institute which works to provide first responders and firefighters with additional information on burning buildings and the behavior of specific materials in fires.

In 2012, Mr. Schaefer shared his expertise on the safety and effectiveness of flame retardant chemicals as he testified before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government. His testimony on the effectiveness of flame retardant chemicals and furniture flammability standards was a significant contribution to the hearing.

Mr. Schaefer also worked to have UL, as part of a partnership with Disney, bring safety education campaigns to children all over the world through the Safety Smart Ambassador Program. The program's video campaign educates children on fire safety, personal safety, water safety, health, environmental protection, and online safety.

UL, under his guidance, expanded its operations overseas. In response to a growing number of imports, UL has increased its presence in Asia, where it tests products intended for consumers in the United States. UL also has expanded its safety outreach to India, establishing an annual Road Safety Council where fire officials work to solve challenges in a developing nation.

Mr. Schaefer's service in Illinois is felt well beyond product safety and testing. Under his leadership, UL established annual Living the Mission Celebrations, which encourage UL staff to spend a day volunteering in the community.

Gus Schaefer's leadership at UL has made the world a better—and safer—place. When we use products approved by Underwriters Labs, we thank Gus Schaefer. I thank him for his many years of service and wish him the best in his retirement.

NATIONAL YOUTH SYNTHETIC DRUG AWARENESS WEEK

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join Senator KLOBUCHAR in cosponsoring a resolution designating the week of March 9, 2014, as National Youth Synthetic Drug Awareness Week. The abuse of synthetic drugs has grown rapidly in a very short amount of time. Calls into poison control centers concerning synthetic marijuana, also known as ''K2,'' doubled between 2010 and 2011 and remained elevated throughout 2012. Emergency room visits connected to synthetic marijuana use more than doubled, to 28,000 visits, from 2010 to 2011. In addition, other synthetic drugs commonly known as ''bath salts'' produced over 22,000 emergency room admissions.

The serious symptoms associated with synthetic drug use range from

rapid heart rate, psychosis, and agitation which may lead to suicide, cardiac arrest, or organ failure. In 2010, a constituent of mine named David Rozga committed suicide shortly after ingesting ''K2'' with his friends. After smoking the drug, David became highly agitated. His friends calmed him down, and he decided to go home. Not long afterward, however, he committed suicide. David's death was one of the first in the United States attributed to synthetic drug use.

I worked with Senators KLOBUCHAR, SCHUMER, and FEINSTEIN, along with many others, to place many of these terrible drugs on the list of Schedule I controlled substances. I am grateful that the Senate and the House worked together to pass the Synthetic Drug Abuse Prevention Act of 2012. Our efforts were an important step in allowing the Drug Enforcement Administration to begin enforcement actions against those who are poisoning our communities.

However, new synthetic drugs have emerged since the passage of that law. In fact, the Drug Enforcement Administration has moved to administratively place an additional 17 chemical compounds on the list of schedule I narcotics in recent months. Included among these drugs is a compound called 5F-PB–22, which was blamed for the deaths of three young Iowans last year. Moreover, in just the past few days, police in Iowa have arrested six people and raided multiple stores in the Des Moines area for selling synthetic drugs. These tragic deaths and arrests of those pushing these substances underscore the ongoing need to raise awareness of these deadly drugs.

The good news is that people, including in my home State of Iowa, are fighting back against the scourge of synthetic drugs. The Rozga family has been active in sharing David's story. They have also started a Web site, K2drugfacts.com, which creates a forum for other parents, friends, and people who have survived terrifying experiences with synthetic drugs to share their stories and spread the word that these drugs are destructive. Other anti-drug organizations and coalitions are raising public awareness in Iowa. For example, a local community group in Johnson County, Iowa called Iowans Against Synthetics has raised synthetic drug awareness throughout that county.

The National Youth Synthetic Drug Awareness Week resolution encourages other individuals and organizations throughout the country to continue their efforts to raise awareness about the deadliness of these drugs. I urge all my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

CONGRATULATING CONNOR PERKINS

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Connor Perkins on obtaining one of the Boy Scouts of America's highest ranks of Eagle Scout.

Connor began this journey as a Cub Scout in 2005 and 5 years later became a Boy Scout with Troop 695. His commitment to excellence continues to expand his record of 35 merit badges, 80 hours of community service, and 100 miles of hiking. Connor has also assumed leadership roles in the Scouts, serving as a den chief for the newer members, including his younger brother Bradley. Furthermore, Connor has lead as troop guide and historian, and he is presently the troop's senior patrol leader.

As one of tomorrow's leaders, Connor enhances my faith in our great Nation's future. It is truly an honor for me to help in celebrating his advancement to Eagle Scout. Continuing at this level of accomplishment, with such a strong commitment to civic duty, Connor will certainly be a strong, contributing citizen of this great Nation.

Connor plans to continue being an active Scout, even after receiving his Eagle status. The guidance of his loving parents and Scout leaders has undoubtedly instilled him with these motivations to do a good turn and make change daily wherever he may go. I am proud to have such a loyal and prepared member in my family and the Boy Scout family.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Connor on his loyal service and contributions to his troop and community.●

TRIBUTE TO SEAN T. HAYES

● Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, it is a pleasure to congratulate Capt. Sean T. Hays on being selected for promotion to the rank of major within the U.S. Marine Corps.

Every day, the men and women of the Armed Forces make incalculable contributions to our society. Nearly 22 years ago, Major (select) Hays swore an oath to protect our Nation and to lead by example. Entering the Marine Corps as a private, the lowest rank, he has diligently worked his way up through the ranks and continues to serve as a role model for his peers.

I had the distinct honor of meeting Major (select) Hays while he was deployed in Afghanistan. He is one of Colorado's best and brightest. His dedication to protecting his country speaks for itself, and I am confident that as a senior officer, he will continue to lead and protect with pride.

Congratulations to Major (select) Hays. I know his continued service will contribute to a stronger U.S. military and a safer nation.●

REMEMBERING THELMA SAYLER

● Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I wish to honor the life of Thelma Sayler.

Thelma Sayler was born in Lynch, NE, on September 3, 1924, to Mads and Ruth (Christensen) Nelson. In 1927, she moved with her parents and younger sister, Donna Faye, in a Model T with the company of 24 chickens, to a one-room ''shack'' north of White River. Ten years later her father tore down an old house and hauled the lumber in the Model T, using it to build a new house for the family. They moved into their new house just 1 day before Christmas, where Thelma had her own bedroom, which was a mansion to her.

Since there were no boys, the girls helped with farming, ranching, and chores around the house. Thelma liked to remember how she, her sister and mother, during the dirty thirties, used aprons to shoo away the Mormon crickets to save their garden.

Thelma graduated from White River High School in 1942. After high school, she traveled with her Aunt and Uncle to Oregon to work in the shipyards during the war. When traveling, she sat in the back of a pickup on a chair. In 1949, Thelma, and her daughters Karen and Sharon, moved back to White River. A couple years later they moved north to the ''Old Rassy Place.''

In 1953, Thelma accepted a teaching job at the Cottonwood School that was about 2 miles from their home. In 1954, she taught in Jones County. When she started teaching, she worked without certification for a number of years. She eventually started taking classes during the summer through Black Hills State Teacher College, and earned her bachelor's degree in 1969. In 1971, Thelma and her family moved 10 miles north of White River to the ''Teddy Fredericks Place,'' where she then began teaching second grade in Murdo.

She taught in Murdo until retiring in 1987. Even after retirement, Thelma continued her passion to educate, which included volunteering at the school, substitute teaching, and even providing snacks for students and staff. Thelma was a lifelong member of the Cottonwood Ladies Aide and volunteered at the Mellette County Museum & Library, blood drives, and the Grand Stand Committee. She was also a longtime member of the United Methodist Church in Murdo.

Thelma Sayler passed away at the age of 89 on February 9, 2014, at her daughter's house in White River. She will be forever remembered for her love of teaching and for all that she has done for her community.

I was among Thelma Sayler's many students. She was a teacher in the truest and best sense of the word, and I am forever grateful for her investment in me. She was patient and kind but tough when needed—and most importantly, she was passionate about seeing kids learn and truly committed to her work. Like so many others who passed through her classroom, I was blessed to have her as a teacher and later in life to call her a friend.●

REPORT OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO IRAN THAT WAS DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 12957 ON MARCH 15, 1995—PM 35

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared on March 15, 1995, is to continue in effect beyond March 15, 2014.

The crisis between the United States and Iran resulting from the actions and policies of the Government of Iran has not been resolved. The Joint Plan of Action (JPOA) between the P5+1 and Iran went into effect on January 20, 2014, for a period of 6 months. This marks the first time in a decade that Iran has agreed to and taken specific actions to halt its nuclear program and to roll it back in key respects. In return for Iran's actions on its nuclear program, the P5+1, in coordination with the European Union, are taking actions to implement the limited, temporary, and reversible sanctions relief outlined in the JPOA.

Nevertheless, certain actions and policies of the Government of Iran are contrary to the interests of the United States in the region and continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to Iran and to maintain in force comprehensive sanctions against Iran to deal with this threat.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *March 12, 2014.*

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

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

H.R. 2019. An act to eliminate taxpayer financing of political party conventions and reprogram savings to provide for a 10–year pediatric research initiative through the Common Fund administered by the National Institutes of Health, and for other purposes.

At 5:43 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 311. An act to direct the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to change the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure rule with respect to certain farms.

H.R. 1814. An act to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate.

H.R. 3474. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of the employer mandate under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

H.R. 3675. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for greater transparency and efficiency in the procedures followed by the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3979. An act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 311. An act to direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to change the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure rule with respect to certain farms; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 3675. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide for greater transparency and efficiency in the procedures followed by the Federal Communications Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2110. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4152. An act to provide for the costs of loan guarantees for Ukraine.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2122. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, 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–4885. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fenamidone; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9906–99) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–4886. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Intelligence), transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification that the annual report on the current and future military strategy of Iran will be delivered to Congress in May of 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4887. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Procurement, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''NASA FAR Supplement: Proposal Adequacy Checklist'' (RIN2700–AE13) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4888. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Global Strategic Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report on Proposed Obligations for Cooperative Threat Reduction''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4889. A communication from the Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to proposals on military compensation included in the President's fiscal year 2015 budget; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–4890. A communication from the President of the United States of America, transmitting, pursuant to law the Economic Report of the President together with the 2014 Annual Report of the Council of Economic Advisers; to the Joint Economic Committee.

EC–4891. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; State of Colorado; Second Ten-Year PM 10 Maintenance Plan for Pagosa Springs'' (FRL No. 9907–57–Region 8) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4892. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of California; 2012 Los Angeles County State Implementation Plan for 2008 Lead Standard'' (FRL No. 9907–14–Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4893. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, Placer County Air Pollution Control District'' (FRL No. 9905–18–Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4894. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Disapproval of State Implementation Plan Revisions; Clark County, Nevada'' (FRL No. 9907–56–Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to

the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4895. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; Texas; Stage II Vapor Recovery Program and Control of Air Pollution from Volatile Organic Compounds'' (FRL No. 9907–55–Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4896. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan; South Coast Air Quality Management District and El Dorado County Air Quality Management District'' (FRL No. 9905–26–Region 9) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4897. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Air Quality Implementation Plans; New Hampshire; Manchester and Nashua Carbon Monoxide Limited Maintenance Plans'' (FRL No. 9906–76–Region 1) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–4898. A communication from the Legal Counsel, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Waivers of Rights and Claims in Settlement of a Charge or Lawsuit under the Age Discrimination in Employment Act'' (RIN3046–AA58) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4899. A communication from the Inspector General of the Railroad Retirement Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Board's Congressional Budget Justification for fiscal year 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–4900. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Diversion Control, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Schedules of Controlled Substances: Temporary Placement of 10 Synthetic Cathinones into Schedule I'' (Docket No. DEA–386) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 7, 2014; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4901. A communication from the Federal Liaison Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes to Permit Delayed Submission of Certain Requirements for Prioritized Examination'' (RIN0651–AC93) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4902. A communication from the Federal Liaison Officer, Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Changes to Continued Prosecution Application Practice'' (RIN0651–AC92) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 6, 2014; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–4903. A communication from the Vice President of Government Affairs and Corporate Communications, National Railroad Passenger Corporation, Amtrak, transmitting, pursuant to law, a notification of a delay in submitting Amtrak's operations update and a general and legislative annual report; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4904. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of the Dallas/Fort Worth Class B Airspace Area; TX'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2012–1168)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4905. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0791)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4906. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters (Type Certificate previously held by Eurocopter France)'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0737)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4907. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; ATR–GIE Avions de Transport Regional Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0799)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4908. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc. (Bell) Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0735)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4909. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0054)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4910. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0210)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4911. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Various Restricted Category Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0736)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4912. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd and Co. KG Turbofan Engines'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0342)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4913. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; BAE SYSTEMS (OPERATIONS) LIMITED Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0793)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4914. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2012–0997)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4915. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Costruzioni Aeronautiche Tecnam srl Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0888)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4916. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0632)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4917. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0538)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4918. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France (Eurocopter) Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0039)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4919. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Agusta S.p.A. (Type Certificate currently held by AgustaWestland S.p.A.) (Agusta) Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0478)) received in the Office of the

President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4920. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Beechcraft Corporation Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0611)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4921. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France (Eurocopter) Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0679)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4922. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Eurocopter France Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0501)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4923. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Area Navigation (RNAV) Routes; Atlanta, GA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0891)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4924. A communication from the Regulations Officer, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Design-Build Contracting'' (RIN2125–AF58) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4925. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''List of Nonconforming Vehicles Decided To Be Eligible for Importation'' (Docket No. NHTSA–2013–0092) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–4926. A communication from the Program Analyst, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; Occupant Crash Protection'' (RIN2127–AK56) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 25, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–203. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan urging complete hydrologic separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, calling for the formation of a regional body to negotiate terms of hydrologic separation, and urging Congress and other entities to take interim steps to prevent Asian carp movement into the Great Lakes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 305

Whereas, The Great Lakes constitute one of the world's greatest inland waterway systems. Recreational opportunities on the lakes make Michigan and the region an attractive place for businesses to locate. The Great Lakes support jobs across a spectrum of industries that include manufacturing, tourism, recreation, shipping—including freight transport and warehousing—agriculture, science, engineering, utilities, and mining. The protection of the Great Lakes is essential to local and national economic growth; and

Whereas, The Great Lakes are central to Michigan's state identity and economy with a $15 billion annual tourism industry and more than 1 million licensed anglers contributing $2 billion to the economy; and

Whereas, Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are one of the foremost challenges facing the Great Lakes. Economic and environmental damage from invasive species in the Great Lakes basin is estimated at $5.7 billion per year, and commercial and sport fishing in the Great Lakes basin have suffered losses estimated at $4.5 billion; and

Whereas, Asian carp pose an imminent threat to the Great Lakes ecosystem and economy. The leading front of the Asian carp population has been confirmed 25 miles downstream of the electric barriers located on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and monitoring has detected Asian carp DNA between the electric barriers and Lake Michigan. Research by U.S. and Canadian fishery experts shows that there is a significant risk of Asian carp surviving, spreading, and establishing populations in the Great Lakes, particularly in shallow, near-shore areas like Green Bay, Saginaw Bay, Lake St. Clair, and Western Lake Erie. Once established, they can reproduce rapidly, consume large quantities of food, disrupt local ecosystems, outcompete native fish species, and devastate recreational fishing and boating opportunities. If populations of Asian carp become established in the Great Lakes, they will be difficult, if not impossible, to control or eradicate, and thus, the federal government has recognized Asian carp as ''the most acute [aquatic invasive species] threat facing the Great Lakes today''; and

Whereas, A recent study conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service showed that the electric barriers in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, designed to prevent the spread of Asian carp and other invasive fish, are not effective in stopping the movement of all fish, especially small fish, and that barges can sweep fish through the electric barrier; and

Whereas, The Restoring the Natural Divide report prepared by the Great Lakes Commission and the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative in 2012 presented three alternatives for hydrologically separating the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. The report demonstrates that a long-term solution to prevent AIS transfer—while maintaining or enhancing water quality, flood control, and transportation—is possible; and

Whereas, The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) report presenting a range of eight options and technologies to prevent AIS movement between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins, including two alternatives for full hydrologic separation. The GLMRIS report recognizes hydrologic separation as the most effective way to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes and mitigate flooding; and

Whereas, Complete hydrologic separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins would be a project measured in decades, not months or years. Asian carp pose a near certainty of establishing populations in the Great Lakes before the implementation of hydrologic separation from the Mississippi River basin unless strong, strategic interim measures are implemented; and

Whereas, While the long-term solution is developed and implemented, priority in the near-term should be given to effectively preventing the movement of Asian carp into the Great Lakes from the Mississippi River basin through technologies, waterway system improvements, technology demonstrations, and continued aggressive management practices leading to real reductions in populations. One-way or partial separation to prevent fish from moving upstream may be possible to achieve in the near-term without having to address major flooding and water quality issues. A short-term plan of action should include study and evaluation of the impacts on shipping infrastructure to provide feasible options for promoting new alternative long-term solutions: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we find that complete hydrologic separation is the most effective long-term solution for protecting the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins from aquatic invasive species (AIS) transfer and urge its implementation; and be it further

Resolved, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to call for immediate action on a suite of measures to reduce the risk of Asian carp and other invasive species passing through the Chicago Area Waterway System until hydrologic separation can be completed, including:

1. Continued implementation of the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework and related efforts;

2. Continued support of extensive monitoring and control efforts, including commercial fishing in the Chicago Area Waterway System, led by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and its federal partners;

3. Design and engineering of modifications to the Brandon Road lock and dam structure or other appropriate lock to reduce the risk of one-way transfer into Lake Michigan, including additional electric barriers at the entrance and exit of the lock, use of carbon dioxide as a fish deterrent, modifications of the gates on the dam, and other technologies; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to implement physical separation immediately through lock closure should Asian carp pose an imminent threat of passing through the Brandon Road Lock; and be it further

Resolved, That we call upon commercial navigation industries to identify practices to reduce the risk of AIS transfer that can be instituted on an escalating pace commensurate with the advance of Asian carp toward Lake Michigan; and be it further

Resolved, That we urge the United States Department of Transportation to study and evaluate the current and future infrastructure needs in the affected region to ensure the continued flow of commerce in and out of the region; and be it further

Resolved, That we call for the assembly of a consensus-building body of state and federal agencies, industries, regional commissions, and nongovernmental organizations to negotiate terms of hydrologic separation of

the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins even while planning for interim measures are underway; and be it further

Resolved, That we request that Congress call upon the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide a lead role in accomplishing these goals and coordinating efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies through the Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework and the national control plan for Asian carp; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of the Interior, the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—Chicago District, and the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, without amendment:

S. 2124. An original bill to support sovereignty and democracy in Ukraine, and for other purposes.

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. MCCAIN:

S. 2111. A bill to reauthorize the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. HOEVEN, and Mr. ENZI):

S. 2112. A bill to authorize the approval of natural gas pipelines and establish deadlines and expedite permits for certain natural gas gathering lines on Federal land and Indian land; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. COBURN (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BURR, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. ENZI, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HATCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. MCCASKILL, Mr. PAUL, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. WARNER):

S. 2113. A bill to provide taxpayers with an annual report disclosing the cost and performance of Government programs and areas of duplication among them, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. COBURN):

S. 2114. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 with respect to disclosures to investors in municipal and corporate debt securities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. REED, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. BOXER, and Mrs. HAGAN):

S. 2115. A bill to provide for the establishment of a fund to provide for an expanded and sustained national investment in biomedical research; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HEINRICH (for himself and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico):

S. 2116. A bill to direct the Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with Indian tribes, to make grants, competitive grants, and special research grants to, and enter into cooperative agreements and other contracting instruments with, eligible entities to conduct research and education and training programs to protect and preserve Native American seeds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

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

S. 2117. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to change the default investment fund under the Thrift Savings Plan, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PAUL, Mr. THUNE, Mr. VITTER, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. KIRK, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. COBURN, Mr. WICKER, Mr. COATS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. ALEXANDER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. ENZI, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2118. A bill to protect the separation of powers in the Constitution of the United States by ensuring that the President takes care that the laws be faithfully executed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. LEE:

S. 2119. A bill to amend the Head Start Act to authorize block grants to States for prekindergarten education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 2120. A bill to expand the prohibition on the manufacture, distribution, and importation of children's products that contain phthalates, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. WALSH (for himself, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2121. A bill to repeal title II of the REAL ID Act of 2005; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. 2122. A bill to amend titles XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, and for other purposes; read the first time.

By Mr. FRANKEN (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2123. A bill to authorize the exchange of certain Federal land and non-Federal land in the State of Minnesota; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S. 2124. An original bill to support sovereignty and democracy in Ukraine, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Foreign Relations; placed on the calendar.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COBURN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. COATS, Mr. PAUL, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. HATCH, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. LEE, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BURR, Mr. VITTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. Res. 382. A resolution to amend the Standing Rules of the Senate to modify the provision relating to timing for filing of cloture motions; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 411

At the request of Mr. ROCKEFELLER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 411, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 635

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 635, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 775

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 775, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a tax incentive for the installation and maintenance of mechanical insulation property.

S. 824

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 824, a bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require shareholder authorization before a public company may make certain political expenditures, and for other purposes.

S. 933

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) was added as a cosponsor of S. 933, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2018.

S. 948

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 948, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage and payment for complex rehabilitation technology items under the Medicare program.

S. 1135

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1135, a bill to amend the Safe Drinking Water Act to repeal a certain exemption for hydraulic fracturing, and for other purposes.

S. 1150

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Iowa

(Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1150, a bill to posthumously award a congressional gold medal to Constance Baker Motley.

S. 1364

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1364, a bill to promote neutrality, implicity, and fairness in the taxation of digital goods and digital services.

S. 1397

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1397, a bill to improve the efficiency, management, and interagency coordination of the Federal permitting process through reforms overseen by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and for other purposes.

S. 1431

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1431, a bill to permanently extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

S. 1456

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the names of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1456, a bill to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Shimon Peres.

S. 1506

At the request of Mr. WICKER, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1506, a bill to provide tax relief for persons affected by the discharge of oil in connection with the explosion on, and sinking of, the mobile offshore drilling unit *Deepwater Horizon*.

S. 1708

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1708, a bill to amend title 23, United States Code, with respect to the establishment of performance measures for the highway safety improvement program, and for other purposes.

S. 1737

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1737, a bill to provide for an increase in the Federal minimum wage and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend increased expensing limitations and the treatment of certain real property as section 179 property.

S. 1738

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1738, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

S. 1793

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1793, a bill to encourage States to require the installation of residential carbon monoxide detectors in homes, and for other purposes.

S. 1802

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1802, a bill to provide equal treatment for utility special entities using utility operations-related swaps, and for other purposes.

S. 1803

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1803, a bill to require certain protections for student loan borrowers, and for other purposes.

S. 2004

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2004, a bill to ensure the safety of all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, children, older individuals, and individuals with disabilities, as they travel on and across federally funded streets and highways.

S. 2024

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2024, a bill to amend chapter 1 of title 1, United States Code, with regard to the definition of ''marriage'' and ''spouse'' for Federal purposes and to ensure respect for State regulation of marriage.

S. 2053

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2053, a bill to direct the Architect of the Capitol to place a chair honoring American Prisoners of War/Missing in Action on the Capitol Grounds.

S. 2077

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2077, a bill to provide for the extension of certain unemployment benefits, and for other purposes.

S. 2082

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2082, a bill to provide for the development of criteria under the Medicare program for medically necessary short inpatient hospital stays, and for other purposes.

S. 2086

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) and the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) were added as cosponsors of S. 2086, a bill to address current emergency shortages of propane and other home heating fuels and to provide greater flexibility and information for Governors to address such emergencies in the future.

S. 2099

At the request of Mr. COATS, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2099, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to establish uniform requirements for thorough economic analysis of regulations by Federal agencies based on sound principles, and for other purposes.

S. 2106

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2106, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that the individual health insurance mandate not apply until the employer health insurance mandate is enforced without exceptions.

S. CON. RES. 33

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. JOHANNS), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) were added as cosponsors of S. Con. Res. 33, a concurrent resolution celebrating the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the nationwide Cooperative Extension System.

S. RES. 348

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 348, a resolution expressing support for the internal rebuilding, resettlement, and reconciliation within Sri Lanka that are necessary to ensure a lasting peace.

S. RES. 355

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the name of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 355, a resolution calling on the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to cease the extra-judicial release of Afghan detainees, carry out its commitments pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding governing the transfer of Afghan detainees from the United States custody to Afghan control and to uphold the Afghan Rule of Law with respect to the referral and disposition of detainees.

S. RES. 365

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 365, a resolution deploring the violent repression of peaceful demonstrators in Venezuela, calling for full accountability for human rights violations taking place in Venezuela, and supporting the right of the Venezuelan people to the free and peaceful exercise of representative democracy.

At the request of Mr. THUNE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 365, supra.

S. RES. 377

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 377, a resolution recognizing the 193rd anniversary of the independence of Greece and celebrating democracy in Greece and the United States.

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 377, supra.

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 377, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 2812

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, her name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2812 proposed to S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2814

At the request of Mr. CASEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2814 proposed to S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2818

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2818 proposed to S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. CASEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2818 proposed to S. 1086, supra.

AMENDMENT NO. 2819

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2819 intended to be proposed to S. 1086, a bill to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. MCCAIN:

S. 2111. A bill to reauthorize the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am please to introduce legislation that would reauthorize the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area located in Yuma, AZ. A companion bill is being introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman RAÚL GRIJALVA and Congressman ED PASTOR from Arizona.

The Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area is a unique success story in the National Heritage Areas, NHA, system. It was first authorized in 2000 under legislation sponsored by myself and former Senator Jon Kyl, P.L. 106–319. Yuma Crossing NHA has proven to be a central component in a collaborative effort by local, tribal and federal partners to transform the City of Yuma downtown riverfront area and restore riparian habitat along the banks of the Colorado River. Like many other NHAs, it was established as a means of encouraging historic preservation at a local level without assigning large federal resources for the management of land as a National Park. The Yuma Crossing NHA model continues to involve a broad coalition of local businesses, farmers, and the Quechan Tribe of the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation among others.

Yuma Crossing NHA was the first NHA to be established west of the Mississippi River. Its purpose is to preserve and share the history of the Yuma Crossing, which is a narrow granite outcropping on the Colorado River that for centuries served as the only transportation gateway for those traveling west to California, including Spanish missionaries, American pioneers, and gold rush prospectors. Prior to the completion of the transcontinental railroad in the 1860's, if you wanted to trade or travel to California, you had to go through Yuma Crossing.

The NHA designation has enabled the City of Yuma to develop plans to leverage about $80 million in private investments, not Federal funding, for the revitalization of downtown Yuma and the historic landmark. The Yuma Crossing NHA also played a critical role in saving a former Arizona State Park unit, the historic Yuma Quartermaster Depot, which had closed and fallen into disrepair due to state budget cuts. Moreover, the Yuma Crossing NHA has led the way in a remarkable environmental project along the Colorado River known as the Yuma East Wetlands project, which aims to remove 1,400 acres of non-native, water-guzzling salt cedar thickets and re-vegetate the area with native willows, cottonwood, and mesquite trees. The 400 acres completed thus far has aided in the initial recovery of a number of endangered and migratory bird species, including the Yuma clapper rail, the yellow-billed cuckoo, and the southwestern willow flycatcher.

As a testament to its successes, the National Park Service has downgraded the Yuma Crossing historic landmark from Threatened to Watch status. However, more work remains to be done. For example, the Yuma East Wetlands project has secured a funding commitment from non-federal parties for the next fifty years. Because NHA's have an authorization period of 15 years, it's critical that Congress reauthorize the Yuma Crossing NHA before the end of Fiscal Year 2015 so that this effort continues uninterrupted. I understand there may be a need to offset the federal spending that's authorized by this legislation, and I hope to address this concern as the bill advances through the legislative process. I encourage my colleagues to support the passage of this bill.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. REED, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. CASEY, Mr. CARDIN, Mrs. BOXER, and Mrs. HAGAN):

S. 2115. A bill to provide for the establishment of a fund to provide for an expanded and sustained national investment in biomedical research; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2115

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''American Cures Act''.

SEC. 2. BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH FUND.

(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to establish a Biomedical Research Fund (referred to in this section as the ''Fund''), to be administered by the Secretary of the Treasury, to provide for an expanded and sustained national investment in biomedical research through the programs and agencies described in subsection (b)(2).

(b) USE OF FUND.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For each fiscal year, amounts shall be transferred from the Fund to the accounts related to the programs and agencies described in paragraph (2) to ensure that funding for such programs and agencies for such fiscal year does not fall below 105 percent of the level of funding provided for the fiscal year immediately preceding the

fiscal year for which the determination is being made and an additional amount to account for any increases in the Gross Domestic Product for the year involved.

(2) AGENCIES.—The programs and agencies described in this paragraph are the following:

(A) The National Institutes of Health.

(B) The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

(C) The Department of Defense health program.

(D) The medical and prosthetics research program of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(c) MINIMUM CONTINUED FUNDING REQUIREMENT.—Amounts appropriated for each of the programs and agencies described in subsection (b)(2) for a fiscal year shall not be less than the amounts appropriated for such programs and agencies for fiscal year 2014.

(d) FUNDING.—There are hereby authorized to be appropriated, and appropriated, to the Fund, out of any monies in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sums as may be necessary in each fiscal year to enable the transfers to be made in accordance with subsection (b)(1).

(e) TRANSFER AUTHORITY.—The Committee on Appropriations of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives may provide for the transfer of funds in the Fund to eligible programs and agencies under this section, subject to subsection (b).

(f) EXEMPTION OF CERTAIN PAYMENTS FROM SEQUESTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 255(g)(1)(A) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act (2 U.S.C. 905(g)(1)(A)) is amended by inserting after ''Advances to the Unemployment Trust Fund and Other Funds (16–0327–0–1–600).'' the following:

''Biomedical Research Fund.''.

(2) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to any sequestration order issued under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C. 900 et seq.) on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 382—TO AMEND THE STANDING RULES OF THE SENATE TO MODIFY THE PROVISION RELATING TO TIMING FOR FILING OF CLOTURE MOTIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself, Mr. COBURN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. COATS, Mr. PAUL, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. HATCH, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. RISCH, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. LEE, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BURR, Mr. VITTER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. BARRASSO, and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration.:

S. RES. 382

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This resolution may be cited as the ''Stop Cloture Abuse Resolution''.

SEC. 2. TIME PRE-CLOTURE.

Paragraph 2 of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate is amended in the first undesignated subparagraph—

(1) by inserting ''after the end of the 24-hour period beginning at the time the Senate proceeds to consideration of a measure, motion, or other matter'' after ''at any time''; and

(2) by striking ''any measure'' and inserting ''the measure''.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2820. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2821. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra.

SA 2822. Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. THUNE, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra.

SA 2823. Mr. BENNET submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2824. Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra.

SA 2825. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2826. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2827. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2828. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2829. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2830. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2831. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2832. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2833. Mr. RISCH (for himself and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2834. Mr. TESTER (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2835. Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2836. Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2837. Mr. SCOTT (for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra.

SA 2838. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2839. Mr. BENNET submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2840. Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2841. Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2842. Ms. WARREN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2843. Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. UDALL of Colorado) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2820. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 98, strike line 15 and insert the following:

view.

''(U) IDENTIFICATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The plan shall contain an assurance that the State will—

''(I) require each parent, who applies for assistance for child care services for a child under this subchapter, to include the name and valid identification number of the child on the application; and

''(II) check the number before providing the assistance.

''(ii) DEFINITION.—In this subparagraph, the term 'valid identification number' means a social security number issued to an individual by the Social Security Administration. Such term shall not include a taxpayer identification number issued by the Internal Revenue Service.'';

SA 2821. Mr. LEE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 136, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

(e) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—Section 658K(a)(1) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858i(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(D) PROHIBITION.—Reports submitted to the Secretary under subparagraph (C) shall not contain individually identifiable information.''.

SA 2822. Mr. FRANKEN (for himself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. THUNE, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. TESTER, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. HEINRICH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care

and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 136, strike lines 8 and 9 and insert the following:

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking ''The Secretary'' and inserting the following:

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary'';

(ii) by striking ''1 percent, and not more than 2 percent,'' and inserting ''2 percent''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(B) LIMITATIONS.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall only reserve an amount that is greater than 2 percent of the amount appropriated under section 658B, for payments described in subparagraph (A), for a fiscal year (referred to in this subparagraph as the 'reservation year') if—

''(i) the amount appropriated under section 658B for the reservation year is greater than the amount appropriated under section 658B for fiscal year 2014; and

''(ii) the Secretary ensures that the amount allotted to States under subsection (b) for the reservation year is not less than the amount allotted to States under subsection (b) for fiscal year 2014.''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

SA 2823. Mr. BENNET submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. ___. ALLOTMENT OF SPACE IN FEDERAL BUILDINGS FOR CHILD CARE.

Section 590(b)(2) of title 40, United States Code, is amended by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following:

''(C) the allotment officer determines that—

''(i) the space will be used to provide child care services to children of whom at least 50 percent have 1 parent or guardian who—

''(I) is employed by the Federal Government; or

''(II)(aa) has met the requirements for a master's degree or a doctorate degree from an institution of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)); and

''(bb) is conducting research under an arrangement between the parent or guardian and a Federal agency; and

''(ii) for available child care services in the space, the child care provider will give—

''(I) first priority to Federal employees; and

''(II) second priority to persons that meet the requirements described in items (aa) and (bb) of clause (i)(II).''.

SA 2824. Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 91, line 17, insert ''efficiently'' before ''coordinate''.

On page 93, strike line 9 and insert the following:

''(ii) OPTIONAL USE OF COMBINED FUNDS.—If the State elects to combine funding for the services supported to carry out this subchapter with funding for any program described in subclauses (I) through (VII) of clause (i), the plan shall describe how the State will combine the multiple sets of funding and use the combined funding.

''(iii) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Noth-

On page 128, line 16, strike ''chapter; and'' and insert ''chapter;''.

On page 128, strike line 22 and insert the following:

ance with this subchapter.

''(5) after consultation with the Secretary of Education and the heads of any other Federal agencies involved, issue guidance, and disseminate information on best practices, regarding use of funding combined by States as described in section 658E(c)(2)(O)(ii), consistent with law other than this subchapter.''; and

---

SA 2825. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 99, strike lines 16 through 20 and insert the following:

tivity described in clause (iii)).'';

(iii) by striking '', with priority'' and all that follows through the period and inserting the following: ''. In using those amounts for child care services, the State shall give priority for services first to children with disabilities from low-income families (whose family income does not exceed 85 percent of the State median income for a family of the same size), then to children of families with very low family incomes (taking into consideration family size), and then to children with disabilities.''; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) REPORT BY INSPECTOR GENERAL.—

''(I) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30 of the first full fiscal year after the date of enactment of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014, and September 30 of each fiscal year thereafter, the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services shall prepare and submit to the Secretary a report that contains a determination about whether each State uses amounts provided to such State for the fiscal year involved under this subchapter in accordance with the priority for services described in clause (i).

''(II) PENALTY FOR NONCOMPLIANCE.—For any fiscal year that the report of such Inspector General described in subclause (I) indicates that such a State has failed to give priority for services in accordance with such clause, the Secretary shall withhold 5 percent of the funds that would otherwise be allocated to that State in accordance with this subchapter for the following fiscal year.

''(iii) CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL SYSTEM.—''

SA 2826. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 120, strike line 12 and insert the following:

preceding 5 years; or

''(E) has been convicted of a violent misdemeanor, such as assault or domestic violence, against a child.

SA 2827. Mr. PORTMAN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 78, line 9, insert ''and early language and literacy development'' after ''readiness''.

SA 2828. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 68, line 22, strike ''such sums as may be necessary for each'' and insert ''$14,400,000,000 for the period consisting''.

SA 2829. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. ___. EVALUATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF DUPLICATIVE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS.

(a) ELIMINATION OF DUPLICATIVE PROGRAMS.—

(1) CHILD CARE ACCESS MEANS PARENTS IN SCHOOL PROGRAM.—Subpart 7 of part A of title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070e et seq.) is repealed.

(2) EVEN START.—Subpart 2 of part B of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6371 et seq.) is repealed.

(3) EARLY READING FIRST.—Subpart 3 of part B of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6381 et seq.) is repealed.

(4) EARLY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ACT.—The Early Learning Opportunities Act (20 U.S.C. 9401 et seq.) is repealed.

(5) EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM.—Subsection (e) of section 2151 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6651(e)) is repealed.

(b) RESTRICTED USE OF FUNDS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds appropriated for any of the following programs or activities shall be used for child care or early education:

(1) Any assistance provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission under chapters 143 or 145 of title 40, United States Code.

(2) The Safe Start Program administered under part C of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5651 et seq.).

(3) The SMART Prevention grant program under section 41303 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043d-2).

(4) The transitional housing assistance for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual assault grant program under section 40299 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13975).

(5) The migrant and seasonal farmworker programs under section 167 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2912).

(6) The Native American programs under section 166 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2911).

(7) Adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities under chapter 5 of subtitle B of title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2861 et seq.).

(c) REPORT.—

(1) DEFINITION OF APPLICABLE SECRETARY.—In this subsection, the term ''applicable Secretary'' means a Secretary with authority

over a program, activity, service, or provision of law described in paragraph (3).

(2) IN GENERAL.—Not later than March 1, 2015, each applicable Secretary shall submit to Congress, and make available through the Internet on the public website of the agency of the applicable Secretary, a report on the outcomes of each program, activity, and service described in paragraph (3) under the authority of the Secretary. Each such report shall include—

(A) a determination of the total administrative expenses of the applicable program, activity, or service;

(B) a determination of the expenditures for services for the applicable program, activity, or service; and

(C) an estimate of the number of clients served by the applicable program, activity, or service and beneficiaries who received assistance under the applicable program, activity, or service (if applicable).

(3) COVERED PROGRAMS.—The programs, activities, and services described in this paragraph are the following:

(A) The local educational agency grant program for Indian education under subpart 1 of part A of title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7421 et seq.).

(B) The Native Hawaiian education program under part B of title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7511 et seq.).

(C) Any Indian child and family service program funded by a grant awarded under title II of the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 1931 et seq.).

(D) Assistance provided to schools under section 1121(b)(3) of the Education Amendments of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 2001).

(E) The Indian child and family education program authorized under part B of title XI of the Education Amendments of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 2000 et seq.)

(F) The Alaska native educational program under part C of title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7541 et seq.).

(G) The grant program for the improvement of educational opportunities for Indian children authorized under section 7121(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7441(c)).

(H) The Race to the Top State incentive grant program under section 14006 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Public Law 112–10).

(I) The grant program for special education for infants, toddlers, and families authorized under part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.).

(J) The special education grant program for preschool-aged children authorized under section 619 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1419).

(K) The child care development block grant program under the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858 et seq.), including funds provided under section 418 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 618).

(L) Programs provided under the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9831 et seq.).

(M) Space allotted in a Federal building for child care services under section 590 of title 40, United States Code.

(N) Any assistance provided by the Appalachian Regional Commission under chapters 143 or 145 of title 40, United States Code.

(O) The child and adult care food program established under section 17 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1766).

(P) The school lunch program established under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.).

(Q) The school breakfast program established by section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1773).

(R) The special milk program authorized under section 3 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1772).

(S) The full-service community school grant program carried out under subpart 1 of part D of title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7243 et seq.).

(T) The promise neighborhood grant program carried out under subpart 1 of part D of title V of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7243 et seq.).

(U) The education for homeless children and youth program under subtitle B of title VII of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11431 et seq.).

(V) The English language acquisition and language enhancement program under subpart 1 of part A of title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6821).

(W) The education of migratory children program under part C of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6391 et seq.).

(X) The local educational agency grant program authorized under part A of title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6311 et seq.).

(Y) The special education State personnel development grant program under subpart 1 of part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.).

(Z) The State grant program for children with disabilities under part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1411 et seq.).

(AA) The technology and media services for individuals with disabilities program under section 674 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1474).

(BB) The community services block grant program under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.).

(CC) The program of block grants to States for social services under subtitle A of title XX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1397 et seq.).

(DD) The program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).

(EE) Grants provided under the Community Development Block Grant program established under title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) for areas that are not nonentitlement areas.

(FF) Grants provided under the Community Development Block Grant program established under title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) for insular areas, as defined in section 102 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5302).

(GG) Grants provided under the Community Development Block Grant program established under title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.) for nonentitlement areas in Hawaii.

(HH) The Safe Start Program administered under part C of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5651 et seq.).

(II) The SMART Prevention grant program under section 41303 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043d-2).

(JJ) The transitional housing assistance for victims of domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, or sexual assault grant program under section 40299 of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13975).

(KK) Migrant and seasonal farmworker programs under section 167 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2912).

(LL) Native American programs under section 166 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2911).

(MM) Adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities under chapter 5 of subtitle B of title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C. 2861 et seq.).

(NN) The donation of surplus Federal personal property through State agencies under section 549 of title 40, United States Code.

(d) COMBINATION OF INDIAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, AND ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS.—By not later than September 15, 2015, the Secretary of Education and the Secretary of Interior jointly shall—

(1) review the program outcomes reports required under this section for the programs, activities, and services described in subparagraphs (A) though (F) of subsection (c)(3); and

(2) prepare and submit to Congress a plan, including legislative and administrative recommendations, regarding how to combine such programs, activities, and services into a single program serving the same populations.

SA 2830. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. ELIMINATION OF CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES FOR MILLIONAIRES.

(a) INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.—

(1) NO HOUSEHOLD AND DEPENDENT CARE CREDIT FOR MILLIONAIRES.—Section 21 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (g) and by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection:

''(f) NO CREDIT FOR MILLIONAIRES.—No credit shall be allowed under this section for any taxable year with respect to any taxpayer with an adjusted gross income equal to or greater than $1,000,000 for such taxable year.''.

(2) NO DEPENDENT CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR MILLIONAIRES.—Section 129(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) NO EXCLUSION FOR MILLIONAIRES.—No exclusion shall be allowed by reason of this section for any taxable year with respect to any taxpayer with an adjusted gross income equal to or greater than $1,000,000 for such taxable year.''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) FEDERAL PAYMENTS.—

(1) NO CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES FOR MILLIONAIRES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no Federal funds may be used to make payments relating to child care or child care services for any individual whose adjusted gross income in the preceding year was equal to or greater than $1,000,000.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The prohibition under this subsection shall apply to any payments made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2831. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and

for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 132, strike line 10 and all that follows through page 136, line 17, and insert the following:

(d) REPORT BY SECRETARY.—Section 658L of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858j) is amended—

(1) by striking ''1998'' and inserting ''2016''; and

(2) by striking ''to the Committee'' and all that follows through ''of the Senate'' and inserting ''to the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate''.

SEC. 9. PAYMENTS TO BENEFIT INDIAN CHILDREN.

Section 658O(c)(2) of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858m(c)(2)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

SA 2832. Mr. COBURN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. ELIMINATION OF CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES FOR HIGH-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.

(a) INTERNAL REVENUE CODE.—

(1) NO HOUSEHOLD AND DEPENDENT CARE CREDIT FOR HIGH-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.—Section 21 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (g) and by inserting after subsection (e) the following new subsection:

''(f) NO CREDIT FOR HIGH-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.—No credit shall be allowed under this section for any taxable year with respect to any taxpayer with an adjusted gross income equal to or greater than $250,000 for such taxable year.''.

(2) NO DEPENDENT CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR HIGH-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.—Section 129(a) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) NO EXCLUSION FOR HIGH-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.—No exclusion shall be allowed by reason of this section for any taxable year with respect to any taxpayer with an adjusted gross income equal to or greater than $250,000 for such taxable year.''.

(3) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this subsection shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(b) FEDERAL PAYMENTS.—

(1) NO CHILD CARE SUBSIDIES FOR HIGH-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no Federal funds may be used to make payments relating to child care or child care services for any individual whose adjusted gross income in the preceding year was equal to or greater than $250,000.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The prohibition under this subsection shall apply to any payments made on or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 2833. Mr. RISCH (for himself and Mr. ALEXANDER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 80, line 15, insert after ''services.'' the following: ''The Secretary shall not promulgate any rule (including any regulation), issue any guidance, or take any other action, that incentivizes, encourages, or mandates any such individual or entity to acquire such a credential.''.

SA 2834. Mr. TESTER (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 136, strike line 16 and all that follows through page 137, line 7, and insert the following:

(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by adding at the end the following:

''(D) LICENSING AND STANDARDS.—In lieu of any licensing and regulatory requirements applicable under State or local law, the Secretary, in consultation with Indian tribes and tribal organizations, shall develop minimum child care standards that shall be applicable to Indian tribes and tribal organizations receiving assistance under this subchapter. Such standards shall appropriately reflect Indian tribe and tribal organization needs and available resources, and shall include standards requiring a publicly available application, health and safety standards, and standards requiring a reservation of funds for activities to improve the quality of child care provided to Indian children.''; and

(B) in paragraph (6), by striking subparagraph (C) and inserting the following:

''(C) LIMITATION.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the Secretary may not permit an Indian tribe or tribal organization to use amounts provided under this subsection for construction or renovation if the use will result in a decrease in the level of child care services provided by the Indian tribe or tribal organization as compared to the level of child care services provided by the Indian tribe or tribal organization in the fiscal year preceding the year for which the determination under subparagraph (B) is being made.

''(ii) WAIVER.—The Secretary shall waive the limitation described in clause (i) if—

''(I) the Secretary determines that the decrease in the level of child care services provided by the Indian tribe or tribal organization is temporary; and

''(II) the Indian tribe or tribal organization submits to the Secretary a plan that demonstrates that after the date on which the construction or renovation is completed—

''(aa) the level of child care services will increase; or

''(bb) the quality of child care services will improve.''.

SA 2835. Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. BEGICH, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. ____. FAMILY LEAVE BECAUSE OF THE DEATH OF A SON OR DAUGHTER.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Parental Bereavement Act of 2014''.

(b) FAMILY LEAVE.—

(1) ENTITLEMENT TO LEAVE.—Section 102(a)(1) of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (29 U.S.C. 2612(a)(1)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(F) Because of the death of a son or daughter.''.

(2) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO LEAVE.—

(A) SCHEDULE.—Section 102(b)(1) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2612(b)(1)) is amended by inserting after the third sentence the following new sentence: ''Leave under subsection (a)(1)(F) shall not be taken by an employee intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule unless the employee and the employer of the employee agree otherwise.''.

(B) SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE.—Section 102(d)(2)(B) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2612(d)(2)(B)) is amended, in the first sentence, by striking ''(C) or (D)'' and inserting ''(C), (D), or (F)''.

(C) NOTICE.—Section 102(e) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2612(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) NOTICE FOR LEAVE DUE TO DEATH OF A SON OR DAUGHTER.—In any case in which the necessity for leave under subsection (a)(1)(F) is foreseeable, the employee shall provide such notice to the employer as is reasonable and practicable.''.

(D) SPOUSES EMPLOYED BY SAME EMPLOYER.—Section 102(f)(1)(A) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2612(f)(1)(A)) is amended by striking ''subparagraph (A) or (B)'' and inserting ''subparagraph (A), (B), or (F)''.

(E) CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 103 of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2613) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) CERTIFICATION RELATED TO THE DEATH OF A SON OR DAUGHTER.—An employer may require that a request for leave under section 102(a)(1)(F) be supported by a certification issued at such time and in such manner as the Secretary may by regulation prescribe. If the Secretary issues a regulation requiring such certification, the employee shall provide, in a timely manner, a copy of such certification to the employer.''.

(F) FAILURE TO RETURN FROM LEAVE.—Section 104(c) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2614(c)) is amended—

(i) in paragraph (2)(B)(i), by inserting before the semicolon the following: '', or a death that entitles the employee to leave under section 102(a)(1)(F)''; and

(ii) in paragraph (3)(A)—

(I) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting '', or the death,'' before ''described'';

(II) in clause (ii), by striking ''or'' at the end;

(III) by redesignating clause (iii) as clause (iv); and

(IV) by inserting after clause (ii) the following:

''(iii) a certification that meets such requirements as the Secretary may by regulation prescribe, in the case of an employee unable to return to work because of a death specified in section 102(a)(1)(F); or''.

(G) EMPLOYEES OF LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES.—Section 108 of such Act (29 U.S.C. 2618) is amended—

(i) in subsection (c)—

(I) in paragraph (1)—

(aa) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting after ''medical treatment'' the following: '', or under section 102(a)(1)(F) that is foreseeable,''; and

(bb) in subparagraph (A), by inserting after ''to exceed'' the following: ''(except in the case of leave under section 102(a)(1)(F))''; and

(II) in paragraph (2), by striking ''section 102(e)(2)'' and inserting ''paragraphs (2) and (4) of section 102(e), as applicable''; and

(ii) in subsection (d), in paragraph (2) and (3), by striking ''or (C)'' each place it appears and inserting ''(C), or (F)''.

(c) FAMILY LEAVE FOR CIVIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES.—

(1) ENTITLEMENT TO LEAVE.—Section 6382(a)(1) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(F) Because of the death of a son or daughter.''.

(2) REQUIREMENTS RELATING TO LEAVE.—

(A) SCHEDULE.—Section 6382(b)(1) of such title is amended by inserting after the third sentence the following new sentence: ''Leave under subsection (a)(1)(F) shall not be taken by an employee intermittently or on a reduced leave schedule unless the employee and the employing agency of the employee agree otherwise.''.

(B) SUBSTITUTION OF PAID LEAVE.—Section 6382(d) of such title is amended, in the first sentence, by striking ''or (E)'' and inserting ''(E), or (F)''.

(C) NOTICE.—Section 6382(e) of such title is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(4) In any case in which the necessity for leave under subsection (a)(1)(F) is foreseeable, the employee shall provide such notice to the employing agency as is reasonable and practicable.''.

(D) CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—Section 6383 of such title is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(g) An employing agency may require that a request for leave under section 6382(a)(1)(F) be supported by a certification issued at such time and in such manner as the Office of Personnel Management may by regulation prescribe. If the Office issues a regulation requiring such certification, the employee shall provide, in a timely manner, a copy of such certification to the employer.''.

SA 2836. Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. __. QUALITY FOSTER CARE SERVICES.

(a) INCLUSION OF THERAPEUTIC FOSTER CARE AS MEDICAL ASSISTANCE.—Section 1905 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (28), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(B) by redesignating paragraph (29) as paragraph (30); and

(C) by inserting after paragraph (28) the following new paragraph:

''(29) therapeutic foster care services described in subsection (ee); and''; and

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

''(ee)(1) For purposes of subsection (a)(29), subject to subparagraph (C), therapeutic foster care services described in this subsection are services provided for children who have not attained age 21, and who, as a result of mental illness, other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities, need the level of care provided in an institution (including a psychiatric residential treatment facility) or nursing facility the cost of which could be reimbursed under the State plan but who can be cared for or maintained in a community placement, through therapeutic foster care programs that—

''(A) are licensed by the State and accredited by the Joint Commission, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, the Council on Accreditation, or by another equivalent accreditation agency (or agencies) as the Secretary may recognize;

''(B) provide structured daily activities, including the development, improvement, monitoring, and reinforcing of age-appropriate social, communication and behavioral skills, trauma-informed and gender-responsive services, crisis intervention and crisis support services, medication monitoring, counseling, and case management, and may furnish other intensive community services; and

''(C) provide foster care parents with specialized training and consultation in the management of children with mental illness, trauma, other emotional or behavioral disorders, medically fragile conditions, or developmental disabilities, and specific additional training on the needs of each child provided such services.

''(2) In making coverage determinations under paragraph (1), a State may employ medical necessity criteria that are similar to the medical necessity criteria applied to coverage determinations for other services and supports under this title.

''(3) The services described in this subsection do not include the training referred to in paragraph (1)(C).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply to calendar quarters beginning on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SA 2837. Mr. SCOTT (for himself and Ms. LANDRIEU) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 140, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 10A. PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Section 658Q of the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 9858o) is amended—

(1) by inserting before ''Nothing'' the following:

''(a) IN GENERAL.—''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) PARENTAL RIGHTS TO USE CHILD CARE CERTIFICATES.—Nothing in this subchapter shall be construed in a manner—

''(1) to favor or promote the use of grants and contracts for the receipt of child care services under this subchapter over the use of child care certificates; or

''(2) to disfavor or discourage the use of such certificates for the purchase of child care services, including those services provided by private or nonprofit entities, such as faith-based providers.''.

SA 2838. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 88, line 5, insert ''offering child care certificates to parents,'' after ''tions,''.

SA 2839. Mr. BENNET submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. ___. ALLOTMENT OF SPACE IN FEDERAL BUILDINGS FOR CHILD CARE.

Section 590(b)(2)(C) of title 40, United States Code, is amended by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

''(i) the space will be used to provide child care services to children of whom at least 50 percent have 1 parent or guardian who—

''(I) is employed by the Federal Government; or

''(II)(aa) has met the requirements for a master's degree or a doctorate degree from an institution of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)); and

''(bb) is conducting research under an arrangement between the parent or guardian and a Federal agency.''.

SA 2840. Mr. MANCHIN (for himself and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 122, between lines 16 and 17, insert the following:

(5) IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT OFFER.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), a child care provider covered by subsection (c) may not make an offer of employment as a child care staff member to an individual, even for employment on a conditional or temporary basis, until the individual—

(A) obtains a qualifying background check result for a criminal background check described in subsection (b); or

(B) qualifies under paragraph (4).

SA 2841. Ms. STABENOW (for herself and Mr. GRASSLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 141, after line 4, add the following:

SEC. 13. QUALITY MEASURES FOR MATERNITY CARE UNDER MEDICAID AND CHIP; QUALITY COLLABORATIVE GRANTS.

(a) QUALITY MEASURES FOR MATERNITY CARE UNDER MEDICAID AND CHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 1139A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–9a) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(j) MOTHER AND INFANT CARE (MIC) QUALITY MEASURES.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—As part of the pediatric quality measures program established under subsection (b) and the Medicaid Quality Measurement Program established under section 1139B(b)(5)(A), the Secretary shall—

''(A) review quality measures endorsed under section 1890(b)(2) that relate to the care of childbearing women and newborns, particularly with respect to the application of such measures to the Medicaid and CHIP programs under titles XIX and XXI, and identify omissions and deficiencies in the application of those measures to such programs;

''(B) develop and publish a set of maternity care quality measures for the Medicaid and CHIP programs under titles XIX and XXI (in this subsection referred to as the 'Mother and Infant Care (MIC) quality measures') in accordance with the requirements of paragraphs (2) and (3); and

''(C) on an ongoing basis, review the MIC quality measures and develop and publish any modifications of, or additions or deletions to, such measures that reflect the development, testing, validation, and consensus process described in paragraph (4).

''(2) PROCESS FOR INITIAL REVIEW AND PUBLICATION.—

''(A) CONSULTATION AND PUBLIC COMMENT.—Not later than January 1, 2016, the Secretary shall—

''(i) solicit public comment on the proposed MIC quality measures; and

''(ii) consult with the stakeholders identified in paragraph (6)(A) regarding such measures.

''(B) PUBLICATION OF INITIAL SET OF MEASURES.—Not later than January 1, 2017, the Secretary shall identify and publish the initial MIC quality measures.

''(3) REQUIREMENTS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The MIC quality measures shall—

''(i) be evidence-based;

''(ii) utilize risk adjustment or risk stratification methodologies, if appropriate;

''(iii) utilize attribution methods to specify the clinicians, facilities, and other entities that the measures are applicable to;

''(iv) be pilot-tested with regards to scientific validity, feasibility, and attribution method; and

''(v) include a balance of each of the types of measures listed in subparagraph (B).

''(B) LIST OF TYPES OF MEASURES.—The measures listed in this subparagraph are the following:

''(i) Measures of the process, experience, efficiency, and outcomes of maternity care, including postpartum outcomes.

''(ii) Measures that apply to—

''(I) women and newborns who are healthy and at low risk, including measures of appropriately low-intervention, physiologic birth in low-risk women; and

''(II) women and newborns at higher risk.

''(iii) Measures that apply to—

''(I) childbearing women; and

''(II) newborns.

''(iv) Measures that apply to care during—

''(I) pregnancy;

''(II) the intrapartum period; and

''(III) the postpartum period.

''(v) Measures that apply to—

''(I) clinicians and clinician groups;

''(II) facilities;

''(III) health plans; and

''(IV) accountable care organizations.

''(vi) Measurement of—

''(I) disparities;

''(II) care coordination; and

''(III) shared decisionmaking.

''(C) PHYSIOLOGIC DEFINED.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'physiologic' means characteristic of or conforming to the normal functioning or state of the body or a tissue or organ, normal, and not pathologic.

''(D) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as supporting the restriction of coverage, under title XIX or XXI or otherwise, to only those services that are evidence-based, or in any way limiting available services.

''(4) ONGOING REVIEW OF THE MIC MEASURES; eMEASURES.—

''(A) CONTRACTS WITH QUALIFIED ENTITIES.—Not later than June 30, 2017, the Secretary, acting through the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, in consultation with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, shall enter into grants, contracts, or intergovernmental agreements with qualified measure development entities for the purpose of identifying quality of care issues that are not adequately addressed by the MIC quality measures and developing, testing, and validating modifications of, or additions or deletions to, the MIC quality measures, and creating eMeasures for data collection related to the MIC quality measures.

''(B) QUALIFIED MEASURE DEVELOPMENT ENTITY DEFINED.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'qualified measure development entity' means an entity that—

''(i) has demonstrated expertise and capacity in the development and testing of quality measures;

''(ii) has adopted procedures for quality measure development that ensure the inclusion of—

''(I) the views of the individuals and entities referred to in paragraph (3)(B)(v) and whose performance will be assessed by the measures; and

''(II) the views of other individuals and entities (including patients, consumers, and health care purchasers) who will use the data generated as a result of the use of the quality measures;

''(iii) for the purpose of ensuring that the MIC quality measures meet the requirements to be considered for endorsement under section 1890(b)(2), has provided assurances to the Secretary that the measure development entity will collaborate with—

''(I) the Secretary;

''(II) the consensus-based entity with a contract under section 1890(a)(1); and

''(III) stakeholders (including those stakeholders identified in paragraph (6)(A)), as practicable;

''(iv) has transparent policies regarding governance and conflicts of interest; and

''(v) submits an application to the Secretary at such time, and in such form and manner, as the Secretary may require.

''(C) eMEASURES.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—A qualified measure development entity with a grant, contract, or intergovernmental agreement under subparagraph (A) shall consult with the voluntary consensus standards setting organizations and other organizations involved in the advancement of evidence-based measures of health care that the Secretary consults with under subsection (b)(3)(H) and section 1139B(b)(5)(A) to create, as part of the MIC quality measures, eMeasures that are aligned with the measures developed under the pediatric quality measures program established under subsection (b) and the Medicaid Quality Measurement Program established under section 1139B(b)(5)(A).

''(ii) eMEASURE DEFINED.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'eMeasure' means a measure for which measurement data (including clinical data) will be collected electronically, including through the use of electronic health records and other electronic data sources.

''(D) ENDORSEMENT.—Any modifications of, or additions or deletions to, the MIC quality measures shall be submitted by the qualified measure development entity to the consensus-based entity with a contract under section 1890(a)(1) to be considered for endorsement under section 1890(b)(2).

''(5) MATERNITY CONSUMER ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND SYSTEMS SURVEYS.—

''(A) ADAPTION OF SURVEYS.—Not later than January 1, 2018, for the purpose of measuring the care experiences of childbearing women and newborns, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality shall adapt the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems program surveys of—

''(i) providers;

''(ii) facilities; and

''(iii) health plans.

''(B) SURVEYS MUST BE EFFECTIVE.—The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality shall ensure that the surveys adapted under subparagraph (A) are effective in measuring aspects of care that childbearing women and newborns experience, which may include—

''(i) various types of care settings;

''(ii) various types of caregivers;

''(iii) considerations relating to pain;

''(iv) shared decisionmaking;

''(v) supportive care around the time of birth; and

''(vi) other topics relevant to the quality of the experience of childbearing women and newborns.

''(C) LANGUAGES.—The surveys adapted under subparagraph (A) shall be available in English and Spanish.

''(D) ENDORSEMENT.—The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality shall submit any Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems surveys adapted under this paragraph to the consensus-based entity with a contract under section 1890(a)(1) to be considered for endorsement under section 1890(b)(2).

''(E) CONSULTATION.—The adaption of (and process for applying) the surveys under subparagraph (A) shall be conducted in consultation with the stakeholders identified in paragraph (6)(A).

''(6) STAKEHOLDERS.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The stakeholders identified in this subparagraph are—

''(i) the various clinical disciplines and specialties involved in providing maternity care;

''(ii) State Medicaid administrators;

''(iii) maternity care consumers and their advocates;

''(iv) technical experts in quality measurement;

''(v) hospital, facility and health system leaders;

''(vi) employers and purchasers; and

''(vii) other individuals who are involved in the advancement of evidence-based maternity care quality measures.

''(B) PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.—The stakeholders identified under subparagraph (A) may include representatives from relevant national medical specialty and professional organizations and specialty societies.

''(7) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated $16,000,000 to carry out this subsection. Funds appropriated under this paragraph shall remain available until expended.''.

(2) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(A) Section 1139A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–9a) is amended—

(i) in subsection (a)(6), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting ''and the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission'' after ''Congress''; and

(ii) in subsection (i), by striking ''subsection (e)'' and inserting ''subsections (e) and (j)''.

(B) Section 1139B(b)(4) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1320b–9b(b)(4)) is amended by inserting ''and the Medicaid and CHIP Payment and Access Commission'' after ''Congress''.

(b) QUALITY COLLABORATIVES.—

(1) GRANTS.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this subsection referred to as the ''Secretary'') may make grants to eligible entities to support—

(A) the development of new State and regional maternity care quality collaboratives;

(B) expanded activities of existing maternity care quality collaboratives; and

(C) maternity care initiatives within established State and regional quality collaboratives that are not focused exclusively on maternity care.

(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The following entities shall be eligible for a grant under paragraph (1):

(A) Quality collaboratives that focus entirely, or in part, on maternity care initiatives, to the extent that such collaboratives use such grant only for such initiatives.

(B) Entities seeking to establish a maternity care quality collaborative.

(C) State Medicaid agencies.

(D) State departments of health.

(E) Health insurance issuers (as such term is defined in section 2791 of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 300gg–91)).

(F) Provider organizations, including associations representing—

(i) health professionals; and

(ii) hospitals.

(3) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS.—In order for a project or program of an eligible entity to be eligible for funding under paragraph (1), the project or program must have goals that are designed to improve the quality of maternity care delivered, such as—

(A) improving the appropriate use of cesarean section;

(B) reducing maternal and newborn morbidity rates;

(C) improving breast-feeding rates;

(D) reducing hospital readmission rates;

(E) identifying improvement priorities through shared peer review and third-party reviews of qualitative and quantitative data, and developing and carrying out projects or programs to address such priorities; or

(F) delivering risk-appropriate levels of care.

(4) ACTIVITIES.—Activities that may be supported by the funding under paragraph (1) include the following:

(A) Facilitating performance data collection and feedback reports to providers with respect to their performance, relative to peers and benchmarks, if any.

(B) Developing, implementing, and evaluating protocols and checklists to foster safe, evidence-based practice.

(C) Developing, implementing, and evaluating programs that translate into practice clinical recommendations supported by high-quality evidence in national guidelines, systematic reviews, or other well-conducted clinical studies.

(D) Developing underlying infrastructure needed to support quality collaborative activities under this paragraph.

(E) Providing technical assistance to providers and institutions to build quality improvement capacity and facilitate participation in collaborative activities.

(F) Developing the capability to access the following data sources:

(i) A mother's prenatal, intrapartum, and postpartum records.

(ii) A mother's medical records.

(iii) An infant's medical records since birth.

(iv) Birth and death certificates.

(v) Any other relevant State-level generated data (such as data from the pregnancy risk assessment management system (PRAMS)).

(G) Developing access to blinded liability claims data, analyzing the data, and using the results of such analysis to improve practice.

(5) SPECIAL RULE FOR BIRTHS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), if a grant under paragraph (1) is for a project or program that focuses on births, at least 25 percent of the births addressed by such project or program must occur in health facilities that perform fewer than 1,000 births per year.

(B) EXCEPTION.—In the case of a grant under paragraph (1) for a project or program located in a State in which less than 25 percent of the health facilities in the State perform less than 1,000 births per year, the percentage of births in such facilities addressed by such project or program shall be commensurate with the Statewide percentage of births performed at such facilities.

(6) USE OF QUALITY MEASURES.—Projects and programs for which such a grant is made shall—

(A) include data collection with rapid analysis and feedback to participants with a focus on improving practice and health outcomes;

(B) develop a plan to identify and resolve data collection problems;

(C) identify and document evidence-based strategies that will be used to improve performance on quality measures and other metrics; and

(D) exclude from quality measure collection and reporting physicians and midwives who attend fewer than 30 births per year.

(7) REPORTING ON QUALITY MEASURES.—Any reporting requirements established by a project or program funded under paragraph (1) shall be designed to—

(A) minimize costs and administrative effort; and

(B) use existing data resources when feasible.

(8) CLEARINGHOUSE.—The Secretary shall establish an online, open-access clearinghouse to make protocols, procedures, reports, tools, and other resources of individual collaboratives available to collaboratives and other entities that are working to improve maternity care quality.

(9) EVALUATION.—A quality collaborative (or other entity receiving a grant under paragraph (1)) shall—

(A) develop and carry out plans for evaluating its maternity care quality improvement programs and projects; and

(B) publish its experiences and results in articles, technical reports, or other formats for the benefit of others working on maternity care quality improvement activities.

(10) ANNUAL REPORTS TO SECRETARY.—A quality collaborative or other eligible entity that receives a grant under paragraph (1) shall submit an annual report to the Secretary containing the following:

(A) A description of the activities carried out using the funding from such grant.

(B) A description of any barriers that limited the ability of the collaborative or entity to achieve its goals.

(C) The achievements of the collaborative or entity under the grant with respect to the quality, health outcomes, and value of maternity care.

(D) A list of lessons learned from the grant.

Such reports shall be made available to the public.

(11) GOVERNANCE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A maternity care quality collaborative or a maternity care program within a broader quality collaborative that is supported under paragraph (1) shall be governed by a multi-stakeholder executive committee.

(B) COMPOSITION.—Such executive committee shall include individuals who represent—

(i) physicians, including physicians in the fields of general obstetrics, maternal-fetal medicine, family medicine, neonatology, and pediatrics;

(ii) nurse-practitioners and nurses;

(iii) certified nurse-midwives and certified midwives;

(iv) health facilities and health systems;

(v) consumers;

(vi) employers and other private purchasers;

(vii) Medicaid programs; and

(viii) other public health agencies and organizations, as appropriate.

Such committee also may include other individuals, such as individuals with expertise in health quality measurement and other types of expertise as recommended by the Secretary. Such committee also may be composed of a combination of general collaborative executive committee members and maternity specific project executive committee members.

(12) CONSULTATION.—A quality collaborative or other eligible entity that receives a grant under paragraph (1) shall engage in regular ongoing consultation with—

(A) regional and State public health agencies and organizations;

(B) public and private health insurers; and

(C) regional and State organizations representing physicians, midwives, and nurses who provide maternity services.

(13) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated $15,000,000 to carry out this subsection. Funds appropriated under this paragraph shall remain available until expended.

SA 2842. Ms. WARREN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 111, strike line 17 and insert the following:

early neurological development of children; and

''(L) connecting child care staff members of child care providers with available Federal and State financial aid, or other resources, that would assist child care staff members in pursuing relevant postsecondary training.

SA 2843. Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. SCHATZ, and Mr. UDALL of Colorado) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 1086, to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

SEC. 13. NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN EDUCATION ACT.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Native American Indian Education Act''.

(b) FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.—

(1) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(A) Nontribal colleges that serve Native American Indian students have a valuable supplemental role to that provided by tribally controlled community colleges in making available educational opportunities to Native American Indian students.

(B) Some 4-year colleges serve Native American Indian students by providing tuition-free education, with the support of the State in which the institutions are located, as mandated by Federal statute, to hundreds of Native American Indian students in fulfillment of a condition under which the United States provided land and facilities for colleges to a State or college.

(C) The value of the Native American Indian student tuition waiver benefits contributed by these colleges and the States that support them today far exceeds the value of the original grant of land and facilities.

(D) The ongoing financial burden of meeting this Federal mandate to provide tuition-free education to Native American Indian students is no longer equitably shared among the States and colleges because it does not distinguish between Native American Indian students who are residents of the State or of another State.

(E) In fiscal year 2012, the State of Colorado paid approximately $13,000,000 in tuition fees to support the education of Native American Indian students at Fort Lewis College in Colorado. In the State of Minnesota, the University of Minnesota waived $2,600,000 in tuition for Native American Indian students in fiscal year 2012.

(F) Native American Indian student tuition waiver benefits are now at risk of being

terminated by severe budget constraints being experienced by these colleges and the States which support them.

(2) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to ensure that Federal funding is provided in order to relieve constrained State education budgets and to support and sustain the longstanding Federal mandate requiring colleges and States to waive, in certain circumstances, tuition charges for Native American Indian students admitted to an undergraduate college program, including the waiver of tuition charges for Native American Indian students who are not residents of the State in which the college is located.

(c) STATE RELIEF FROM FEDERAL MANDATE.—Part A of title III of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1057 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 319 the following:

"SEC. 319A. STATE RELIEF FROM FEDERAL HIGHER EDUCATION MANDATE.

''(a) AMOUNT OF PAYMENT.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), for fiscal year 2014 and each succeeding fiscal year, the Secretary shall pay to any eligible college an amount equal to the charges for tuition for such year for all Native American Indian students who—

''(A) are not residents of the State in which the college is located; and

''(B) are enrolled in the college for the academic year ending before the beginning of such fiscal year.

''(2) ELIGIBLE COLLEGES.—For purposes of this section, an eligible college is any institution of higher education serving Native American Indian students that provides tuition-free education as mandated by Federal statute, with the support of the State in which it is located, to Native American Indian students in fulfillment of a condition under which the college or State received its original grant of land and facilities from the United States.

''(3) LIMITATION.—The amount paid to any eligible college for each fiscal year under paragraph (1) may not exceed the amount equal to the charges for tuition for all Native American Indian students of that college who were not residents of the State in which the college is located and who were enrolled in the college for academic year 2012–2013.

''(b) TREATMENT OF PAYMENT.—Any amounts received by an eligible college under this section shall be treated as a reimbursement from the State in which the college is located, and shall be considered as provided in fulfillment of any Federal mandate upon the State to admit Native American Indian students free of charge of tuition.

''(c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to relieve any State from any mandate the State may have under Federal law to reimburse a college for each academic year—

''(1) with respect to Native American Indian students enrolled in the college who are not residents of the State in which the college is located, any amount of charges for tuition for such students for such academic year that exceeds the amount received under this section for such academic year; and

''(2) with respect to Native American Indian students enrolled in the college who are residents of the State in which the college is located, an amount equal to the charges for tuition for such students for such academic year.

''(d) DEFINITION OF NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS.—In this section, the term 'Native American Indian students' includes reference to the term 'Indian pupils' as that term has been utilized in Federal statutes imposing a mandate upon any college or State to provide tuition-free education to Native American Indian students in fulfillment of a condition under which the college or State received its original grant of land and facilities from the United States.''.

(d) OFFSET.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, $15,000,000 in appropriated discretionary funds are hereby rescinded, on a pro rata basis, by account, from all available unobligated funds.

(2) IMPLEMENTATION.—The Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall determine and identify from which appropriation accounts the rescission under paragraph (1) shall apply and the amount of such rescission that shall apply to each such account. Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall submit a report to the Secretary of the Treasury and Congress of the accounts and amounts determined and identified for rescission under the preceding sentence.

(3) EXCEPTION.—This subsection shall not apply to the unobligated funds of the Department of Defense, the Department of Veterans Affairs, or the Department of Education, or any unobligated funds available to the Department of the Interior for the postsecondary education of Native American Indian students.

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 March 12, 2014, at 9 a.m.

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 March 12, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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 on March 12, 2014, at 9 a.m. in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''From Poverty to Opportunity: How a Fair Minimum Wage Will Help Working Families Succeed.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2014, at 9 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Management Matters: Creating a 21st Century Government.''

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 March 12, 2014, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

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

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2014, at 9:45 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Election Administration: Innovation, Administrative Improvements and Cost Savings.''

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 March 12, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room SD–G50 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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 March 12, 2014, at 2 p.m. in room SR–418 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC POLICY

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs subcommittee on Economic Policy be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 12, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''The State of U.S. Retirement Security: Can the Middle Class Afford to Retire?''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on Wednesday, March 12, 2014, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Superstorm Sandy Recovery: Ensuring Strong Coordination Among Federal, State, and Local Stakeholders.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Strategic Forces of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of

the Senate on March 12, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Max Freedman, an intern in Senator AYOTTE's office, be granted floor privileges for the duration of today's session.

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

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the period for morning business be extended until 8 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

T'UF SHUR BIEN PRESERVATION TRUST AREA ACT

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 299, S. 611.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 611) to make a technical amendment to the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area Act, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill which had been reported from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

S. 611

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Sandia Pueblo Settlement Technical Amendment Act''.

SEC. 2. SANDIA PUEBLO SETTLEMENT TECHNICAL AMENDMENT.

Section 413(b) of the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area Act (16 U.S.C. 539m–11(b)) is amended—

(1) in the first sentence of paragraph (4), by striking ''conveyance'' and inserting ''title to be conveyed''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(6) FAILURE TO EXCHANGE.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—If the land exchange authorized under paragraph (1) is not completed by the date that is 30 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary, on request of the Pueblo and the Secretary of the Interior, shall transfer the National Forest land generally depicted as 'Land to be Held in Trust' on the map entitled 'Sandia Pueblo Settlement Technical Amendment Act' and dated October 18, 2013, to the Secretary of the Interior to be held in trust by the United States for the Pueblo—

''(i) subject to the restriction enforced by the Secretary of the Interior that the land remain undeveloped, with the natural characteristics of the land to be preserved in perpetuity; and

''(ii) consistent with subsection (c).

''(B) OTHER TRANSFERS.—After the transfer under subparagraph (A) is complete, the Secretary of the Interior, with the consent of the Pueblo, shall—

''(i) transfer to the Secretary, consistent with section 411(c)—

''(I) the La Luz tract generally depicted on the map entitled 'Sandia Pueblo Settlement Technical Amendment Act' and dated October 18, 2013; and

''(II) the conservation easement for the Piedra Lisa tract generally depicted on the map entitled 'Sandia Pueblo Settlement Technical Amendment Act' and dated October 18, 2013; and

''(ii) grant to the Secretary a right-of-way for the Piedra Lisa Trail within the Piedra Lisa tract generally depicted on the map entitled 'Sandia Pueblo Settlement Technical Amendment Act' and dated October 18, 2013.''.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 611), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

SUPPORTING A VENEZUELAN DEMOCRACY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 323, S. Res. 365.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 365) deploring the violent repression of peaceful demonstrators in Venezuela, calling for full accountability for human rights violations taking place in Venezuela, and supporting the right of the Venezuelan people to the free and peaceful exercise of representative democracy.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I would like to express my strong support for S. Res. 365, a resolution I cosponsored deploring the violent repression of peaceful demonstrators in Venezuela, calling for full accountability for human rights violations taking place in Venezuela, and supporting the right of the Venezuelan people to the free and peaceful exercise of representative democracy.

Since February 4, 2014, the Venezuelan people have taken to the streets on a daily basis to express frustration with the country's high inflation, corruption, food shortages, lack of press freedoms, lack of due process, violent crime, and other grievances. Addressing these legitimate concerns is a basic function of a democratic government. Instead, we have seen a crackdown on protests through unlawful use of force, a stifling of the media, and the detention of opposition leaders. Over 22 people have been killed, hundreds injured, and over 1,000 people arrested during these protests.

The Venezuelan Government is an elected government and, as such, it should act like a democratic government by immediately addressing the core concerns of its people through meaningful dialogue, halting the use of force, and providing a safe space for the Venezuelan people to express their views peacefully. Without a genuine, transparent conversation to address the central concerns raised by the protestors, Venezuela faces a bleak future.

Contrary to comments by the Venezuelan Government, this crisis is not about the United States; it is about the Venezuelan people. But the crisis does have implications for peace and security in the hemisphere and the broader international community. The United States always has stood and always will stand for basic freedoms, including freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press. We will not back down on protecting and promoting these universal values, nor should the international community. It is incumbent upon neighboring countries and regional organizations to be vocal during this critical point, to take a stand for universal human rights, and to expect the highest level of respect for representative democracy from its hemispheric neighbor.

Today, we see tension and unrest around the world. Each situation is unique; however, the desire for fundamental human rights is universally recognized. I call on my colleagues and nations around the world to stand up for these basic freedoms and support a path toward a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Venezuela.

Mr. CASEY. 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. 365) 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. 2122

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I understand there is a bill at the desk and I ask for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2122) to amend XVIII and XIX of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare sustainable growth rate and to improve Medicare and Medicaid payments, and for other purposes.

Mr. CASEY. I ask for a second reading and in order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection having been heard, the bill will be

read for a second time on the next legislative day.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

DIFFERING VIEWS

Mr. REID. I apologize to the Presiding Officer and all the staff, but I have been conducting for the last hour and a half or more a meeting in the classified room dealing with Ukraine. I am sorry I couldn't be here, but I just couldn't because I had to conduct that meeting.

Mr. President, the senior Senator from Iowa is my friend, but I am quite disappointed in my friend the senior Senator from Iowa. This afternoon he delivered another one of his ''Alice in Wonderland'' speeches. He has delivered a few of these, but the one today especially is a view of reality that only exists in fairy tales.

He complains that I file too many cloture motions. His complaint is like that of an arsonist who complains about having to hear the sirens of too many fire engines.

The real reason I have had to file so many cloture motions is because Republicans have engaged in a systematic pattern of obstruction—and not last week, not last month, but this has been going on for 5 years. We have come to see this as something of the pinnacle, the landmark, the zenith of obstructionism led by my Republican colleagues.

I have now had to file cloture motions during the time I have been the majority leader more than 500 times. Lyndon Johnson, who had the job for 6 years—I have had it a little longer than that—only had to face one filibuster. I have had to deal with 500.

I don't file cloture, as the Senator from Iowa would like folks to think, in this fairy tale world he believes in, I guess, because I enjoy it. It is not something I enjoy. It takes a lot of my time, the staff's time, the Senate's time, and the country's time. I don't like to do it. I file these motions because Republicans have made it clear that we can't get a vote on anything without going to cloture, and that is basically true.

What is the solution of the Senator from Iowa to the problem? Listen to this. Now, this really is ''Alice in Wonderland.'' He proposes it should take longer to file. He proposes it should take longer to file cloture. Now, that is some dreamland that I don't understand. He says the solution to the problem of Republican obstructionism is to make obstruction easier.

We have on the Executive Calendar 140 nominations. We have Ambassadors—there is an Executive Calendar here someplace. The pages have stripped all the desks of the calendars, but they are always around. The Republic of Mauritania, the Republic of Colombia—South America is a continent that has been our friend for decades—we have most all countries in Africa waiting to have Ambassadors appointed: Zambia, Niger, Peru, Belize, Albania, Angola, Palau, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Namibia, Tanzania, Morocco, Netherlands, Norway, Hungary, Iceland, U.S. Human Rights Council.

I am not going to take more of the staff's time, but throughout this Executive Calendar there are about 40 Ambassadors—40 Ambassadors—who are waiting to be confirmed and 35 or so judges. Do the math yourself. That is 75 or 80 very important jobs they have stopped.

So my friend from Iowa is living in a dream world. I don't know where it exists, but it doesn't exist here in the Senate. And his solution is to give them more time? Can you imagine that. This is an ''Alice in Wonderland'' speech from the Senator from Iowa, and he should have better use of his time than playing fairy tales in the Senate.

The obstruction led by Republican Senators from all over this country is an embarrassment to our country. It is preventing the people of this country from getting what they need.

Now, I know people around the country are not too worried about an Ambassador to some foreign country, but to our country it is important. Our foreign policy is important. Being able to get work done here legislatively is important, and we have been stymied every step of the way.

I am sorry to say my friend has stepped over the line with his speech here today about what a terrible thing has happened here, that we have filed cloture 500 times. The record speaks for itself.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 13, 2014

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 13, 2014; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 10:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and the time be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half; and that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of S. 1086, the child care and development block grant reauthorization bill.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. DURBIN. Rollcall votes are expected throughout the day tomorrow in an effort to complete action on the child care and development block grant bill. We are also working on an agreement on the flood insurance bill. Senators will be notified when votes are scheduled.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. DURBIN. 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 7:43 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 13, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate March 12, 2014:

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

SARAH BLOOM RASKIN, OF MARYLAND, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BRUCE HEYMAN, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO CANADA.

THE JUDICIARY

CAROLYN B. MCHUGH, OF UTAH, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE TENTH 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.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

JAMES H. SHELTON III, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

FRANCE A. CORDOVA, OF NEW MEXICO, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION FOR A TERM OF SIX YEARS.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

HEATHER L. MACDOUGALL, OF FLORIDA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING APRIL 27, 2017.