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Senate

The Senate met at 10 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.

Eternal God, who transforms common days into transfiguring and redemptive moments, hallowed be Your Name. Make our lawmakers great enough for these momentous times as they seek to live worthy of Your great Name. Lord, cleanse the fountains of their hearts from all that defiles, so that they may be fit vessels to be used for Your glory. Let Your peace be within them as Your spirit inspires them to glorify You in their thoughts, words, and actions.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 9, 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.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2223

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I am told S. 2223 is due for a second reading; is that right?

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

The legislative clerk read the bill by title as follows:

A bill, S. 2223, 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.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I would object to any further proceedings with respect to this legislation at this time.

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

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 345, S. 2199, the Paycheck Fairness Act.

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of Senator MCCONNELL, the time will be equally divided and controlled until 11 a.m., and at that time there will be a cloture vote on the motion to proceed with the legislation now before us.

Additional votes are expected today on confirmation of nominations. Floor staff is working to come up with convenient times for everyone in that regard and will notify Senators when we have those votes scheduled.

Mr. President, today the Senate will vote on whether to end debate on the paycheck fairness legislation. This much needed legislation provides important protections for women. It addresses wage disparity, helping women negotiate for equal pay, and it empowers workers to fight back against wage discrimination—women in particular.

It is a good and important bill, and it helps American women in many different ways, but for reasons known only to them, Senate Republicans don't appear to be interested in closing the wage gap for working women, such as my daughter and my grandchildren, the Presiding Officer's wife and daughter, friends and neighbors.

Four years ago the Republicans filibustered this exact same legislation. Two years later the Republicans filibustered this legislation. Now for a third time the Paycheck Fairness Act is before us and it appears it is going to be filibustered again. They have indicated that they will likely not let us begin work on this important piece of legislation or this debate.

If they are ideologically opposed to equal pay for equal work, they are free to vote against paycheck fairness, come down here and give speeches as to why it is such a bad idea, but we haven't heard any.

Today's vote is simply to begin debate on the bill. Are they so repulsed by equal pay for hard-working American women they again will not debate equal pay for equal work, but they will obstruct equal pay for equal work?

The Republicans come to the floor and try to offer amendments that have

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

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nothing to do with equal pay—nothing. I am at a loss as to why anyone would decline to debate this important issue or, if you don't like it, come and tell us why. Debate is what this institution is all about. It is the U.S. Senate.

Hubert Humphrey said once: ''Freedom is hammered out on the anvil of discussion, dissent and debate.'' That is what he said. So we should debate this bill. Together we can find a solution to this unfair wage disparity that costs average working women $464,324 over a lifetime, on average.

American families want us to debate and hopefully pass this legislation. This legislation overwhelmingly is supported by the American people. People in support of the Paycheck Fairness Act are calling on us to pass this legislation. They are writing letters, they are posting on social media, and they are attending rallies. Our constituents have made their feelings known, but the Republicans have not gotten the message.

Henry David Thoreau said:

It takes two to speak the truth. One to speak and another to listen.

The Senate Democrats have heard the truth about giving women a fair shot at equal pay for equal work. The truth is that working women make an average of 77 cents for every dollar their male colleagues make for doing the exact same work. That is not fair.

Today we will see if Republicans will give working women and their families a fair shot when voting on debate for this important legislation. Millions of American women and men—everyone in America—are hoping that a third time will be the charm for Senate Republicans.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

THE ECONOMY

Mr. MCCONNELL. The Obama economy has had a devastating impact on the people we represent. It has hurt millions in the middle class and people from every region of the country in almost every walk of life. When we consider the debate in the Senate, a few statistics jump out in particular.

Under this President's watch more than 3.7 million American women have fallen into poverty. The average American woman now makes about $730 less than when the President took office. If she is a college graduate, she has actually seen her income shrink by about double that amount. In other words, when it comes to American women overall, what we have seen over the past 5½ years is less income and more poverty. That is the story Senate Democrats don't want to talk about.

Perhaps that is why for weeks now they have blocked the efforts Republicans have made to improve the picture. Senate Democrats want to control this debate from start to finish and basically do nothing to help with our efforts to expand opportunity and jobs for women and for men. It would appear, as some have put it, they have no interest in solutions or any concern for the consequences of their actions. We see that in how uninterested they seem to be in the statistics I just mentioned, and we can see it in some other policies they have been defending literally for months.

Take Obama's 30-hour workweek rule, which is basically forcing employers to slash workers' hours. Who is impacted the most by it? As one study pointed out, it is women. Nearly two-thirds of those adversely impacted by this arbitrary provision of ObamaCare are women, but Washington Democrats don't seem to care about that. They don't seem to care about the ways people we represent are being hurt by their policies.

As I said, they continue to block all the innovative ideas that Republicans have been offering to turn the tide. Just look at what happened on the Senate floor yesterday. I, along with several other Republican colleagues, offered a series of measures that would not only have helped the jobs picture in our country, it would have provided greater opportunities for men, women, and families desperate to get ahead. Had Democratic Senators not blocked these ideas, they would have passed.

Why did Senate Democrats object to Senator COLLINS' proposal to restore the 40-hour workweek? Do they think it is fair that Obama's 30-hour workweek discriminates against working women? Do Democrats think it is fair to protect the rules that disproportionately reduce their wages?

Why do they object to the workplace flexibility proposal that Senator AYOTTE and I offered? Here is legislation that would have given working moms and dads the option to take time off to help them find a better work-life balance—flexibility that is more critical than ever now that ObamaCare's 30-hour work rule is forcing people to pick up a second or third job just to scrape by.

Why are Democrats so opposed to a policy that a lot of working women say they want, a policy that is tailored to the needs of the modern workforce and that many government employees already enjoy?

Why do Senate Democrats object to our job creation legislation, which includes so many smart ideas from so many different Senators? Here is a bill that strikes right at the heart of what has ailed our country for 5½ years, a lack of jobs and opportunity. Passing it should have been a no-brainer.

But Senate Democrats blocked all of it, every last one of our proposals, just like they shut down the proworker legislation Senator PAUL and I offered last week. The Right to Work Act is smart policy that promises to boost competitiveness while advancing workers' rights, ensuring they are not limited by the dictates of a union.

It is similar to another bill I am proud to cosponsor: Senator RUBIO's RAISE Act, which would allow workers to get a raise even if union bosses didn't want them to. Take for instance a worker who outperforms her colleagues and then is told by a union boss to sit down and accept less pay than she deserves—not a dime more than the coworker she is outperforming. It is completely and totally unfair, and workers such as she shouldn't be penalized by some archaic rule dreamt up before the age of ''Mad Men.''

These are the ideas that everyone who claims to stand for workplace fairness should want to help us pass. Yet Washington Democrats always seem to find some excuse not to. Maybe the Big Labor bosses they are answering to are telling them they cannot. Who knows. Or maybe it is the trial lawyers they seem to be so attentive to these days.

It makes sense when we consider what Senate Democrats have been talking about this week, a bill that even publications such as the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune, and the Boston Globe have said is bad policy. At a time when the Obama economy is already hurting women so much, this legislation would double down on job loss, all while lining the pockets of trial lawyers. In other words, it is just another Democratic idea that threatens to hurt the very people it claims to help.

It is time for Washington Democrats to stop protecting trial lawyers and start focusing on actually helping the people we were sent to represent. We have already seen what 5½ years of Washington Democratic control has meant: more poverty and lower wages for women. So they need to stop blocking innovative ideas that would move us further along the path to opportunity because, look, the college graduate who has seen her annual paycheck decline by $1,400 over the past several years is counting on Senate Democrats to change their game plan. The part-time worker who cannot imagine how she is going to make ends meet under ObamaCare's 30-hour work rule is counting on Democrats to think outside the box.

The American people are tired of Washington Democrats' 5½ years of failed policies and all the political games that helped us get here in the first place. Americans actually want solutions and they want them now and we owe it to them to start passing the kinds of innovative ideas Republicans are committed to pursuing, no matter how many times the majority tries to shut us down.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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.

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, this week President Obama has been holding what appear to be made-for-TV events to talk about the economy. He has been talking about the policies he wants Congress to enact, policies that he says will finally get America's economy going again.

President Obama has been in the White House now for more than 5 years, so I think it is fair to ask: What has this administration—the Obama administration—been doing for the economy over the past 5 years? We know that the recession actually ended almost 5 years ago. Since then, our economy has not bounced back the way it should have or the way it typically does after a deep recession.

The Obama administration has spent a lot of money on failed ideas such as the so-called stimulus package. Since the recession ended, Washington has racked up more than $6 trillion worth of additional debt, and it has not gotten us nearly the kind of growth we should have had as a result of this spending.

Now the President has come out with a budget in which he has asked for tax increases of over $1.7 trillion—nearly $2 trillion in higher taxes over the next decade. Taxes are already too high. When I go home to talk to my constituents—as I would think most Members of this body hear from their folks at home—they say taxes are already too high.

Americans are now preparing to file their taxes. Income tax day is coming—April 15. As Americans prepare to file their taxes, they are getting a reminder of just how much of their hard-earned money Washington is taking from them. Next Tuesday, April 15, is the deadline for most of us to fill out the forms and send everything off to the Internal Revenue Service, the IRS. According to the Tax Foundation, Americans will spend more on taxes this year than they spend on food, clothing, and housing combined.

We now know how much President Obama is spending, but what kind of effect have his policies been having on our American economy? We know that the economy is still not producing the number of jobs we need for a real recovery. We know if we want to look for the reasons why that seems to be the case, we could talk about the two million jobs Democrats are blocking with their restrictive energy policies.

We could talk about the minimum wage bill that Democrats are pushing right now. The Congressional Budget Office says that would reduce employment in the United States by one-half million jobs—they say maybe as many as 1 million jobs. Yet the majority leader comes here and says it is the best thing we can do for the economy. Again, according to the Congressional Budget Office, it will cost the economy one-half million jobs and maybe up to 1 million jobs.

But probably the largest and most harmful thing the administration has done—not just with regard to the economy, but to other factors, including the lives of the American public—is the President's health care law. This law is hitting people across the country. There are folks who are seeing their premiums go up, losing access to their doctor, getting cancellation notices from their insurance companies, and it is also having an effect on our economy.

Today we had our usual Wyoming Wednesday where people from around the State of Wyoming come to Washington and meet with their two Senators from Wyoming so we can talk to people from our communities. Today I heard another horror story related to the President's health care law. A family had insurance that worked for them, and it worked for them for a long time. It fit their budget, and it fit their needs as a family. But, of course, it was canceled as a result of the President's health care law and the mandates where the President believes he has a better idea of what works for their family than they know in terms of their family.

This husband and wife have a couple of young children, and they lost their insurance. They tried and tried again to get reinsured through the exchange. It took them months. They finally went with paper forms to apply. The stories go on and on, and it is horrible to listen to what American families have had to go through as a result of the President's health care law. This is a family that was hurt as a result of the President's health care law in terms of what they are paying for insurance, in terms of the deductibles that are now in place, and in terms of not being able to go to the doctor of their choice.

We have the effect on the family and the effect on the economy. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the health care law is going to lead to 2½ million fewer people working over the next decade. These are not my numbers. These are the Congressional Budget Office's numbers. Because of the warped incentives that are built into this law, some people will have to choose between working more and getting higher wages or working less so they can collect government subsidies.

Remember NANCY PELOSI, the Speaker of the House on the Democratic side. When this law was jammed through and down the throats of the American people, she was saying: First you have to pass it before you get to find out what is in it.

I actually read the whole thing, and it continues to astonish me how few Members of this body and the body across the way actually read it and instead just took her for her word. Now what we are seeing are these unintended consequences continuing to show up.

Even some Democrats have had to admit as much about this issue of people having to work more and getting higher wages or choosing to work less so they can collect greater government subsidies.

One liberal columnist wrote in the Washington Post back in February that ObamaCare is ''a drag on economic growth.'' He said it was ''a drag on economic growth.'' It is a drag on economic growth ''as more people decide government handouts are more attractive than working more and paying higher taxes.'' The President wants higher taxes, but he sets into place a health care law that discourages the work and additional income because the government subsidies get greater if you work less and have a lower income.

That is one way that the President's health care law has been harmful, and there is another way as well. Remember, this law requires employers to pay for insurance for anyone working 30 hours per week or more. Thirty hours per week or more is considered a full-time job. There is bipartisan legislation in an effort to try to actually overturn that and get that back to the 40-hour workweek, which is what most Americans think of as a full-time job.

How do people have to respond to the health care law that is out there? What are towns doing with their town budgets? What are counties doing in States all across the country? What are school districts doing? We see what they are doing, and they are talking about it. Towns, communities, counties, school districts, and universities are cutting back on the hours of their part-time bus drivers, librarians, coaches, and other middle-class workers. They are cutting back to get them below 30 hours a week so they don't fall into the mandates of the President's expensive health care law.

What does that mean? It means it hurts people's take-home pay. If someone is working 32 or 33 hours a week and finds that their hours have been cut to 29 hours—regardless of what the majority leader wants to do with minimum wage—their paycheck is going to get smaller. Their paycheck is going to be smaller because of the health care law. Their paycheck will be smaller because of policies that Democrats have voted for—many of whom never read it in the first place.

Is this just a Republican versus a Democratic idea? Not necessarily, because a group of labor union leaders who supported the law initially have said that this health care law will ''destroy the foundation of the 40-hour workweek that is the backbone of the American middle class.''

The House of Representatives voted last week to do something about it. They passed—in a bipartisan vote—a

bill that would change the definition of full-time work under the health care law from 30 hours to 40 hours.

Senator SUSAN COLLINS introduced a bill to do the same thing here in the Senate. So what has happened with it? Well, the Democratic majority leader isn't allowing a vote on that bill.

This is a commonsense way to reverse some of the harm the President's health care law is doing to hard-working Americans—how it is impacting their take-home pay, how they are seeing smaller paychecks and impacting their quality of life. But the Senate majority leader has blocked the vote. So the health care law hurts patients, it hurts health care providers, and is hurting the economy.

It is interesting, because the President said all he wanted to do was insure the people who didn't have insurance. So we have an exchange. We have turned the whole health care system upside down. We have impacted one-sixth of the economy. And the whole purpose: to take people who didn't have insurance and get them insured.

What does the Wall Street Journal say about it today in the headline talking about the newest statistics in the RAND study? They say most who bought policies through the new exchanges—most who bought policies through the new exchanges—already had insurance. They weren't uninsured. These people had insurance already.

Many lost their insurance because of the President's health care law. Yet we have turned upside down one-sixth of the economy in an effort to help some but have hurt so many in the process. That is one of the fundamental flaws and problems of a health care law where the President promised, if you like your coverage, you can keep it; if you like your doctor, you can keep him or her. Now we have millions of people whose coverage has been canceled. We have many people who can't keep their doctor, can't go to their hospital. They are seeing higher premiums, higher copays, higher deductibles, more pain because of what the President and the Democrats have forced through the Congress, forced through the House, forced through the Senate.

The American people wanted to change the health care system in this country and they knew what they wanted. They wanted the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower cost. They didn't get that in this health care law. Many Americans have seen their costs go up—their initial out-of-pocket costs—to buy the insurance on the exchange. They have seen their copays go up. They have seen their deductibles go up. And they can't keep the doctor of their choice. So they know what they wanted, and this is not what they wanted, but it is what they have gotten instead. People understand that.

That is why this health care law is still so very unpopular across the country. People see how bad this health care law is in terms of their own lives and how bad it is for the American economy. They see how 5 years of this administration and the policies have held back our economic recovery.

Tax day, April 15, coming next week, will be another opportunity for Americans to reflect on how much of their money Washington has been taking from them and what they have gotten in return. I would say, as they reflect upon that, they will continue to say they are not getting value for their money. They are not getting value for their money.

Polling shows that—and I hear this at home in Wyoming—for every dollar people send to the government, they think they are getting less than 50 cents on the dollar in value. They don't like it because it means when the government takes more, they have less to spend.

The government is deciding where the money is spent, not families. And it is families who want to make decisions for themselves about their freedoms, about their health care, about their financial choices—what they want, what they need, and what works best for them.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. What is now the pending business on the floor?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The motion to proceed to S. 2199.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I believe the number of that bill refers to the paycheck fairness bill; is that correct?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator is correct.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, what a bloodless way to talk about such an important public policy issue—to use the motion to proceed—and very few people realize this. To simply get a bill on the Senate floor, we have to vote on a motion to proceed on whether we are going to take it up. And because this is now going to require a 60-vote majority, because of the invocation of this fog of filibuster, we can't even get to a majority vote on how to make sure women get equal pay for equal work.

No wonder people are fed up with us. They wonder why, when all is said and done, more gets said than gets done. I travel the State of Maryland in the United States of America, and people want us to do our job, to work on a bipartisan basis, hands across the aisle, work across the dome, to solve national problems.

We heard this morning the talk about the economy. One way to help the economy is for people to make more money. Do we know what is one of the best ways to make more money? Pay women equal pay for equal work. Also, enforce the law, the Equal Pay Act, that was passed in 1963. But we haven't been able to do it for several reasons, and this is what the paycheck fairness bill deals with.

Right now, there is a veil of secrecy in businesses all over America—a veil of secrecy about the fact that an employee cannot ask a fellow employee what they are making. An employee is not supposed to talk about their salary. They can talk about anything, but they can't talk about what the person next to them is making.

The second issue is if an employee in any way, particularly if that employee is a woman, tries to speak up for their rights to get equal pay for the same job—same pay, same job—an employee is often retaliated against. Then, businesses come up with lots of loopholes, which are bad. They use business explanations as bad excuses to avoid paying equal pay for equal work.

We want to pass this legislation to end the retaliation, close the loopholes, and lift the veil of secrecy. This, in many ways, will give American women not a raise but what justice demands.

I am here this morning to keep up the momentum which we have been able to maintain in this Senate. I am very proud of the fact that in 2009 we passed the Lilly Ledbetter Act which opened the courthouse doors to women. Now, as we continue 5 years later, we are listening to stories—terrible stories—about what has happened.

There was Kerri Sleeman—a mechanical engineer in Michigan—who was told that men had to be paid more in her company because they were breadwinners. She was a mechanical engineer doing the same job.

Latoya Weaver, a Marylander who wrote me, learned that the males at the hotel where she worked were being paid $2 more an hour than she was, which meant a total of several hundred dollars a year.

We want to end that discrimination—no retaliation, no loopholes, no veil of secrecy.

This has been going on a long time. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson, as part of the great civil rights movement that was sweeping our country, wanted to pass three civil rights bills: the Equal Pay Act, the Civil Rights Act, and the Voting Rights Act.

He started with the Equal Pay Act because he thought it would be the easiest to pass and the easiest to enforce. Fifty years later, we are still fighting the battles on all three of those pieces of legislation, and today we are talking about equal pay.

(Ms. HEITKAMP assumed the Chair.)

Right now women are an emerging force in the workplace. Way back in the 1950s, only 11 percent of women were in the workplace, although many had been there during World War II as Rosies and kept our economy going.

Now they are the breadwinners in 40 percent of households. Women make up 40 percent of the households in which she is the head of the house or the prime or the breadwinner, and it is time to make the labor market reflect that—most of all the pay market.

When the Equal Pay Act was signed in 1963, guess what women made. Five cents for every $1 men made. Everybody said: We have to fight that. Fifty years later—now—women make 77 cents for every $1 men make. Over a 50-year period we closed the gap by 18 cents. Now what do you think about that? I think that is pretty unjust. I do not think it is even American.

We like to say: If you work hard and play by the rules, America will work for you. Well, women work hard. They play by the rules. Yet they work but America does not work for them.

For women of color, it is even worse. If you are an African-American woman, you earn 64 cents for every $1 a man earns. If you are an Hispanic woman, you earn 54 cents for every $1 a man earns.

You like to hear: Oh, you've come a long way. But I do not think we have come a long way with an 18-cent improvement in a 50-year period. Who in this Chamber thinks that earning 1 cent more every 5 years counts as ''coming a long way''? Maybe if we made 1 cent more every year since 1964 we would not think it is so terrific.

My constituents do not go for this—either men or women. Women want to stand up for their rights, and men want to stand up for the women they love. There are men all over this country, right this minute, who are in jobs they hate so their daughters could have the job they love, working hard so they can help them go to school, get the education, get the skills to be able to take care of themselves. This is why they have spoken up for dads.

Every week, in every month, as families sit down to pay their bills, husbands are looking at their wives and saying: Tell me about the pay. It doesn't seem right. I heard that George is making—I heard that Tom is making—but what about us? So men are outraged about this too. They see it as a fundamental fairness issue. They see it as a fundamental justice issue. And guess what. It is a family pocketbook issue.

We want change, and we want change today by voting for this bill. This way we will change the Federal lawbooks so we can help change the family checkbooks. This bill, as I said, will close the loopholes in the law which allow pay discrimination to continue to occur.

I will repeat, paycheck secrecy—making it harder to uncover pay differences—is hard to fight when you are prohibited from even talking about it. Businesses are under a gag rule. Then there is the retaliation. And then there are the loopholes.

The Paycheck Fairness Act is quite simple. They say: Well, didn't you deal with this with Lilly Ledbetter? Well, Lilly Ledbetter dealt with the statute of limitations. This bill is dealing with other issues. No longer can workers be retaliated against for sharing wages.

For years, Lilly—and she tells her own story, but it is the story of many—was harassed and humiliated for asking questions about coworkers' salaries. She found out that the guys were making more because of an anonymous note that was sent to her. Somewhere in the vast corporation of Goodyear, for whom she worked, a contractor—a Federal contractor, by the way—there was somebody, probably a wonderful man who worked with her, who wanted to help her out and told her.

But then she went on to try to do something. Well, guess what. She faced retaliation. First she faced verbal harassment. She faced threats to her very safety. She faced sexual intimidation. She really got it thrown right back in her face, and every day it became a torture in the workplace. But she pressed on.

That happens to women all over America. We cannot allow that. When you stand up for your rights in America, you should not be harassed.

There is much said about the First Amendment. Yes. There is much said about the Second Amendment—the right to carry a gun. Women would like to be able to carry a law to be able to fight for themselves.

No longer will employers also be able to use just any reason to justify paying a woman less. Oh, he is the breadwinner. Oh, they do a harder job. Well, when you talk to Kerri, the mechanical engineer, they were doing the same job. In fact, in some instances she was the actual supervisor. For Latoya, working in the hotel, they were doing exactly the same job, and the EEOC verified that. So this is why it is important.

The other thing is, no longer will women be limited just to backpay. They will be able to get punitive damages. Because in many businesses, when they are caught, the current law catches up with them, they just pay a fine and see it as a cost of doing business. Well, that is not fine with us. We want to make sure if you feel you have suffered these injustices, you will be able to seek redress through punitive damages. And no longer will women be on their own.

The consequences of the pay gap are significant. Let's take a college graduate—a woman who has had the benefit of an education. For women between ages 25 and 29, the annual pay gap now is about $1,700 a year. For women closer to retirement age, it is more like $14,000 a year. Over a lifetime, for many women, it is $400,000.

This has enormous consequences. When you are paid less—when you are paid less—it affects not only your paycheck that you take home, but it will affect your retirement because Social Security is pegged to earnings. So when you pay women less, they are going to get less in retirement. This is not fair.

Now, I will tell you what I am tired of hearing—that somehow or another we are too emotional when we talk. When we raise an issue, we are too emotional. Well, I am emotional. I am so emotional about this. I am telling you, if we do not pass this bill, I am so emotional I am going to press on. It brings tears to my eyes to know how women, every single day, are working so hard and are getting paid less. It makes me emotional to hear that.

Then, when I hear all of these phony reasons—some are mean and some are meaningless—I do get emotional; I get angry; I get outraged; I get volcanic. And the way I want to channel my emotions is by doing everything we can do to be able to pass this bill.

There are those who say: This is a lawyer's dream. It is not a lawyer's dream; it is a family's dream. If they are afraid of lawsuits, they ought to follow the law. The best way not to have a lawsuit is to follow the law. So do not retaliate against a worker, because if you do, you are going to have to pay up. If you have loopholes that are mean or meaningless, yes, that employee might sue. But guess what. The way to avoid the lawsuit is do not be mean, do not be cruel, do not be unfair, do not be unjust. And if you think we are emotional, wait until you see what happens if this bill fails. We are pretty emotional about this.

Madam President, you and I have talked about this. Whether it is in North Dakota or north Baltimore, we feel the same, that when you work hard, play by the rules, do the same job, you want the same pay. American women need a fair shot at equal pay for equal work—the same pay for the same job. We need to pass this legislation today.

Let us adopt the motion to proceed so we can get actually on the bill to discuss it, offer amendments. There are those, I know, who have other ideas and suggestions. We look forward to that. And then, at the end of the day and the end of the week, let's pass it.

I think today is a day of reckoning: Do you want equal pay for equal work? And I want men and women all across America to be emotional about it.

I yield the floor and 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. MERKLEY. 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. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I would like to take a few minutes to speak on the bill being considered today, the Paycheck Fairness Act. The proponents of the Paycheck Fairness Act argue that many women continue to earn significantly less pay than men for equal work. I am afraid the effort to consider this bill is nothing more than election-year politics aimed at scoring political points.

Equally unfortunate, the bill will do nothing to address our Nation's anemic economic growth. It will not create a single job for the more than 10 million unemployed Americans. This bill does nothing for the millions of Americans who have become so discouraged with this economy that they have completely given up on looking for work. This political show-vote will not help the millions of women who have lost their jobs or who are now living in poverty as a result of the Obama economy.

Let me be clear: I strongly support equal pay for equal work. I support equal employment opportunities. I abhor discrimination of any kind. Discrimination in the workplace is unacceptable, and must not be tolerated. Workers have been protected against sex-based pay discrimination since the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides additional protections and remedies for discrimination.

Many have concerns that the Paycheck Fairness Act would undermine a business's defense even when the pay disparity is legitimate. The bill would allow unlimited punitive and compensatory damages, while also automatically including employees in a class-action lawsuit unless they specifically choose to opt out. This bill would be a boon to trial lawyers at the expense of job creators and job seekers.

A Washington Post Editorial from September 28, 2010, stated, '' the proposal, which builds on the existing Equal Pay Act, would allow employees and courts to intrude too far into core business decisions.'' It further stated, ''Discrimination is abhorrent, but the Paycheck Fairness Act is not the right fix.''

Rather than consider a politically motivated measure, we should be working together to create good-paying jobs and grow the economy. Instead, the Democratic leadership has chosen to disregard the welfare of struggling Americans and pursue messaging bills. If the majority in the Senate truly cared about helping the middle class, they would allow consideration of Republican amendments that would actually help workers, help the unemployed find work, and grow the economy.

But just like consideration of the unemployment insurance extension bill, the Senate majority has no interest in considering amendments that would actually grow the economy and create jobs. During consideration of that bill, Republicans offered a job-creating amendment that would have repealed provisions of ObamaCare that are proven job killers. It would have spurred job creation through energy development, including authorizing the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline. It would have provided small businesses, who are responsible for creating 70 percent of jobs in our economy, with permanent tax relief aimed at incentivizing new investments. A version of this amendment has been filed to this bill. Unfortunately, the majority leader is again blocking consideration of any amendments.

While the majority leader pushes ahead with his political agenda, Republicans continue to propose measures that will create jobs and grow the economy. Senator MCCONNELL and Senator AYOTTE have put forward an amendment to allow voluntary flexible workplace arrangements such as compensatory time and flexible credit hour agreements for hourly workers. This amendment would provide much needed flexibility for working moms, but was immediately blocked by the majority leader. Why would the majority leader block consideration of such a reasonable proposal?

Senator ALEXANDER has also proposed an amendment that seeks to provide working parents more flexibility in the workplace. Senator RUBIO has proposed an amendment to allow employees to seek fair wage increases and remove obstacles for employees to earn merit-based pay raises. In addition, Senators FISCHER, COLLINS and AYOTTE have filed an amendment to reaffirm existing laws prohibiting pay discrimination and would prohibit retaliation against employees who inquire about, discuss or disclose their salaries.

Sadly, none of these reasonable, thoughtful amendments to address job creation and workplace flexibility will be considered because the majority leader has already signaled that this debate is not about legislating. It's about political messaging. For these reasons, I must vote against the procedural motion to proceed.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, today we will decide whether to begin debate on the Paycheck Fairness Act. I am an original cosponsor of this bill, I strongly support it and the ideals that motivate it, and I hope that someday we can pass this legislation. But today's vote is not on final passage. It is not even a vote on whether to end debate on this measure. It is a vote on whether to begin the debate. Those who vote against cloture on this motion to proceed are not just saying they oppose equal pay for women; they are saying they do not even want to discuss it.

But a refusal to debate this measure will not make this issue go away. The fact remains that in our country today, women make 77 cents for every dollar men earn. Some of our Republican colleagues suggest there's nothing we can do about it.

As a Democrat I believe that our prosperity rests on a principle—the idea that if you work hard and play by the rules, you should have a fair shot to provide for your family, your future and your children's future. The promise of that better future is part of what gets us up every morning, gets us on the bus or in the car, and gets us to the office or the shop or the factory floor. It is the promise that our work will be rewarded.

The obvious and persistent pay gap between men and women does violence to that promise. Under current conditions, the message we send to women is this: ''Work hard, play by the rules, and you'll get three quarters for every dollar's worth of work you do.'' Democrats believe that is unfair—unfair to the women it shortchanges and to the families they support. And we believe that even those of us who are not working women lose something when we do not live up to the principles of fairness and opportunity that give all of us hope for that better future.

And we Democrats want to do something about it. When you think about it, what we want to do should not be that controversial. Here is all this bill does: It requires employers to ensure that when men and women are paid differently, that the difference is related to factors such as education, training and experience, and not merely based on gender; and it strengthens protections against retaliation by employers for women who file discrimination complaints.

Surely we can all agree that pay differences should be limited to factors that truly reflect qualification and performance, and not determined by gender. Surely we can all agree that when an employee believes she or he is being treated unfairly, or that their employer has violated the law, they have the right to seek redress without fear of retribution.

Those who care about the 60 percent of American households that depend partly or entirely on a woman's income should support this bill. Those who care about the 6.9 million women trying to raise a family on what is now three-quarters of what they have worked for should support this bill. Those who care about making this a society that lives up to our professed goals of equal opportunity should support this bill.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, 5 years ago, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was signed into law by President Obama. That bill—necessary because of a divided decision by the Supreme Court to strike a blow to the rights of working families in Vermont and across the country—was a first step in closing the still-existing gender wage gap. Today, one day after commemorating Equal Pay Day, Senators will once again have the opportunity to stand with working families and support equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender.

I am proud to cosponsor the Paycheck Fairness Act, which Senator MIKULSKI—a trailblazer herself—has once again introduced to close loopholes that allow employers to unfairly discriminate workers based on gender. Thanks to the hard work and perseverance of earlier generations, working women today have career and business opportunities never before available. Yet, despite the gains we have made, there remains a troubling constant—women continue to earn less than men. According to the Census Bureau, women still only earn 77 cents for

every dollar a man earns. This disparity has real-world, financial consequences: on average, women are paid more than $11,000 per year less than men. And of American households with children under the age of 18, 40 percent list women as their sole or primary earners. The wage gap based on gender is hurting low- and middle-income families who, in today's economy, still wrestle with putting food on the table, heating their homes, paying the mortgage, and saving for college.

Vermont has been a national leader in addressing equal pay for equal work. In 2002, Vermont adopted its own Equal Pay Act, making it illegal for employers to offer anything less than equal pay for equal work. Still, in Vermont, where 22,000 households are headed by women, the yearly gender pay gap is nearly $6,000. More needs to be done, and we can do better.

Our national march toward equality continues. The Paycheck Fairness Act builds on efforts that date back more than 50 years to ensure a balanced and equal playing field in the workplace for both men and women. The Paycheck Fairness Act will require employers to show a difference in pay is truly linked to job performance and not to gender. It will protect employees from being retaliated against by their employers for discussing salaries with colleagues, and remove obstacles to challenging pay discrimination in a court of law. It will provide employers with assistance to create equal pay practices and recognize those who already adhere to such practices. These are commonsense provisions we can all support.

The Paycheck Fairness Act has twice before been filibustered in the Senate. Meanwhile, hard-working families across the country, anchored by the incomes of hard-working women, continue to struggle. Equal pay for equal work is a matter of simple fairness, and the Paycheck Fairness Act is an important step towards just that. I urge all Senators to support this bill.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 345, S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Barbara A. Mikulski, Patty Murray, Richard J. Durbin, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Brian Schatz, Heidi Heitkamp, Martin Heinrich, Tammy Baldwin, Barbara Boxer, Debbie Stabenow, Mazie K. Hirono, Kay R. Hagan, Mary Landrieu, Claire McCaskill, Jeanne Shaheen, Dianne Feinstein, Amy Klobuchar.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

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

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 53, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 103 Leg.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—44

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

NOT VOTING—3

Coburn	Cornyn	Cruz

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 53, the nays are 44. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I enter a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that at 2:30 p.m. this afternoon the Senate proceed to the Felton nomination under the previous order; further, that following the disposition of the Felton nomination, the Senate proceed to the McSweeny nomination, also under the previous order; further, that following the disposition of the McSweeny nomination, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar Nos. 506, 619, and 522; that there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees prior to each vote; that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order I have listed; that any rollcall votes, following the first in the series, be 10 minutes in length; that 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 to the nominations; that any statements related to these nominations be printed in the RECORD; that President Obama 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.

Mr. REID. Madam President, for the information of all Senators, under the agreement we just had approved, there will be as many as five rollcall votes starting at 3:30 p.m. this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, we just lost the vote today on a cloture vote to proceed to the Paycheck Fairness Act, but I want everyone to know—everyone in the Senate and everyone in the United States of America—although we lost the vote, we refuse to lose the battle. We are going to continue the fight. We are going to continue the fight to get equal pay for equal work, to lift the veil of secrecy on pay in the workplace, to end the retaliation if you fight for your rights, and to close loopholes that are mean or meaningless.

We have been here before. I remember when we had the first vote on the Lilly Ledbetter bill. We lost that vote, but we pressed on. Women all over America expressed their frustration and their outrage. In 2009 we were able to right that wrong and pass the Lilly Ledbetter bill and open the courthouse doors.

So here we are again. We are ready to continue that fight. We are ready to turn our biggest noes into our biggest yeses. We will continue the war against the wage gap and wage discrimination against women.

Women of America, I say to you, join us in this fight. Make your voices heard if you want to change the Federal lawbooks so we can make a change in your family checkbook.

We are going to finish what we started with Lilly Ledbetter and bring the Paycheck Fairness Act back to the

floor. When Senator REID voted no, it was so that he could bring up another vote on the motion to proceed. But this is not about parliamentary procedure; this is about how we will press the fight.

When we lost Lilly Ledbetter, I came to the floor then, and I come to the floor now, to say that when we continue this fight, I will remind my colleagues about what Abigail Adams once said to her husband: As you are making those laws down there, she said, ''do not forget the ladies. For we will foment a revolution of our own.''

So women of America—and the good men who support us—keep the revolution going. I said then, as I say now, let's suit up, let's square our shoulders. For the women, put on your lipstick and let's fight on. We will be back another day for another vote.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I applaud my colleague Senator MIKULSKI for her great work, in spite of the result today.

CONGRATULATING THE UCONN HUSKIES

I am here on the floor, however, to congratulate my UConn Huskies for a double national championship. It has only been done once before in the history of college basketball—the men winning a national championship and the women winning a national championship in the same year—and the last time it was us too, in 2004 and now in 2014. So, very briefly, I wish to add my congratulations to those offered by Senator BLUMENTHAL.

Our new coach, Kevin Ollie, when he took the job, went on TV and said that despite some of the tough times surrounding the UConn program, his intent was for UConn basketball to take the stairs and not the elevator.

He said elevators were for cowards, and they were going to walk one step at a time towards a national championship.

Given the fact our long-time Hall of Fame coach had just left, we had sanctions which didn't allow our team to play for a year in the postseason. People thought it just wasn't possible that UConn was ever going to be able to return to the greatness we have seen over the last 20 years. But in Coach Ollie's first tournament, he brought his team to a victory led, of course, by our great point guard Shabazz Napier—another Connecticut first and second. There are only two players who were national champions in the men's tournament who scored 125 points, had 25 assists and 25 rebounds. Shabazz Napier is the second because Kemba Walker was the first in UConn's last national championship.

The women, of course, are even more impressive in what they have done because they managed to win their national championship this year by going undefeated and beating another undefeated team in the national championship game. Of course, that has become kind of old hat for the UConn women. This is the third time they have gone undefeated in the past 6 years, and it is their fourth title in 6 years—Geno Auriemma's ninth title overall, now eclipsing the great Pat Summitt.

Watching the game last night, we saw Coach Auriemma in an uncommon display of emotion at the end of the game. He is a very emotional guy, but he very rarely breaks down in tears—which he did, talking about a couple of his seniors, Stefanie Dolson and also Bria Hartley. He has a love for those players.

We saw Kevin Ollie's love for his players, especially the guys who stuck it out who could have transferred to other programs but decided to stay with him and stay with the program.

What Geno said after the game is he is flattered: ''I'm flattered and grateful, and all the things that have come with this kind of accomplishment . . .'' But he also said: ''I'm more proud of the legacy that exists and what Connecticut basketball is as opposed to the number of championships.

When we watch these championship games that now add up for both the men and the women, we see throughout the stands former players by the dozens—maybe even by the hundreds—who come back because of the legacy that has been created in 20 years of nine national championships for the women and four national championships for the men.

Even though, as Kevin Ollie said, UConn got there the hard way. We don't have the 100-year legacy of basketball such as Kansas or Kentucky has. We have built this over the past couple of decades. Just as Kevin Ollie has done over the last 2 years, UConn over the course of the last the 2 decades, in registering 13 national championships, has always taken the stairs rather than the elevator.

Congratulations, as a diehard Husky fan, to our twin national championship teams.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

CONGRATULATING UCONN

Mr. COATS. Madam President, this is not easy for me to do, but I am going to do it in good grace here. I congratulate my colleague from Connecticut on The University of Connecticut's victory over the University of Notre Dame last night.

He watched in joy and exuberance, and I watched in dismay. But I do want to congratulate the Senator and those from Connecticut for the singular achievement of having both men's and women's basketball championships.

Those of us in Indiana are deeply immersed in the basketball culture. Statewide, we didn't have the best year or the kind of year we would have liked. But we were very proud of the University of Notre Dame women and the accomplishments they made—in an undefeated season until last evening.

It probably is not politic for me to say this, but it is unfortunate that our all-American center, who was one of the keys to the success of the team, unfortunately had a knee injury which prevented her from playing. I am not saying we would have won had she played because I don't want to take anything away from the Huskies. On the other hand, I think it could have been a more contested contest had she been able to be a part of that.

Either way, both teams deserve congratulations for the phenomenal seasons they had. It was a joy to watch from Indiana our Notre Dame women do so well, just as it was a joy for Senator MURPHY to watch his men and women do so well. So I congratulate him for that.

RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

Madam President, I rise to advocate for something obviously far more serious and threatening to us than basketball contests, and that is our response to Russia's recent unlawful takeover of Crimea. I urge, and continue to urge, the President as well as our colleagues in the Senate to take more vigorous action to deter further Russian aggression.

As I speak, anxieties are building that Vladimir Putin's first big bite out of Ukraine has not satisfied him and he hungers for more. Many signs indicate Russian aggression threatens further incursions into Eastern Ukraine and possibly beyond.

Troops are positioned on the border, logistics for an invasion are arranged, and the Russian propaganda machine is once again ginning up the excuses needed to justify unjustifiable actions. The only thing I can conclude is that the lack of an effective, forceful response by the United States and by our allies—particularly our European allies—has given President Putin reason to expect that further aggression will not be punished. Despite all the rhetoric, despite all the tough talk, very little has been done, and—with what little has been done—there has been no effect to deter and to condemn what has taken place and deter further aggression.

From the beginning of this blatant act, I have waited for the administration to impose real costs on Russia for its illegal territorial aggression. So far, I have waited in vain.

For the past month, in two separate resolutions which I have offered on the floor, several speeches, and numerous opinion columns I have written in the media, I have consistently attempted to make the case for hard-hitting sanctions on Russia. I joined Senator DURBIN, my colleague from Illinois, to achieve a unanimous bipartisan passage of an initial list of sanctions which would signal to Putin that the Senate was unified in condemning and sanctioning Russia for its blatant takeover of Crimea.

I stated at the time that this was an initial list and much tougher sanctions needed to come. But I wanted to give

the administration time to fashion those, to work with our allies across the ocean and to stand strong for the type of hard-hitting, hard-biting economic sanctions which would make Russia pay a real price, as we had said we were going to do.

The administration has to take the lead on economic sanctions because to implement the steps needed to ensure maximum effectiveness we need to coordinate with our friends and our allies. But I have seen little evidence that the administration is leading our European friends in the direction of such sanctions. I have not seen evidence that our European allies are willing to take the lead. I am therefore wondering if anyone is willing to take a lead in this effort.

More needs to be done—and more needs to be done now. With Russian troops mounting their vehicles on the Ukrainian border, the United States should be using every means available to press for firm measures, and our European allies should be joining us in this cause. Those measures should include imposing serious costs so such behavior will not be repeated.

Further, we should defend our allies and reassure them that we have their backs. We need to isolate Russia and prevent it from participating in organizations that give Putin credibility and strength. We should impose obstacles to prevent Russia from taking material advantage of their conquest, and we should convince other nations, businesses, and individuals to follow our lead.

I think recent history shows that in conflict issues around the world, if the United States does not take a firm and a strong lead, other nations simply do not feel they have the strength or the backing to take that lead. So it is imperative the United States takes that lead, steered by our President, and supported by a bipartisan Congress to send a unified message that we are willing to address egregious breaches of international law and lead the way in doing so.

The first task, as I see it, is to make sure we and others do not accept this aggression and annexation—what some others are already calling a fait accompli. Since the United States' refusal to recognize Soviet annexation of the three Baltic states 74 years ago, we have firmly and consistently refused to recognize such annexations. We must do the same in this case.

Unfortunately, words and actions from this administration and from many of our European allies continue to focus on threatening consequences for future Russian incursions, rather than on the illegal annexation that has already taken place. It is exactly this reluctance to impose costs for the annexation of a portion of the Ukraine that paves the way for further Russian aggression.

I sadly note that some of our best European friends are downplaying the importance of the invasion and annexation which have already taken place.

Just as Chancellor Merkel from Germany was showing signs of a more forceful German foreign policy in defense of European territorial integrity, it now appears Germany is showing more interest in dialogue and restraint, backing down from the tough talk about making Russia pay a price for the actions it has taken. I am convinced there is very little reason to believe that further aggression will be adequately discouraged or punished.

In this policy vacuum, if we don't find leadership from our administration or from the Europeans, I believe it is imperative that Congress act—and act now. So today, I am introducing yet another response in addition to those I have previously introduced addressing this situation in Ukraine.

I will be introducing to the Senate the Crimea Annexation Non-Recognition Act—legislation which would mandate an official policy of not recognizing Russian sovereignty over Crimea, its land, airspace, waters, and resources.

The purpose of this act is to ensure the United States will not recognize Russian sovereignty over Crimea nor take any action which would imply such recognition. Further, my bill imposes obstacles to Russian exploitation of Crimean resources by taking greater legal certainty about investing in Crimea, and it restricts foreign aid to countries which recognize Russian sovereignty over Crimea.

I will illustrate some of the specific proposals I have introduced.

First, establish firm policy that the United States Government does not recognize Russian sovereignty over Crimea, its territory, airspace, and territorial waters, and may take no action that implies any recognition of Russian sovereignty.

Second, prohibit the United States from financing or guaranteeing investments in Crimea with Russia as an intermediary.

Third, oppose international financial institutions' assistance programs for Crimea that go through Russia as an intermediary.

Fourth, require the Department of Justice to affirm this nonrecognition policy upon request, in order to create greater legal uncertainty for those who hope to contract with Russia for exploitation of Crimean resources.

Fifth, deny entry to vessels sailing from Crimea with Russian customs documentation.

Sixth, prohibit U.S. ships and aircraft from taking action that imply Russian sovereignty over Crimea, its airspace or territorial waters.

And, seventh, prohibit some forms of foreign assistance to countries that recognize Russian sovereignty over Crimea.

There are very few precedents in postwar history where a state has so boldly and aggressively used force against a neighbor for the purpose of territorial acquisition. What has happened in Crimea is a crime left over from an earlier age. We, together with our European friends, must move aggressively to oppose it before it becomes repetitive.

At a time when so much depends on Vladmir Putin's unspoken plans, it is not hard to guess how he will respond to meekness. The American response must be much greater if we want Putin to understand that his actions in Ukraine are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. At a minimum, I would suggest, Congress must refuse to recognize Russian sovereignty over Crimea by passing my legislation. I have proposed a number of sanctions which were added to other measures I have introduced and hopefully will convince this administration and our European allies to take a much tougher stance and provide much more of a penalty to Russia over the actions it has taken. I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I wish to speak a little bit about the letters I have received and the emails and the calls over the last few days about the health care plan.

The numbers signed up or whether the Web site worked—and I have said repeatedly—aren't the test here. The test is, is this a better plan? Does it allow more people to have better coverage or does it allow more people to have lesser coverage? I am becoming more and more convinced that the latter might be the case: the high deductibles, the increase in premiums, the benefit of a couple of years, actually, where the trajectory of health care costs were still going up but were beginning to flatten out, and now they are projected to go up pretty dramatically over the next few years based on the recent projections.

So the real test is, is this plan a better plan, not does the Web site work. The fact that the Web site doesn't work sort of shows the ineptitude of government. The easiest thing in the world to do today—or should have been in 4 years—would be to figure out how to develop a Web site. So I would say the Web site shouldn't be the test of whether the health care plan works because the Web site will work. Apparently a number of States are having a problem, the Federal Government had a very obvious problem, but the Web site will eventually work. Surely that can't be a long-term problem. Given no other alternatives, people are going to eventually sign up in some numbers.

I am not interested even in finding out whether the numbers are real. I did

notice that the President, as with most of the people I work for, in his announcing the numbers the other day, referred to the plan as ObamaCare again. I noticed he quit doing that since the election. He said he kind of liked ''ObamaCare''—in one of the Presidential debates in 2012 he said he liked the term—and then he pretty well quit using it. But with the signup numbers, he said some people call it ObamaCare, in his announcement the other day. So I guess if he can call it that, the people I work for can call it that as well.

So we have premiums rising, deductibles going up, and hospitals seeing, in many cases, their fastest growing column of unpaid debt is people with insurance. Not too long ago, we said: That doesn't make any sense. How did people with insurance wind up in the fastest growing column of unpaid debt? It is because people's deductibles are, for many families now, well beyond a deductible they can pay. If a person had a $500 deductible a few years ago and they have a $3,000 deductible today—if they had a hospital bill, they might be able to put $500 together and think that gets this bill paid. Nobody is going to call me anymore. I am not going to get this repeated notice. But if a person has a $3,000 deductible, they might decide: I can never pay that, so I am going to let them do whatever they are going to have to do, and hopefully my insurance company pays enough of the bill that the hospital decides they are not going to bother me. But that is the fastest growing debt in many hospital accounting offices right now—people who have insurance, who aren't paying their part of the bill.

But whether it is increases in premiums or increases in deductibles or they can't see their doctor, the people I work for in Missouri tell me every week a series of stories that I absolutely believe are true. I basically verify with people before I come to the floor, before pulling a few of these stories out: Do you mind, Timothy from Kirksville, if I mention that you have contacted us? I am not going to give your last name or put that on the record, but I would like to show that there is some dispersing around our State of this problem. They say, yes, this is absolutely true, and I told you because I want people to know about this.

Timothy from Kirksville, MO, said his premiums went up drastically in 2013. If premiums continue to rise, he says his family will have to make sacrifices elsewhere in their budget.

Kim from Frankford, MO, said she and her husband's deductible recently increased dramatically to $6,000. So far, she says, it feels like we don't have insurance because we have such a high deductible. We couldn't pay it if we ever had to use it, so do you really have insurance? Kim's parents recently tried to find a plan on the exchange and were shocked to learn that the cheapest plan they could find offered premiums of $1,200 a month with a $12,000 deductible. Yearly premiums were equal to 20 percent of their income.

Mike from Columbia, MO, said his health insurance premiums shot up by $1,000 this year—and $1,000 matters to families. Based on the letters I get, there would be some temptation to contact Mike and say, if you want to look at a whole stack of letters here, $1,000 is not the worst story people have to tell, but for a working family it is almost $100 a month. It is whatever you were going to do with that $100 a month that you are not able to do because your insurance just went up $100 a month. Mike doesn't say anything about his deductible or what his premiums are, but he just says it is $1,000 more than it was last year.

Lisa from Jefferson City, MO, the State capital, said she and her husband own a small business, and even though they don't have to provide health insurance for their employees, they have done so and they have chosen to pay 100 percent of the cost up until now.

Actually, until January of this year, no employer had to provide insurance for their employees but most employers did. Eighty-five percent of everybody who had insurance got insurance at work. Ninety percent of them thought what they had at work was great for what they needed to have for themselves and their family. We had a system that was working pretty good, where almost everybody had it. Instead of figuring out how to expand that system so other people could get in, I am afraid we have made it more difficult for everybody involved.

Lisa, the business owner, says her premiums went up 35 percent last year, and they have been told already that they will go up even higher next year. She says if the premiums continue to increase, they will soon not be able to cover their employees.

Carol from Cameron, MO, said her coverage has gone down and her out-of-pocket costs have increased significantly. Her deductible is now $3,500 and she has to pay $65 every time she goes to see a doctor. She worries she will never be able to use the coverage she is paying for because the out-of-pocket costs are too high, and if she ever actually got sick or had to go to the hospital or had a significant condition, she is worried she can't pay the deductible, even though she is paying every month to have this coverage and feels as though the coverage is not truly insurance for her at all.

Merl and his wife in Cape Girardeau, MO, are in their late sixties. They have Medicare and a supplemental policy, but their copays have increased. One of their primary doctors has stopped taking Medicare. He and his wife are concerned they can't see the doctor they would like to see, that their copays have increased, and their doctor left the program.

By the way, the administration, I guess the day before yesterday, announced we weren't going to have the reductions in Medicare Advantage next year as we had this year. We will still have this year's increase, but we will not have next year's increase. Whoever thought that paying for a new health care program out of Medicare was a good idea anyway? So $500 billion out of Medicare, which has bigger and bigger problems all the time as more and more people enter Medicare—$500 billion out of Medicare to pay for yet another new system. Apparently, even the administration, at least between now and the election, doesn't think that is a good idea because they just suspended one of the pay-fors. They said: We did that once, and that was kind of painful because people could see what was going to happen to their Medicare Advantage, so we don't want to do that between now and election day—although I think in fairness they didn't mention election day in the rule, they just mentioned it wasn't going to happen in this even-numbered year.

Mike from Kansas City, MO, says his premiums went from $600 a month to $700 for him and his wife. The deductible went from $5,000 to $7,500—he says all because of the new requirements and what has to be covered.

Mark from Columbia, MO, says the doctor he has had for 18 years joined a network of concierge doctors because he is afraid of the President's health care plan limiting his ability to provide quality care to his patients. Unfortunately, now that his doctor is part of a private network, Mark is no longer able to afford him—or to afford to see him, and the doctor does not accept the insurance Mark is covered by.

All kinds of unintended consequences appear to be happening when the government decides not only can it begin to involve itself in 17 percent of the economy of the country but in virtually everybody's health care decisionmaking process. This would be a big job for a very efficient government in a very small country. In a federalist system where we have 50 States and territories to deal with, in a big country, this is very hard to do. It is unfortunate that all of the warnings about the unintended consequences about people in the workplace will begin to have part-time jobs instead of full-time jobs or people who had less than 50 employees wouldn't want to go to 51 because they would then be covered by a law they were not initially covered by—all of those warnings have turned out to be at least as bad as those people saying this could happen were saying they could be.

John in Overly, MO, went to healthcare.Gov to find a plan. The cheapest quote he could find for his family of four was $750 a month, and in John's case that is almost 30 percent of his income. He has looked at the numbers and has decided it would be more affordable to go uninsured. He said:

> I am self-employed, married, and have two children, and though I am self-employed, I never had any trouble affording health insurance for me and my family [until now].

Richard is from Stoutsville, MO. His wife's premium last year was $359 a month, with a $5,000 deductible. This year it is $800 a month, and since they are on a fixed income, they have just decided they can no longer afford to pay for her individual insurance because they had to buy it as individuals.

I would just say that we need to look at these cases. Surely somebody out there has benefited from the system. There are people who were able to stay on their family policies longer. A piece of legislation I wrote when I was a Member of the House—it was 3¼ pages long—apparently it would have added about as many people as any other single thing did, and it would have added those people whether you had the rest of this health care bill or not, at no cost to any taxpayer anywhere and no disruption of anybody else's insurance coverage.

Those are the kinds of things we should have looked at. But we need to look at what it takes now to be sure we have a system that is not measured by whether the Web site works and not measured by an argument about whether people who signed up paid but is measured by whether this really does provide better health care.

Health care is critical to families. Somebody told me one time: When everybody in your family is well, you have lots of problems; when somebody in your family is sick, you have one problem. That is how important health care is. We need to be sure this is a system that does not meet some numerical or technical ''check the box'' but really does provide access to what was the greatest health care system in the world.

There are ways to encourage more access to that system and more choices, not fewer choices and less access and more people who feel as though they are paying a premium every month but if they ever really get sick, they really will not have insurance.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. 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. MORAN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in the morning hour.

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

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Mr. MORAN. I thank the Chair.

Madam President, nearly every minute someone in America develops Alzheimer's disease. More than 5 million Americans suffer from this disease and more than 35 million individuals worldwide. If trends continue, the number of individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease after the age of 65 is expected to double every 5 years, while the number of people 85 years and older with this disease will triple by 2050.

Alzheimer's is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States, and there is currently no cure, no diagnostic test, and no treatment for this terrible disease.

As a nation, we must remain committed to defeating one of the greatest health threats to the health and well-being of all Americans. Caring for those with Alzheimer's and other dementia is expected to cost $214 billion this year—$214 billion this year alone, with $150 billion covered by the Federal Government through Medicare and Medicaid.

A recent study outlined that the cost of care for those struggling with dementia is projected to double over the next 30 years, surpassing health care expenses for both heart disease and cancer. Without a way to prevent, cure, or effectively treat Alzheimer's, costs will only continue to climb.

Alzheimer's has become a disease to define our generation. But if we focus and prioritize our research capabilities, it need not remain an inevitable part of aging. There is reason for newfound hope. Over the last 5 years, significant strides have been made in understanding how Alzheimer's disease affects the brain and body. This new understanding has the potential to lead to new research opportunities and to better management of the disease.

In February, the Senate Appropriations health subcommittee held a hearing on the impact of Alzheimer's—both economic and personal—and the state of these current research initiatives. I am the ranking member of that subcommittee. Chairman HARKIN and I held this hearing to raise awareness of the threat to America's health, the impact on the financial well-being of our country, and to highlight the groundbreaking research initiatives currently taking place.

For example, until 2009, only one genetic variant was known to increase the risk of late-onset Alzheimer's disease. However, through advances in genome studies and other technologies, the list of known gene risk factors has grown substantially. Now researchers have identified 11 genetic risk factors.

The National Institutes of Health is supporting research that has established methods and standards for testing for biomarkers for Alzheimer's disease. Changes in these biomarkers may precede the onset of the disease and could be a key to unlocking the causes and progression of the disease.

NIH has also made significant progress over the last several years and we continue to support them moving more aggressively toward developing new treatments for Alzheimer's and related dementia. Several innovative studies, ranging from research on the most basic underpinnings of the disease to early-stage clinical trial of promising agents, are now underway.

A sustained Federal commitment to research for Alzheimer's will improve health outcomes for people living with the disease both today and in the future, and it will also lower health care costs. I have been and remain committed to prioritizing the funding for Alzheimer's research.

Recently, I and other members of the Appropriations Committee worked to include a $1 billion funding increase for the National Institutes of Health in the 2014 Omnibus appropriations bill. This amount includes a $100 million increase in funding for the National Institutes of Aging within NIH, as well as the initial year of funding for the new BRAIN initiative to map the human brain. These research investments are critically important because they will increase our understanding of the underlying causes of Alzheimer's, help unlock the mysteries of the brain, help bring us closer to an effective treatment and one day a cure.

Alzheimer's is a defining challenge of our generation. We must together commit to defeat this devastating disease by supporting the critical research carried out by scientists and researchers across our Nation. The health and financial future of our Nation are at stake, and the United States cannot afford to ignore such a threat. Together, we can make a sustained commitment to Alzheimer's research that will benefit our Nation and bring hope to future generation of Americans. The challenge is ours and the moment for us to act is now.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SANDERS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

OLIGARCHY

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, I hear more and more from people in my own State of Vermont and from people, in fact, all over the country via email, through my Web site, who are wondering whether this great country is evolving into an oligarchic society.

Historically, as I think most people know, the United States was the envy of the world for so many reasons. But one of the reasons, economically, is that in our country there was always the belief that regardless of your income you have the opportunity to move up the economic ladder. There was the reality—not just the belief—that we had a great and expanding middle class; that if your dad and your mom didn't go to college—which, in fact, was the case in my family—you would have that opportunity to go to college and move up the educational ladder or the business ladder or professional field. There was the feeling that economically what America was about, and what we celebrated, was the great middle class. People today, both from an economic perspective and from a political perspective, are beginning in a

very serious way to question that reality.

What they are looking at is that today in our country we have the most unequal distribution of wealth and income of any major country on Earth. I think a lot of young people say, well, how could that be? In England you have the Queen of England, all the lords, all the royalty all over Europe, and we don't have that in the United States.

Yet the truth is that over the years we have moved to a situation where in terms of wealth and income, we are now the most unequal society of any major industrialized nation on Earth.

I keep mentioning one statistic, because I don't hear too many other people talking about it, but we need to talk about it. That is, in terms of wealth. Wealth is what we own. Wealth is what we have accumulated over a lifetime of work. In terms of wealth, the top 1 percent in our Nation owns 38 percent of the financial wealth of America.

I would ask those people back home who might be listening, what does the bottom 60 percent own? The top 1 percent owns 38 percent of the wealth. What do you think the bottom 60 percent owns? They own 25 percent, 20 percent, 10 percent? What do they own? The answer is they own all of 2.3 percent—all of 2.3 percent is what the bottom 60 percent of Americans owns in terms of total wealth.

If you had a big pizza with 100 slices in it, 1 person would get 38 percent of those pieces of pizza if we looked at wealth, and the bottom 60 percent of the people would have to share 2.3 percent of the pizza. I don't think that is what America is supposed to be about and that situation is getting even worse.

In terms of income now—all right, everybody goes out and works—we have millions of people today who are working longer hours and their income is going down. Their wages are going down. Maybe they are paying more for health care. Their pensions are going down.

But in terms of all new income—new income generated in this country—from the last statistics we saw, which were from 2009 to 2012, in terms of all new income, 95 percent of all new income went to the top 1 percent. So more and more income goes to the millionaires and billionaires while millions of people are working longer hours for lower wages, and while we have the highest rate of childhood poverty, at 22 percent, of any major country on Earth.

Since 1999, the typical middle-class family has seen its income go down by more than $5,000. Do you want to know why people are angry, why people are concerned, and why people are worried what is going to happen to their kids? It is because the median family income has gone down by $5,000 since 1999.

Let me break it down even further. The typical male worker, that guy right in the middle, made $283 less last year than he did 44 years ago. Imagine that. In the last 44 years, with all of the increase in productivity, with all of the robotics, with all of the space technology, all of the iPhones, iPads, and everything else where people are now producing much more, the typical male worker made $283 less last year than he did 44 years ago. The typical female worker earned $1,775 less last year than she did in 2007.

Today in America we have more people living in poverty than ever before, and that is 46.5 million people. Here is a fact that should frighten everybody; that is, half of Americans have less than $10,000 in their savings account right now. Can you imagine that? That means if your car breaks down and you need that car to get to work or you have a serious health problem and you don't have particularly good health insurance, there it goes. It goes.

Then you talk about people who are older who have to retire. How do you retire with dignity if you have less than $10,000 in the bank? Well, you are going to get Social Security. Thank God, you, I, and other Members have fought hard to make sure there were not cuts in Social Security that many people wanted. But is Social Security alone enough? No. The answer is it is not.

What is happening in this country is that while the middle class shrinks, there is another reality; that is, the people on top are doing phenomenally well. Today we see a situation in which some of the wealthiest families in America—the Koch brothers come to mind, and I will talk about them in another context. They are now worth $80 billion. In the last year alone their wealth went from $68 billion to $80 billion—in 1 year a $12 billion increase in their wealth.

Sheldon Adelson—another billionaire who has had his name in the paper a whole lot recently by bringing prospective Republican candidates for the Presidency to Las Vegas to talk to them and see what they have to offer him and how much money he will contribute to their campaign—also saw a huge increase in his wealth over the last year.

What is the face of oligarchy? The face of oligarchy is what we see in Russia. When many people refer to oligarchy, they think of Russia. In Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, a small number of bureaucrats were able to steal a lot of public property, and they became multibillionaires. They controlled oil companies, banks, gold mines, aluminum companies, television stations, and other state-owned companies, and that is how they became oligarchs.

By 2001 5 oligarchs controlled 95 percent of Russia's aluminum production, 40 percent of its copper, and on and on it goes. People may say: Oligarchy has to do with Russia; what does it have to do with the United States of America? Well, it has everything to do with the United States of America because that is the direction in which we are moving.

Now, let me cite some examples of what oligarchs do. When we think of oligarchies we might want to think of a gentleman named Hank McKinnel, Jr., who was the CEO of Pfizer—a major drug company—from 2001 to 2006. When he retired, he received a $188 million golden parachute—$188 million—at the same time as the people in our country are paying the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. That is oligarchy.

When we think about oligarchy, we may want to think about a gentleman named Lee Raymond who served as the CEO of ExxonMobil from 1993 to 2005. When he retired—and remember, this is at a time when the vast majority of the American people did not have the resources to retire with a shred of dignity—Mr. Raymond received from ExxonMobil a golden parachute, retirement benefits, of more than $320 million—$320 million. That is at the same time as people in Vermont and all over this country are finding it harder and harder to pay for gas at the pump.

What oligarchy is also about is that in 2009 ExxonMobil, maybe the most profitable corporation in the history of America, did not pay any Federal income taxes, even though in that year it earned $19 billion in profits.

When we talk about oligarchy we might want to think about somebody like Jamie Dimon, who is the CEO of JPMorgan Chase. He recently received a 74-percent increase in pay—more than $20 million in total compensation. Interestingly enough, that is a pretty big salary—$20 million—but what did he do to earn it? During that same period, over the last year, the bank he runs, JPMorgan Chase, paid out over $20 billion in penalties to the Federal Government for financial fraud. So after paying out $20 billion to the Federal Government in penalties for financial fraud, he still got a $20 million compensation package. That is called oligarchy. No matter what you do, if you are at the head of a large financial institution, you are going to get rewarded for that.

Oligarchy has a lot to do with a gentleman named William Mcguire, the CEO of UnitedHealth Group from 1991 to 2006. Everybody knows of the crisis we are facing in health care. Everybody knows that tens of millions of Americans today, despite the Affordable Care Act, are still uninsured. Everybody knows we spend more per capita on health care than do the people of any other nation. Yet when this gentleman retired from UnitedHealth Group in 2006, he received a $285 million golden parachute. So here we have the most dysfunctional health care system in the world, the most expensive health care system, with tens of millions of people uninsured, yet the head of a major insurance company gets $285 million in retirement benefits. That is called oligarchy.

Let me take oligarchy away from the economic realm and turn it into an area that I am—and many Americans are—very concerned about. Recently, we saw an interesting spectacle relating to politics that took place in Las Vegas. A gentleman named Sheldon Adelson—who is worth some $38 billion, and who is maybe the world's largest casino magnate not only in Las Vegas but off the shores of China as well—held a meeting in Las Vegas in which he brought forth Republican candidates who are interested in running for President. Now, here is the point. In the last Presidential election, both President Obama and Mitt Romney spent a little over $1 billion in their campaigns. Sheldon Adelson, if he provided more money into a campaign than both Obama and Romney spent, would still have $9 billion more in wealth than he did in 2013.

What am I saying? What I am saying is that we are moving toward a situation where people such as the Koch brothers and Sheldon Adelson have so much money it would hardly matter to them to write a check for more than both Obama and Romney spent in the last Presidential election. They could write out a check for $2 billion, and it would be insignificant, a fraction of their increase in wealth over a 1-year period.

As bad as that situation is, because of the disastrous Citizens United Supreme Court decision, we may not have seen the worst yet. Judge Thomas, of the Supreme Court, the most conservative member of a very conservative Supreme Court, wrote an opinion which said: Maybe we should look at doing away with all limitations on campaign finance. Many Republicans think that is a great idea. Let us do away with all limitations.

In the real world, what does that mean? It means that billionaires—people who are worth $20 billion and, in the case of the Koch brothers, $80 billion—if we moved in that direction and ended all limitations on campaign spending, could sit in a room—and the Presiding Officer comes from the State of Wisconsin, a moderate-sized State—and they could write a check for $50 million or $100 million for a candidate for Senate or Congress or Governor of Wisconsin or of Vermont or anyplace else, and it would not matter at all.

So I want people to take a deep breath and think about whether that is what we believe American democracy is supposed to be. When I grew up, we believed what American democracy was about—and we still practice it to a large degree in the State of Vermont, where we have town meetings. On the first Tuesday in March people come out, and they argue about the school budget, and they argue about other budgetary items, and every person has a say and every person has a vote. In my career, I have done hundreds and hundreds of town meetings, where people from any walk of life can walk in the door and can ask any question they want. I think democracy is about elected officials talking and communicating with people, regardless of their income, and listening to their comments and answering their questions. That is what democracy is about.

I do not believe democracy is about a handful of billionaires, such as the Koch brothers or Sheldon Adelson, being in a position in which they can spend as much money as they want on any political race in this country. It is very hard for me to imagine how anybody could defend that as being democracy. It is not. It is oligarchy. It is the power of a handful of billionaires to control the political process.

So both in terms of economics, where so few own so much and so many have so little, and in terms of politics, where a handful of billionaires increasingly are able to determine the nature of politics in America and who is elected and who is defeated, I think we as a nation have a lot of hard thinking in front of us. We have to ask ourselves: Are we going to fight for our democracy and an expanded middle class? Are we going to fight for a democracy where one person has one vote and billionaires cannot fight elections? To my mind, that is the most important issue we face as a nation.

I hope the American people become engaged in that struggle and are prepared to take on the billionaires, who, apparently, are not content to have $10 billion or $20 billion in wealth. They feel the need to have more and more and more and to take that money out of the hides of working families, the elderly, the children, the sick, and the poor. They want more tax breaks for billionaires, and then they want to cut Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, education, and every other program that is of importance to working families.

So we need a very serious debate about these issues. We need millions of Americans to stand and fight with us to defend American democracy and to stop this country from evolving into an oligarchic form of society.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I come to the floor about an hour or so after a vote on a motion to proceed to take up the Paycheck Fairness Act. I struggled with my decision as to whether to move to this measure that I feel was flawed in terms of its approach to a solution or to recognize that perhaps this measure was more of an exercise in political messaging rather than an effort to resolve what I believe is an issue.

In sorting through all aspects of not only the merits of the legislation, but also the facts as they exist back home, the facts as they exist around this country, where we see pay disparity between men and women, I had a lot on my mind. I had a lot to weigh. I did not come to the floor yesterday to speak with the many who rose to either offer proposed amendments to the Paycheck Fairness Act or those who rose to speak to defend the act. I don't want my silence yesterday to be construed that I don't think there is an issue here; that I don't think this is something that needs to be addressed.

Yesterday was national Equal Pay Day, the day when, according to the Department of Labor, women's wages supposedly catch up to men's wages. We can argue and we can debate what that gap is—whether it is 77 cents, whether those statistics are outdated, whether it is closer to 82 cents or what the raw statistics are. We can debate that. But the fact is—and I think the Presiding Officer and I would agree—if there is any discrepancy there, it is worth looking at. Why does a discrepancy exist? Is there disparity that stems from discrimination? Because if it stems from discrimination, it should not be allowed—pretty simply.

In Alaska, the statistics are a little bit different than what we have on the national level. In my State, Equal Pay Day is not going to occur until May 5.

As an Alaskan, as a woman, and as one who has been in the Alaska job market, I want to know: Why the greater disparity in my State?

We had a women's summit in Anchorage, AK, last October. I worked with a former colleague in the Alaska State legislature to host a summit designed to look at many of the issues women face in Alaska, whether it is pay disparity, childcare affordability, access to health care—so many of the issues and concerns women all over the country deal with day to day. We relied on a study from the state Legislative Research Services. A portion of the research tried to drill down into some of the pay disparities we have in the State.

In 2010 our State Department of Labor reported a wage gap of 67 cents or 33 percent. This statistic is different from the overall national averages because that review conducted by Legislative Research Services included part-time as well as full-time workers and part-time workers generally receive lower salaries. That may be one reason for the disparity.

But when we look at some of the areas where there are discrepancies, it really does cause one to say: Wait a minute. In areas where occupations are significantly male-dominated—crab fishermen, for instance, welders on the pipeline—occupations where the pay is really quite substantial, we might look at that and say, OK, I understand why there might be a discrepancy. But there are other occupations that have some surprising statistics. For example, back in 2010 the average earnings for a male physician were $229,312, but the average for a woman physician was $166,000. It doesn't make sense.

In certain areas, women out-earn men—dietitians, for instance. The ratio of women's to men's earnings is 170 percent, according to the raw numbers. For legal secretaries, the ratio of women's to men's earnings is 132 percent.

For teachers, the ratio of women's to men's earnings is 125 percent.

We need to peel back the onion to understand what we are dealing with—is this a situation where it is the difference in the career choice that has made the distinction with the pay disparity? If that is the case, what are we doing to encourage women to go into areas where, quite clearly, earning opportunities are better?

When we look at occupations, I think it is something that needs to be considered. When we talk about a wage disparity, a pay disparity, I think we need to look very critically at whether there are other factors that come into play. Is it a career choice? Is it the need or desire for flexibility?

Starting out as a young lawyer in Anchorage, I was making what the young men in the firm were making. But when my husband and I decided that I wanted to spend more time at home with our boys, I negotiated for that level of flexibility. That put me behind my male counterparts in the firm. I was good with that. That was a choice I made. I wanted that flexibility.

Are there other nonmonetary forms of compensation that perhaps the wage gap statistics don't necessarily respect? We don't know. So this is where I came down in my decision process as to which direction to take on the Paycheck Fairness Act vote that we had just an hour or so ago. Do we want to try to address what I believe is an issue in that we do have a disparity but how we understand what causes that disparity and, then, what we do with that going forward is an important consideration.

We have the Equal Pay Act of 1963 that imposes strict liability for wage disparity based on gender. It is in law. We have title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that protects against all forms of employment discrimination, including on the basis of sex. But maybe we are not enforcing these Federal laws as we need to. If after all these years we are still seeing areas of disparity that we cannot reconcile based on occupation or based on desire for flexibility, does there continue to be discrimination? That is what we need to get to.

That is why I and many of my colleagues supported some of the amendments that were presented yesterday and I think were important to present—to make sure there is no retaliation for a woman when she inquires as to what others are making to determine whether there is discrimination, so making sure we are able to access that information. However, when we take a proposal like the Paycheck Fairness Act that has an initial presumption that the employer has unlawfully discriminated against an employee if there is a difference in pay—if we start off with a presumption of discrimination, it is pretty hard for an employer—particularly a small employer—to deal with that, to defend that, to present the case, to really work through this issue.

The solution should not be more litigation as the Paycheck Fairness Act response is here. The solution needs to be more all-encompassing because we have laws on the books that already say it is illegal to discriminate. If we are still seeing instances of discrimination—and, again, let's figure out where and why and how—then let's honestly try to address that rather than through messaging efforts that are designed to elevate the issue, which is fair, but then not be pragmatic about how we approach the solutions.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD an article from this morning's Washington Post titled ''President Obama's persistent '77-cent' claim on wage gap gets a new Pinocchio rating.''

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

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 9, 2014]

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S PERSISTENT '77 CENT' CLAIM ON THE WAGE GAP GETS A NEW PINOCCHIO RATING

(By Glenn Kessler)

''Today, the average full-time working woman earns just 77 cents for every dollar a man earns . . . in 2014, that's an embarrassment. It is wrong.''

—President Obama, remarks on equal pay for equal work, April 8, 2014

In 2012, during another election season, The Fact Checker took a deep dive in the statistics behind this factoid and found it wanting. We awarded the president only a Pinocchio, largely because he is citing Census Bureau data, but have wondered since then if we were too generous.

We also called out the president when he used this fact in the 2013 State of the Union address. And in the 2014 State of the Union address. And yet he keeps using it. So now it's time for a reassessment.

The Truth Teller video above also goes through the details.

THE FACTS

Few experts dispute that there is a wage gap, but differences in the life choices of men and women—such as women tending to leave the workforce when they have children—make it difficult to make simple comparisons.Obama is using a figure (annual wages, from the Census Bureau) that makes the disparity appear the greatest–23 cents. But the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that the gap is 19 cents when looking at weekly wages. The gap is even smaller when you look at hourly wages—it is 14 cents—but then not every wage earner is paid on an hourly basis, so that statistic excludes salaried workers.

In other words, since women in general work fewer hours than men in a year, the statistics used by the White House may be less reliable for examining the key focus of the proposed Paycheck Fairness Act—wage discrimination. For instance, annual wage figures do not take into account the fact that teachers—many of whom are women—have a primary job that fills nine months out of the year. The weekly wage is more of an apples-to-apples comparison, but it does not include as many income categories.

June O'Neill, a former director of the Congressional Budget Office, has noted that the wage gap is affected by a number of factors, including that the average woman has less work experience than the average man and that more of the weeks worked by women are part-time rather than full-time. Women also tend to leave the work force for periods in order to raise children, seek jobs that may have more flexible hours but lower pay and choose careers that tend to have lower pay.

Indeed, BLS data show that women who do not get married have virtually no wage gap; they earn 96 cents for every dollar a man makes.

Economists at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis surveyed economic literature and concluded that ''research suggests that the actual gender wage gap (when female workers are compared with male workers who have similar characteristics) is much lower than the raw wage gap.'' They cited one survey, prepared in 2009 for the Labor Department, which concluded that when such differences are accounted for, much of the hourly wage gap dwindled, to about 5 cents on the dollar.

''This study leads to the unambiguous conclusion that the differences in the compensation of men and women are the result of a multitude of factors and that the raw wage gap should not be used as the basis to justify corrective action. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct,'' the report for the Labor Department said. ''The differences in raw wages may be almost entirely the result of the individual choices being made by both male and female workers.''

A 2013 article in the Daily Beast, citing a Georgetown University survey on the economic value of different college majors, showed how nine of the 10 most remunerative majors were dominated by men:

1. Petroleum Engineering: 87% male
2. Pharmacy Pharmaceutical Sciences and Administration: 48% male
3. Mathematics and Computer Science: 67% male
4. Aerospace Engineering: 88% male
5. Chemical Engineering: 72% male
6. Electrical Engineering: 89% male
7. Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering: 97% male
8. Mechanical Engineering: 90% male
9. Metallurgical Engineering: 83% male
10. Mining and Mineral Engineering: 90% male

Meanwhile, nine of the 10 least remunerative majors were dominated by women:

1. Counseling Psychology: 74% female
2. Early Childhood Education: 97% female
3. Theology and Religious Vocations: 34% female
4. Human Services and Community Organization: 81% female
5. Social Work: 88% female
6. Drama and Theater Arts: 60% female
7. Studio Arts: 66% female
8. Communication Disorders Sciences and Services: 94% female
9. Visual and Performing Arts: 77% female
10. Health and Medical Preparatory Programs: 55% female

The White House discovered this week that calculations using average wages can yield unsatisfactory results. McClatchy newspapers did the math and reported that when the same standards that generated the 77-cent figure were applied to White House salaries, women overall at the White House make 91 cents for every dollar men make. White House spokesman Jay Carney protested that the review ''looked at the aggregate of everyone on staff, and that includes from the most junior levels to the most senior.'' But that's exactly what the Census Department does.

Betsey Stevenson, a member of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, acknowledged to reporters that the 77-cent figure did not reflect equal pay for equal work. ''Seventy-seven cents captures the annual earnings of full-time, full-year women divided by the annual earnings of full-time,

full-year men,'' she said. ''There are a lot of things that go into that 77-cents figure, there are a lot of things that contribute and no one's trying to say that it's all about discrimination, but I don't think there's a better figure.''

Carney noted that the White House wage gap was narrower than the national average, but the White House actually lags the District average calculated by the BLS: 95 cents.

THE PINOCCHIO TEST

From a political perspective, the Census Department's 77-cent figure is golden. Unless women stop getting married and having children, and start abandoning careers in childhood education for naval architecture, this huge gap in wages will almost certainly persist. Democrats thus can keep bringing it up every two years.

There appears to be some sort of wage gap and closing it is certainly a worthy goal. But it's a bit rich for the president to repeatedly cite this statistic as an ''embarrassment.'' (His line in the April 8 speech was almost word for word what he said in the 2014 State of the Union address.) The president must begin to acknowledge that average annual wages does not begin to capture what is actually happening in the work force and society.

Thus we are boosting the rating on this factoid to Two Pinocchios. We were tempted to go one step further to Three Pinocchios, but the president is relying on an official government statistic—and there are problems and limitations with the other calculations as well.

TWO PINOCCHIOS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Included in this article is the following quote referencing a study by the Census Bureau:

This study leads to the unambiguous conclusion that the differences in the compensation of men and women are the result of a multitude of factors and that the raw wage gap should not be used as the basis to justify corrective action. Indeed, there may be nothing to correct.

I don't know that. There indeed may be more that we can correct. I am willing to look to see, to continue to peel back this onion to see if we can do more than we did with the Equal Pay Act of 1963, do more than we did with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, do more than we did with the Lilly Ledbetter Act that I supported several years ago. If there is more that needs to be done, I am willing to work on it because I don't want to be in a State where men are viewed as being paid $1 to the 67 cents that a woman is being paid. I don't want those statistics to be valid. I don't want them to play out in my State. I want to understand how we ensure that there is a level of fairness. I think we need to make sure we look keenly to the issue of whether there is discrimination at play or whether, in fact, there are a host of other issues we need to consider as well. I am willing to work in good faith with my colleagues to do just that.

I see the chairman of the Judiciary Committee is with us.

(Mr. MARKEY assumed the Chair.)

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank the distinguished senior Senator from Alaska for yielding. I was interested in hearing her speech too.

LANDMINES

The Presiding Officer represents the beautiful Commonwealth of Massachusetts. But consider if 15 percent of the land area of Massachusetts was littered with 100,000 landmines or if my State of Vermont, with a slightly larger land area, was littered with landmines. Each one a tiny explosive buried a few inches beneath the surface of the ground, and it explodes when an unsuspecting person steps on it. Each one capable of killing a child or blowing the legs off of an adult.

This may sound far-fetched, but it is not. It is the reality today for many countries—from Vietnam to Angola to Colombia. But if that were the reality in our States, I think we would all agree that these inherently indiscriminate weapons—designed to be triggered by the victim regardless of whether it is a civilian or combatant—do not belong in the arsenal of a civilized country.

In fact, 161 nations have already agreed, and they have joined together in an international treaty banning antipersonnel mines. They include every member of NATO except one—the United States. They include every country in this hemisphere except two—the United States and Cuba.

We condemn the use of IED's against our soldiers and civilians in Afghanistan, and of course we should. But why not condemn antipersonnel landmines? There is really no appreciable difference.

I am hoping some will be listening to me at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue because I ask this: If landmines were littering this country—in schoolyards, along roads, in cornfields, in our National Parks—and hundreds of American children were being crippled like this Cambodian girl who lost her left foot, how long would it take before the White House sent the Mine Ban Treaty to the Senate for ratification? Two days? Two weeks? It wouldn't take any longer than that, I am sure. Yet we hear the same excuses year after year.

I look at my five beautiful grandchildren and I ask, what if they were living in a country where simply by walking across a field, going to a playground, or walking down a road, they might lose their lives? They are not combatants. It is usually civilians who are injured and killed by these landmines. We hear the same excuses year after year—why the most powerful Nation on earth cannot join its NATO allies, why the most powerful Nation on earth is the only country other than Cuba in this hemisphere not to sign it. What do we get? The same talking points, the same power points. It is really bureaucratic inertia. It is also a lack of leadership.

For 20 years the Pentagon insisted that Korea was the problem. But 20 years later, there is absolutely no evidence they have done anything to revise their Korea war plans without antipersonnel mines or that any President, Democratic or Republican, has ever told them to do so.

The U.S. Government deserves credit for spending hundreds of millions of dollars to clear mines and help mine survivors, and the Leahy War Victims Fund has been an important part of that, including the money I have gotten through appropriations to clear land mines.

But this girl—and there are countless more like her—we are told there are thousands of new mine victims each year, show the other tragic side of the story.

I mentioned on the floor the other day about talking to a young teenager in the hospital about the Bosnia war. She had been sent away by her parents to a safe place during the fighting. The war ended. She could come home. She was running down the road calling out to her parents and stepped on a land mine and lost both her legs. She wasn't a combatant. She became a victim. There are so many innocent victims.

Americans overwhelmingly condemn the use of landmines, and they expect more than they are getting from their government, and so do I, and so, too, should every Member of Congress.

It has been 20 years since President Bill Clinton at the United Nations called for the elimination of antipersonnel landmines. I cheered him when he did. Two years later in 1996 he said: ''Today I am launching an international effort to ban antipersonnel landmines.'' And I cheered that. But 18 years later we are still waiting. We are waiting for action, not words. We haven't signed the landmine treaty. We didn't sign it during the Clinton administration or the George W. Bush administration or this administration.

I have spoken to President Obama about this. I was encouraged when, in accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, he said:

I am convinced that adhering to standards, international standards, strengthens those who do and isolates and weakens those who don't.

I told the President how much I agreed with his words. Coincidentally, when he received the Nobel Prize it was a decade after the Nobel committee awarded the prize to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. How fitting it would be after all these years if my friend, President Obama, gave real meaning to the words he said when accepting the Nobel Peace Prize by putting the United States on a path to join the Mine Ban Treaty, and joining our NATO allies. This is what the President needs to do. More importantly, it is what America and the world needs.

I will speak further about this on another occasion, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

FRANKLIN REGIONAL H.S. TRAGEDY

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak on S. 1596, the Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act.

Before I do that, though, I want to say a few words about a terrible event that occurred this morning in Pennsylvania. The students at Franklin Regional High School in Murrysville, PA, suffered a terrible, devastating tragedy this morning. A person—and this person is believed to be a fellow student—took out a knife and attacked his fellow students before the start of the school day. It appears that as many as 20 people were injured, some severely. Our thanks go out to the first responders who did respond as rapidly as they could, and our prayers go out to those who were injured and their families at Franklin Regional High School.

PROTECTING STUDENTS FROM SEXUAL AND VIOLENT PREDATORS ACT

Mr. President, I want to turn to this bill that I have introduced, the Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act, S. 1596. I want to thank my cosponsors, Senator JOE MANCHIN and Senator MITCH MCCONNELL.

The inspiration for this bill begins with a story of a boy named Jeremy Bell. The story begins in Delaware County, PA. One of the school teachers in the school in Delaware County was found to have molested several boys and raped one of them. Prosecutors decided there was not enough evidence to bring a case. The school knew about what was happening and decided to dismiss the teacher for this appalling behavior. What was so amazing and disturbing is the school also helped this predator land a job at another school in West Virginia, even passing on a letter of recommendation so they could move their problem somewhere else.

The story ended in 1997 when that teacher, by then a school principal, raped and murdered 12-year-old Jeremy Bell in West Virginia. Justice finally caught up with that teacher who is now in jail serving a life sentence for that murder. But for Jeremy Bell justice came way too late. Jeremy Bell's father wouldn't rest until he knew he had done all he could to help to ensure that no child or parent would ever experience a similar tragedy.

Roy Bell, Jeremy's father, worked with Congress to create protections for children to ensure they were not victimized at school. I think for him it was some consolation for his loss. The House of Representatives responded to this terrible, terrible tragedy. On October 22 of last year, the House unanimously passed the Protecting Students Against Sexual and Violent Predators Act. But again, sadly, justice came too late. Jeremy Bell's father passed away just 3 days before the vote.

So we are now in the Senate with a chance to pass the same bill, a bill that has already passed the House unanimously. It is a bipartisan bill. The bill that I introduced is a companion legislation. As I mentioned, we have bipartisan support for this bill, but I hear some people suggesting that maybe we should wait, maybe now is not the right time. Maybe we need more time.

I want to say as strongly as I can that we have had enough waiting. We have wasted enough time. Let me explain why we cannot wait another day. I want to start with 2 numbers, the first is 130. Since January 1 of this year, 130 teachers have been arrested across America for sexual misconduct with children. That is more than 1 teacher arrested for each day of the year so far. And that is, of course, only those who have been caught and arrested. Every moment that we delay we are delaying rooting out some of these problems.

The other number is 73, and 73 is the number that comes from the Government Accountability Office. GAO says that the average pedophile molests 73 children over the course of that pedophile's lifetime. These predators actively seek out the environment where they can find victims. That is what they do. What better place for them than schools. They go from school district to school district, sometimes from State to State, methodically looking for victims. Every moment we delay we let a predator move on to the next of his 73 victims.

The damage that these predators do is just enormous. It is damage far beyond what any number can convey. Over the past few months I have had a chance to visit a number of child advocacy centers around Pennsylvania, meeting with the men and women who work with abused children, whether it is helping them through the criminal justice system or just helping them to start the healing process. These folks do some incredibly important and very, very good work. But again, you cannot visit one of these centers without being profoundly impacted by how devastating the abuse is.

I cannot come up with the words to convey how devastating it is, but I can let some of the children speak for themselves. I am going to quote from two students who were victims. Shannon was raped by a teacher. The teacher was later convicted of sexual assault and sentenced to life in prison. Nine years later here is what Shannon wrote:

> When I was a senior in high school, Mr. Peterson approached me and said I would need to go to night school if I wanted enough credits to graduate on time. And of course he taught those courses—a computer class.
>
> I was 17, and he raped me four times over the course of the year. He said he would fail me if I ever told. He also hit me and made threats against me and my family. So I didn't tell. I held it in for a year and a half.
>
> In the end 66 people offered to testify against Peterson. His first victim dated back to the year I was born. Some of those who spoke up were parents. Their daughters had complained at the time but nothing was done. That made me very angry. It still does. I learned that a handful of teachers and two principals knew about him. And his teaching license had been revoked in Michigan years before, but no one knew why.
>
> I am different because of what happened. I have to watch people all the time, analyze them. I can't be carefree.
>
> Now I have a 7-year-old son and two daughters, ages 3 and 1. I will home school my girls.

Next is a case of a boy from South Carolina named Gary, one of at least 29 boys abused by a teacher, Mr. Fisher, over the teacher's 37-year career. The teacher is serving 20 years in prison. Two school principals were sued for allegedly covering up the abuse.

What Gary wrote is as follows:

> I was 9 when it started. The abuse was frequent and long-term—until I went to college. I knew there were others, too, but until it all came out I never knew how many. You feel so guilty, so ashamed. It's frightening now to look back and see how calculating Fisher was. I did everything I could to get kicked out of school. I was in the guidance counselor's office all the time. Finally, in tenth grade I got myself kicked out for cheating.
>
> By the time I went to college I was drinking all the time. I was terrified to quit because then I would have to feel. But I couldn't drink and do school, so I entered rehab. I was 18. It took me a year and a half, and I've been sober since.
>
> My life is good now for the first time. You can survive it, but you have to deal with it.

He goes on to say:

> I always felt that what the school did was far worse than what Fisher did. Fisher was sick, an evil monster. But [the school] just calculated the damage to its public relations. We kids were disposable, which is a whole other category of evil.

So the question before us is what are we going to do about this? What can we do? What are we going to do?

My bill, the Protecting Students From Sexual and Violent Predators Act is a sensible first step in protecting these kids. It would require a mandatory background check for existing and perspective employees, and the checks would have to be periodically repeated. There are five States today that don't require any background check at all.

The second thing my bill would do is it would check all employees or contractors who have unsupervised contact with children—not just teachers, coaches, and school bus drivers. Anybody who has contact with kids in my view should undergo this background check. There are 12 States in which there is no such requirement from contractors.

My bill would also require a more thorough background check. It would require a check of four major databases, both State and Federal. In Pennsylvania, for instance, if an employee has been living in the State for 2 years or more, there is no Federal background check at all, only the State check, and I don't think it is adequate. The way these predators move from State to State, I think it requires that we check the Federal database.

Importantly, my bill would also ban what we call ''passing the trash.'' This is the horrendous practice whereby the school discovers they have a predator and they intentionally ease the predator out and sometimes actually facilitate that predator getting a job somewhere else. That should be illegal, and my bill would make it illegal.

The fifth thing that my legislation does is it would stipulate that schools cannot hire a person who has ever been convicted of any violent or sexual crime against a child. I think that is a very reasonable first step.

In addition, it would ban hiring of a number of specific felonies—not all felonies, but felonies such as homicide, child abuse or neglect, crimes against a child including pornography, spousal abuse, rape, sexual assault, and kidnapping. Any of those felonies are so egregious it would qualify to keep a person excluded from working with children.

In addition, anyone convicted of a felony physical assault or battery or a felony drug-related offense would be prohibited for 5 years, couldn't be hired for 5 years. The enforcement of all of this would be that if a State refused to adopt these very commonsense measures to protect kids, then they would get no Federal funding from the EASA. I think the States would adopt these reforms.

I would point out there is nothing the least bit radical about these proposals. In addition to having passed the House of Representatives unanimously, we in the Senate just passed virtually an identical background check requirement on the Child Care and Development Block Grant legislation we adopted last week or perhaps the week before—very recently. That bill essentially had identical background check provisions for daycare workers, and that is very sensible. That is an important and good step. It makes sense to protect children in daycare, but it makes no sense whatsoever to protect kids in daycare and then leave them defenseless when they move on to an ordinary school.

Finally, I want to emphasize that this bill has broad bipartisan support manifested in the House and here in the Senate. More than that, I think it is a moral imperative. Our children deserve to be protected now. If that is not a responsibility we have, I don't know what is. The protection didn't come soon enough for Jeremy Bell or Shannon or Gary, but we don't have to fail other children by delay.

I ask any of my colleagues who object to this legislation that passed unanimously in the House—legislation that is completely consistent with what we passed a couple of weeks ago—to please come forward with their concerns or issues. I welcome hearing any objections, if there are any, but I want to see a very speedy passage of this legislation.

It is my intention tomorrow to come down here to the Senate floor and ask for unanimous consent from my colleagues to pass this legislation here on the Senate floor. That will expedite this process and that will assure we put this important safeguard in place as soon as we possibly can.

EX-IM BANK

I have one other issue I want to address briefly before I yield the floor, and that is about the Ex-Im Bank. I believe this afternoon we will be considering a nominee to a very senior post at the Ex-Im bank. My focus is not principally on this particular candidate, but I think we need to ask ourselves some important questions about the way the Ex-Im Bank operates and what it does and how it does it. I hope we will make some very significant changes when we get to the reauthorization debate in the fall.

First of all, I should point out this is an institution—the Ex-Im Bank—that gives rise to a very substantial taxpayer risk, and it is large and growing. In 2007, Ex-Im Bank's total exposure was $57 billion. Today it is almost precisely twice that amount. It is $113 billion, and the Ex-Im Bank wishes to increase that exposure further.

In 2013, the GAO, after doing an audit, found multiple weaknesses in Ex-Im's risk management processes, failures to account for changing environments that could lead to higher losses, lapses that would not be acceptable in fully private institutions.

Another point I wish to make is—I hope we don't kid ourselves about this; I know sometimes people suggest to the contrary—taxpayers are systematically subsidizing the activity of the Ex-Im Bank, and the risk that taxpayers are taking is not adequately compensated. How do we know this? We know this because buyers of products that are subject to Ex-Im Bank financing get the Ex-Im Bank financing because no private lender is willing to make the loan or, if they are, they are not willing to do it under terms as generous as the Ex-Im Bank. That is all the evidence we need to confirm that they are systematically underpricing the risks they are taking, and I find that very objectionable.

There is another concern I have, and that is the nature of the activity, the financial subsidization it provides for certain overseas buyers of some American exports. The nature of this process inevitably creates winners and losers back here in the United States.

The Ex-Im Bank effectively subsidizes—and I will give one example. Indian Airlines gets a subsidy to purchase Boeing jets, and that is very nice, except that Indian Airlines competes directly with some American airlines and American companies. They are direct competitors, but they don't get the advantageous funding. Yet their foreign-based competitor does. How can that possibly be fair? How can that possibly make sense?

My final point is that one of the most predictable things in the world is that when we create a government entity to engage in an economic activity, that entity will be politicized. It is a creature of Congress and the government. It is going to be affected. Sure enough, it didn't take long for that to happen. It already happened in the Ex-Im Bank.

I have seen Members of this body come down to this floor and attempt to offer amendments that would require, for instance, certain quotas that the Ex-Im Bank must lend to certain places in the world that are geographically favored by particular Members for whatever reasons.

There are other mandates on Ex-Im Bank's financing, such as that it must accommodate certain economic activities or certain products. This has nothing to do with market forces or general exports. This has everything to do with the politics that individual cares about. This is the kind of politicization and distortion that inevitably occurs.

In my view, we ought to make it a high priority of our trade discussions to insist with our trading partners around the world that we have a mutual and reciprocal phasing out of these counterproductive, taxpayer-subsidized export entries. While we will not have the opportunity to do that with respect to this nominee we are going to consider this afternoon, we will have the opportunity to do it when the reauthorization debate begins in the fall, and I hope my colleagues will engage in that debate.

With that, I yield the floor.

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

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I think we are prepared to have several unanimous consent requests regarding the issue of how to care for veterans in our country. I first want to begin by thanking Senator SANDERS for his extraordinary leadership on the issue of caring for and supporting veterans, their families, their dependents, and the communities in which veterans live. There has been no stronger voice on the Senate floor for veterans on either side of the aisle than Senator SANDERS, and I appreciate his leadership. He has been spending a great deal of time on the floor explaining the importance of his legislation. He has joined me today to talk further about it.

Inside of this very important and major piece of legislation, there is a piece of it that passed the House unanimously that would authorize the construction of 27 major medical facility leases in 18 States and in Puerto Rico, two of which would be in Louisiana—one in Lafayette and one in Lake Charles. I have been leading the effort—contrary to the testimony put on the RECORD by the junior Senator from Louisiana—with Congressman BOUSTANY, whose district this is in, and he has been the leader of our delegation. There is no hesitation among our delegation about who the leader has been about getting these clinics built.

We have been working with the veterans office for years. We got them to admit that they actually made the mistake that caused our clinics to have to be delayed in their construction because of a mishap of great proportion in the way these contracts were bid. The veterans in our State—and Senator SANDERS knows this—have rightly been complaining for years that they have been left out and left behind.

Our entire delegation, Democrats and Republicans, has been fighting on their behalf vigorously. We have written letters, made phone calls, and made multiple visits to the region. Contrary to the testimony by the junior Senator from Louisiana, the fact is everybody has been working well together.

Congressman BOUSTANY got to pass this piece of legislation out of the House that basically says: Yes, let's go forward and build these clinics and not require an offset.

I ask unanimous consent right now to do just that and take the House bill that has passed with no amendments, no modifications, and pass this bill so it doesn't have to go back to the House. It can go right to the President's desk for signature. It costs $1.8 billion, and there is no offset. As I have said, in my view—and this is only my view—the veterans this is going to help have already paid the price. They have already paid the price. They should not have to pay twice.

I agree with the House of Representatives. There doesn't need to be an offset to this. I don't agree with Senator VITTER's amendment that there needs to be an offset. I think we just need to go ahead and unanimously decide to send this to the President's desk for his signature. I am confident he would sign this, and it would authorize these clinics not only in Louisiana but in the States around the country.

I understand there is some opposition from outside of our State. I don't understand any opposition from within the State.

I ask unanimous consent the Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3521, the bill read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Utah.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator COBURN, who is not here today, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. LEE. My understanding is that Senator COBURN's objection is based on the lack of a pay-for in this proposal. There is, however, an amendment that has been introduced by Senator VITTER that addresses this concern and fills this gap.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Veterans' Affairs Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 3521, and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration. I also ask unanimous consent that the Vitter amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to, that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Would the Senator yield for a question?

Is that an order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Does the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. LEE. Yes.

Ms. LANDRIEU. I understand that the House of Representatives passed this bill, H.R. 3521—and I will get the exact vote in a minute—with a vote of 346 to 1. They passed this bill, H.R. 3521, with a vote of 346 to 1, that has no offset.

Does the Senator from Utah have any reason to know why Senator COBURN would now require an offset since the bill and the politics is controlled by the Republican leadership in the House?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I don't mean to cut my colleague off, but Senator LEE is here on behalf of Senator COBURN, who has been more involved, and so I will give the history of it. Some folks in the Senate had concerns about the bill and the fact that, in their view, it was not paid for. I met with them and talked through all of these concerns. I could not convince them to drop those concerns completely, so instead we found a solution, which is the Vitter amendment that is at the desk. That amendment has been cleared within its four corners. Nobody in the Senate—no Republican or Democrat—opposes the amendment. We found that solution in order to pass the bill through the Senate, and that addressed Senator COBURN's objections to the bill alone. That is the solution we worked out.

I can't fully walk through all of Senator COBURN's thoughts about the bill on its own and whether it was paid for. I can just tell the Senator that I met with him exhaustively, was not able to get him to completely drop his objection, but was able to agree on this compromise—this solution to the pay-for issue. So that is why the amendment, which is at the desk, was proposed, which removes the Coburn objection and thereby fixes the problem.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Utah?

Mr. SANDERS. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont, objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana has the floor.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, that is very good to know that Senator COBURN is objecting—or not objecting—to an offset that is not a real offset.

The reason there is some objection from our side, and I think from Senator SANDERS as well, is because the Vitter offset is not real. It doesn't generate $1.6 billion in savings. So I think we should go forward with no offset because the $1.6 billion is not a real offset.

The CBO analysis of this offset basically says, from our preliminary estimate of the amendment, based on information from the Department of Defense, there are no savings—there are no savings—for drug-related purchases to the current law. The preliminary estimate is zero.

With that, I wish to reiterate my unanimous consent request—please don't interrupt—I would like unanimous consent for my amendment, which has no offset—and the bill does not have to go back to the House of Representatives. The bill can go straight to the President's desk.

I yield the floor.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I have a parliamentary inquiry.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator will state his inquiry.

Mr. VITTER. I would like to ask through the Chair, because this is significant information, whether Senator SANDERS would object to passing the bill without amendment, because in all previous discussions to date, I understood he would object to that. But that is very significant information, so I would ask that of Senator SANDERS through the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is not a parliamentary inquiry. However, if the Senator chooses to respond, he may.

Mr. SANDERS. I will respond later.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, reclaiming the floor and reclaiming my time, that is very significant information that can guide us with regard to any path forward. So I would like to know from the Senator whether he would or would not object to a UC to pass the bill without this amendment.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, that is a fair question. Let me ask my colleague from Louisiana—as he knows, I will be speaking more to this in a moment. I wish to thank Senator LANDRIEU for her strong support of legislation I introduced and for her support not only for veterans in Louisiana but for every veteran in this country. This legislation is supported by virtually every veterans organization in the United States of America.

I will respond at this point to my colleague from Louisiana to say that if I were prepared to support the Landrieu amendment, which has no offsets—and she makes a good point, that veterans have paid for this legislation in their blood already—would the Senator from Louisiana object to an amendment I offered for the comprehensive bill that had no offset as well?

Mr. VITTER. If I could address the Chair, I am happy to answer the question.

As Senator SANDERS knows, I have serious concerns with his much broader bill. So I am not agreeing to his far broader bill. He knows that. We have talked about that. We have talked about those concerns. I am happy to restate that.

Having answered his question, I would like to reask through the Chair if Senator SANDERS is objecting or would object to a UC request to pass this veterans clinics bill without the amendment at the desk.

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object, let me again thank Senator LANDRIEU, who has raised this issue with me on numerous occasions. The

issue we are talking about—I think Senator VITTER referred to it—is clearly not just an issue for Louisiana, it is an issue which addresses the need to see built 27 major medical facilities in 18 States and Puerto Rico. To my mind, this is a very important provision, which is in fact why I put it in a very prominent place in my legislation.

What I would say to my friend from Louisiana is that as important as that provision in the bill is, there are many other provisions of equal or greater importance. What I would say to my friend from Louisiana is that organizations—and, again, virtually every veterans organization in America, representing millions and millions of veterans, wants this body and Members of the Senate to not just give speeches on Veterans Day or Memorial Day about their concerns for veterans, they want this body to start acting on behalf of the veterans in this country.

What they want us to do, among many other things, is an advanced appropriations. I know my friend from Louisiana isn't a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and maybe he does not know that in the last government shutdown we were 10 days away from veterans—disabled veterans—not getting the checks they live on. This bill I have introduced addresses that.

Maybe the Senator from Louisiana does not know we have a major backlog problem; that while the VA is making good progress and significantly reducing that backlog, I as chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee want to make absolutely certain that when a veteran applies for a benefit, that benefit is adjudicated in a rapid, efficient, and accurate way, and my legislation deals with that issue.

I don't know if the junior Senator from Louisiana knows we have a real problem for veterans in Louisiana and across this country who are trying to take advantage of the post-9/11 education bill. Over 1 million veterans and their families are taking advantage of it but suddenly find themselves, if they move from Vermont to Louisiana or Louisiana to Vermont, they may not be able to take advantage of instate tuition. Our bill addresses that issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senators are advised that subject to a previous order, the Senate was to proceed to executive session at 2:30.

Mr. VITTER. I ask unanimous consent that the previous order be postponed for an additional 10 minutes so we can simply round out this very important discussion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANDERS. None whatsoever.

Mr. VITTER addressed the Chair.

Mr. SANDERS. I think I have the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. VITTER. I believe I made an inquiry through the Chair, so I believe I have the floor and I would like to reclaim it if that is appropriate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont currently has the floor.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, the point I am making is that furthermore, not only are we dealing with the instate tuition issue, which impacts veterans from Louisiana and Vermont and every other State, we are dealing with another issue in that we are going to extend for 5 years to 10 years unfettered access to VA health care for recently separated veterans. At a time when real unemployment in this country is close to 12 percent and many veterans are coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan and they are looking for work and work is hard to find, this legislation renews our vow to hire heroes because we believe it is important that veterans get back to work and take care of their families.

Mr. VITTER addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. I apologize for interrupting, but I just want to ensure that of the additional 10 minutes that were granted, I would have 5 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair is dividing the time equally.

Mr. VITTER. I apologize for interrupting.

Mr. SANDERS. Not at all.

I wanted to mention to my colleague from Louisiana, which he may or may not know, that we have a very serious problem in the military regarding sexual assault, and it is terribly important that the men and women who were sexually assaulted get the help and the treatment they need in a VA facility and we address that issue.

The Senator from Louisiana may or may not know that 2,300 veterans—these are men and women who suffered injuries in Iraq and Afghanistan and came back home—are unable, because of their wounds, to have babies, and this legislation is going to help them start the families they want.

The Senator from Louisiana may or may not know—and I know the Senator from Illinois Mr. DURBIN does know—that in this legislation we deal with the caregivers act; that right now we have 70-year-old women who have taken care of their husbands who lost their legs in Vietnam or in Korea or whatever war, and they are crying out for us to give them a modest degree of help.

What I say to my friend from Louisiana: Now is the time to stand with the veterans of this country. If he thinks it is too expensive, then don't send them off to war. Don't send them off to war. Taking care of veterans is a cost of war. They paid for it. I am very proud, again, that this legislation has the support of the American Legion, VFW, DAV, Gold Star Wives, Vietnam veterans organizations, Iraq, Afghanistan veterans organizations, and all the others—virtually all of the other ones.

I implore my friend from Louisiana to do the right thing and support this comprehensive legislation which addresses his concerns in this provision, but it does a lot more.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I think this discussion has been very important and very instructive because it underscores that not only does the distinguished Senator from Vermont object to my efforts to pass the veterans clinics bill with the amendment at the desk by unanimous consent, but he also objects to Senator LANDRIEU's efforts to pass the same veterans clinics bill, in her case, without the amendment, without the offset. I asked him that direct question. He made it very clear that he continues to demand that we pass his entire much broader bill and will not let this hostage go.

I think that is very sad and very inappropriate for him to object to my effort, for him to now object to the efforts of Senator LANDRIEU. She made the unanimous consent request to pass the clinics bill, the focused clinics bill. He is objecting to that as well.

It is also completely contrary to what Senator SANDERS has said before, working on these and related issues. In another instance in late 2013, November, Senator SANDERS himself, talking about our colleagues, said:

> I'm happy to tell you that I think that was a concern of his.

Another colleague—

> We got that UC'ed last night. So we moved that pretty quickly, and I want to try to do those things, where we have agreements, let's move it.

Where we have agreement, let's move it. We do not have agreement about the significant details of the much broader Sanders bill. It is not 1 Senator objecting about that, it is 43, but we do have agreement about this clinics issue. No one, including Senator SANDERS, objects to the substance of the clinics bill. We have worked out every issue, including through my discussions with Senator COBURN, about the pay-fors. The amendment at the desk solves that.

So when we take that bill and the amendment, no one objects to that substance. No one objects to it within the four corners of that material. The only objection constantly on the floor for the last several weeks—today again toward me, today again toward Senator LANDRIEU's UC—is, no, I need my whole bill.

We will continue to discuss those important issues and disagreements, but 43 Senators disagree with Senator SANDERS. Sixty are needed to move forward. In the meantime, can we at least agree what we agree on and not hold veterans hostage? They have had guns pointed at them before, but they don't expect U.S. Senators to hold guns to their head and hold them hostage over veterans clinics.

So where we have agreement, let's move it. We have agreement about the

veterans clinics. Let's move it. That is my effort. That is Senator LANDRIEU's effort, which again is being objected to, moving this focused clinics bill, by the Senator from Vermont. I find that very unfortunate, but I will certainly continue to demand that we pass this and continue to talk regarding all of the other important veterans' issues.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, we talk about holding hostage. The distinguished junior Senator from Louisiana pointed out that 43 Senators voted against comprehensive legislation that is supported by virtually every veterans organization in this country. The arithmetic is 43 voted against it, that is true. How many voted for it? Fifty-six voted for it and 1 was absent who would have voted for it. Fifty-seven voted for comprehensive legislation, 43 voted against it.

So when the Senator talks about holding veterans hostage, I would suggest to my friend from Louisiana that maybe instead of filibustering this bill and requiring an undemocratic 60 votes, let the majority rule.

The American people want us to pass this legislation. If you choose not to vote for it, that is your right. But I do urge you not to hold us hostage by demanding 60 votes when a very strong majority wants to see it passed.

With that, Mr. President, I would object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, can you tell me the order of business we are in now?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 40 seconds remaining on the current issue, following which we will proceed to executive session.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I yield back that time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF WANDA FELTON TO BE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

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 Wanda Felton, of New York, to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The remaining time until 3:30 p.m. will be for debate on the Felton nomination.

The Senator from Illinois.

AMERICAN CURES ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, a generation ago, an AIDS diagnosis meant a sure and agonizing death. It was 23 years ago, when I was in the House of Representatives, when I was walking to the Chamber for a vote when I saw a colleague and friend, Tom McMillen, a Congressman from Maryland, coming my way. You would not miss Tom McMillen. He played in the NBA. He was tall. As he passed by on the sidewalk, he stopped and said: Magic has AIDS. It was a stunning announcement that Magic Johnson had been diagnosed with AIDS. The reality is that was 23 years ago. At the time we felt this was a death verdict, there was no way to escape it.

Last month American researchers revealed that a second American baby born with HIV has apparently been cured of the virus with drugs delivered just minutes after birth.

How far we have come in 23 years—from an AIDS diagnosis meaning certain death to being able to cure for the second time a baby born with HIV with drugs delivered minutes after birth.

These babies were treated as part of a research program at the National Institutes of Health. Their apparent cures offer real hope for a quarter of a million babies who were born into the world this year with HIV—many of them in desperately poor nations.

It is not the only happening when it comes to medical research, by a long shot. In my home State of Illinois, Dr. Jose Oberholzer from the University of Illinois-Chicago and Dr. Xunrong Luo from Northwestern University are among scores of researchers throughout the country on an NIH-sponsored project to find a cure for Type 1 diabetes.

Do you know anyone with type 1 diabetes? I do. To think that we are close enough to even consider the possibility of a cure should spur us all on to want more research in this area done as quickly as possible.

These two doctors are part of an effort called the Clinical Islet Transplantation Consortium. Islets are a group of beta cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. Type 1 diabetes destroys these cells. Transplanting healthy beta cells into the liver of someone with type 1 diabetes can enable the person's body to start producing insulin on its own—a functional cure for type 1 diabetes.

This is not just a theory; it is starting to show results when it comes to this clinical research.

Why do I raise these amazing medical research stories on the floor of the Senate? Because the U.S. Senate and the House of Representatives each year vote on how much money we are going to put into the National Institutes of Health, and we have had some sad outcomes in recent years.

Did you know that over the last 10 years we have been unwilling to give the National Institutes of Health even a cost-of-living adjustment? So each year they have fallen behind in medical research just because of inflation. They have fallen behind 22 percent in awarding research grants such as the ones I just described because we have failed to provide a cost-of-living adjustment for them.

Does anyone believe we are saving money by cutting back on medical research? If they do, they are just plain wrong.

They had a program announced about a month ago at NIH called the AMP Program. It is a new undertaking. The 10 largest pharmaceutical companies have put up $150 million—not a great amount of money for successful pharmaceutical companies but an investment—to be matched by NIH, and they are setting out to use human genomic mapping and cell information to find cures for Alzheimer's, type 1 diabetes, and rheumatoid arthritis.

Can we afford this? Can we afford this research? Do you know what we paid last year in Medicare and Medicaid just for Alzheimer's patients? It was $203 billion—1 year. If we can, through our research, find a way to at least delay, if not cure, Alzheimer's, think of the misery that will be spared these poor families who suffer from Alzheimer's and think of the money we will save.

Are we so shortsighted as a nation that we have forgotten that medical research not only finds cures but saves us money that would otherwise be spent for medical care?

That is why I introduced, 2 weeks ago, the American Cures Act. It is different. There are not a lot of proposals like it before Congress. What I am doing with this proposal is trying to get Congress, on both sides of the aisle, in both Chambers, to make a commitment to American medical research, American cures.

Here is the commitment: Over the next 10 years, I want a commitment that we will increase the funding in medical research beyond inflation 5 percent a year—5 percent—for the National Institutes of Health, for the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Defense medical research, and the Veterans' Administration medical research.

What is the cost of that? The cost of that is $150 billion over 10 years—to make a commitment to go forward on medical research. It is a lot of money. It is a lot of money until you consider what the cost is each year of Alzheimer's—$200 billion—not to mention the cost of diabetes, arthritis, and so many other illnesses and diseases that call for huge investments when it comes to medical care.

Where in the world can we get $150 billion over 10 years? Where could we possibly find it? Let me give you a starting place. Increase the Federal tax on tobacco products by 95 cents. I am for that. I will tell you why I am for it. I have been fighting tobacco as long as I have been in Congress—the House and Senate—and what I have discovered is, if you want to discourage young people from smoking, taking up tobacco addictions that will ultimately cost them their lives, raise the price of the product. They stop buying it.

In my lifetime, we have seen the percentage of Americans smoking cut in

half. So raising that tobacco tax gives us money for medical research and reduces the likelihood that people will become addicted to nicotine and tobacco.

Mr. President, 700,000 Americans will not take up the tobacco habit if we raise that tax 95 cents. It is money well spent on medical research.

If we do not do this, what happens? We fail to find the cures for diseases, we continue to make massive expenditures in Medicare and Medicaid and other health programs, and we watch the world pass us by.

If the United States decides to retreat when it comes to biomedical research, other countries are ready to step in. Now, today, China is investing 12 to 20 percent more each year in government research and medical research—each year. In 8 years China will surpass the United States in dollars spent on government research and medical research. Are we ready to let that happen? I hope not.

For the sake of the people who live in this country who need cures for these diseases, and help, for the sake of the cost to our health care system that all of this medical challenge presents, and if we want to maintain a lead when it comes to researchers and doctors and hospitals, it is time for us on a bipartisan basis to make a commitment to medical research.

I hope others will join in cosponsoring this American Cures Act. A number have done this already, and I thank them for joining me. One of them is on the floor, my colleague from California Mrs. BOXER. She is always by my side. We have fought a lot of these battles together. And the list goes on: Senators REED, BROWN, HIRONO, FEINSTEIN, GILLIBRAND, CARDIN, HAGEN, CASEY, MARKEY, and MIKULSKI, and we are just getting started. I might also say that Congresswoman ANNA ESHOO is cosponsoring this measure in the House.

I cannot think of a more important thing that we can do to make this a better, safer nation, to reward research, to find cures for diseases, and to make sure our country continues to lead the world when it comes to biomedical research.

I hope my colleagues will join me in cosponsoring this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I want to thank my colleague from Illinois for his leadership in making our people healthier than they otherwise would be. He talked about the battles we have had making sure that we crack down on the tobacco companies that told us for years smoking was safe—as a matter of fact, do it, it will relax you—and they denied the science.

We lived through those years. Many years ago, I worked with then-Senator Lautenberg—and Senator DURBIN led the charge in the House—to stop smoking on airplanes. I remember coming home from these long trips and literally reeking of cigarette smoke—I never smoked in my life, but just sitting around it in the airplanes.

Now we are working together on NIH issues. We are very upset about some of the false claims that are being made about ecigarettes, and we want the truth out.

So before he leaves the floor, I want to thank the Senator.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. President, I am here for only a couple minutes to express my chagrin, my disappointment, my shock that not one Republican voted with Democrats to make sure women have equal pay to men. What a simple concept: If you work a job that is the same as a man, the pay should be equal, and that means women can get a fair shot in the workplace. And how do we know it is not happening? We know because there are statistics that prove that women are earning, on average, $11,000 less than a man for the same job; and that is $11,000 a year. Over the course of a lifetime, it is over $400,000.

Our Republican friends, in searching to come up with a reason—I do not know their reason; I do not get their reason—but this is what they said. They said—MITCH MCCONNELL, the Republican leader, said in a press conference—and I just read it; I hope I am wrong, and maybe he did not say this—but he said: We are hurting the very same people we are trying to help in this legislation.

Now, somebody explain to me how it hurts a woman to have equal pay with a man for the same job. How does it hurt a woman to be able to afford a better place to live with that $11,000 a year, or a better school, to send her child to college, or just to enjoy a family vacation or a used car that maybe they want to buy—or, or, or.

It is unbelievable to me. Every Republican voted against equal pay today for women. What is even more disturbing, every Republican voted to filibuster equal pay for women, meaning they voted against our even taking up the subject. They stopped us. We had a good, solid majority of Democrats—54. We just wanted to take it up and work on it and get it through. They filibustered this. It is, to me, amazing.

Senator MCCONNELL said that Democrats are obsessed with this issue of equal pay for equal work. OK, I will take it. I am obsessed. I want equal pay for women.

We are here in the U.S. Senate. Everyone knows what we earn, and everyone knows that a woman Senator makes the same as a man Senator. We have the same pension options and health care options, and that is the fair way. All the equal pay for equal work act says is: We want to enforce the civil rights laws that demand it. But employers now harass you, fire you, stop you from finding out what your colleague across the aisle makes.

If you even ask someone: I want to just check, am I getting paid fairly? I am getting paid $45,000 a year, and we do the same job. Can you tell me?—that alone—that alone—makes that worker a target for dismissal, harassment, et cetera.

This should not be. We should be able to find out and ask. That is all we are trying to do here. We are trying to make sure that the Civil Rights Act which passed in the 1960s actually works. Because the Civil Rights Act said: equal pay for equal work. But then all these rules came down and loopholes came down, and employers can fire you, harass you, or do whatever, if you even ask about it.

Everyone knows—I should not say ''everyone''—a lot of people understand the Lilly Ledbetter case. Lilly Ledbetter worked at a tire company. She was a manager. She was considered one of the top people in the company who did this work. She found out she was getting paid thousands of dollars less by the owner of the tire factory. She sued.

She won her lawsuit at the lower level. Then it went all the way to the Supreme Court. They said: Sorry, you waited too long to file your lawsuit. What? She said: I could not find out about it. I did not find out about it, she said, until a coworker left me a note and said:

> Lilly, I admire you. You're great. Do you know you're getting paid X thousands less a year than your male counterpart?

But she did not find it out for many years. So we had to fix that problem. BARBARA MIKULSKI led us, and the President led us. He signed the bill, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which expands the statute of limitations so when you find out you have been discriminated against you can bring a lawsuit.

All this is, is you can find out for sure earlier by asking someone. So I am in shock. Do not tell me women do not want fair pay, all they care about is flexibility. You cannot buy groceries with flexibility. If you want flexibility in the workplace, you can work that out. But set your pay first. I have employees, men and women, who want to get their pay settled. Then they will say: Is it okay if I work 4 days at the same level, but then I do not get paid for that fifth? That is fine if that is the flexibility workers want. But do not substitute flexibility and say: Well, if you want to work 4 days a week, we will give you that, but, guess what, you are going to be paid less for the job than a man. Please.

Yes, we are obsessed with this. We are because we Democrats believe in justice and fairness and equality, not just in words and speeches and reading great quotes from our Founders, but in reality.

That means, in reality, we want a woman in the workplace to be able to find out if she is getting paid fairly. I am disappointed, but I am also excited that HARRY REID is going to bring this back again and again and again in the hopes that our Republicans in the Senate relent and understand this is about

fairness and justice and equality and the right thing for women in this country. Not only women in this country, but for their families, their children. Two-thirds of women either are the sole supporters of their families or they are cosupporters of their families. This is an economic issue.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. 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. LEE. Mr. President, the American economy is the envy of the world, primarily because it is still seen as a place where anyone—regardless of who you are or where you come from—can work hard, play by the rules, and succeed. That belief is predicated on the notion that America has a thriving, competitive, and free enterprise economy in which the best ideas and hardest workers win the day, while those who are less successful always have a fair chance to try again.

The free enterprise system is not perfect, by any means, but it is fair. Unfortunately today, Americans increasingly believe our system is rigged. In President Obama's America, they have good reason. From the stimulus to Cash for Clunkers, from the bailouts to cap-and-trade, from Dodd-Frank to ObamaCare, every namebrand initiative of the President's term of office has distorted public policy to privilege well-connected insiders and elites at the expense of taxpayers and consumers.

The Export-Import Bank is another taxpayer-funded example of distorted public policy that further erodes Americans' confidence in our markets and our system. In short, the Ex-Im Bank exists to dole out taxpayer-backed loan guarantees to help American exporters. Most of the benefits go to large corporations that are perfectly capable of securing private financing anywhere in the world. That is to say, Congress allows Ex-Im Bank to risk taxpayer money unnecessarily to subsidize well-connected private companies.

This kind of public policy privilege, best described as crony capitalism, is a threat to the free market and to its moral underpinnings. Crony capitalism corrupts the free market by rewarding political connections over competitive excellence. It subverts the rule of law by codifying inequality. It undermines social solidarity by pitting citizens against one another, twisting cooperative communities into rival special interests.

That is why in Obama's crony economy, we are seeing record corporate profits but stagnant middle-class wages and an anemic, jobless recovery. Cronyism has promoted and exacerbated inequality. It has isolated the poor and it has squeezed America's middle class.

There are three principal reasons why we should start making this discussion part of the public debate and why we should start doing it right now: First, we should do this to fix the economy. Nearly all of our Nation's net job creation comes from firms that have existed for 5 years or less. But cronyist policies tilt the playing field against those very firms, and make it next to impossible for those companies to succeed, to grow, and to create new jobs that we so badly need, and that the American people so significantly deserve. Leveling the playing field creates competition in both directions. It allows smaller, younger firms to compete, and it forces larger, older firms to do the same. That dynamic competition is what creates new jobs. It is what creates new economic growth. It is what gives rise to new opportunities up and down the economy on every step on the economic ladder.

Second, this is a matter of basic justice. The American people have a fundamental right to equal opportunity under the law, and it is the job of the government to protect equal opportunity. If the very people who work hard and play by the rules are forced by government to bail out, prop up, and subsidize elite insiders who do not, then the land of opportunity, well, is not.

Third, as those who most support free enterprise and equal opportunity, Republicans must bear the burden of reform. We believe in the power of free markets and a voluntary civil society to expand, lift people out of poverty, and support a secure and prosperous middle class. So it is our responsibility to follow through on our own convictions and close our own branch of the beltway favor bank. It starts with conservatives having an agenda to reform government and to end cronyism. Fortunately, some of us have already started working on it.

These proposals focus on protecting the American people from the economic harm that comes from the collusion of big government, big business, and big special interests.

For example, we have policy reforms that force Congress to periodically reevaluate expensive regulations; level the playing field for all energy producers; open our higher education system to new students, teachers, and competition; give Americans the right to choose whether to join a union; cut out the bureaucrats who waste critical infrastructure funding; and, yes, eliminate taxpayer subsidies to organizations such as the Ex-Im Bank.

This agenda will create jobs, grow the economy, increase opportunities by allowing small businesses and forcing big businesses to compete on a level playing field where success depends on customer service and not on political connections. A conservative agenda to get right on cronyism will be good for jobs, for the economy, and above all it will be the right thing to do.

Eventually, later this year, the reauthorization of the Ex-Im Bank will be before the Senate, and I hope my colleagues will keep these points in mind. But before us today is the nomination of Wanda Felton to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank. This is a position she already holds, but it is being renominated so that she can continue holding that position.

Ms. Felton, significantly, sat on the board of the Ex-Im Bank, and she did so at a time when the Ex-Im Bank declined to take several recommendations from its own inspector general to lower its risks, which, in turn, put taxpayers at greater risk.

The Ex-Im Bank has also continued to make claims about the importance of Ex-Im on job creation without necessary caveats or references to the bank's methodology—claims the GAO has heavily criticized.

I cannot support putting someone back into this position after that person largely ignored these recommendations by government watchdogs.

For all the reasons I have mentioned, I respectfully and strongly ask my colleagues to oppose the renomination of Wanda Felton to be the First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. CANTWELL. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Wanda Felton, of New York, to be First Vice President of the Export-Import Bank of the United States?

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) would have voted ''nay'' and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) would have voted ''nay.''

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

The result was announced—yeas 75, nays 21, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 104 Ex.]

YEAS—75

Alexander	Graham	Murkowski
Ayotte	Hagan	Murphy
Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Heinrich	Nelson
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Portman
Blunt	Heller	Pryor
Booker	Hirono	Reed
Boxer	Hoeven	Reid
Brown	Isakson	Rockefeller
Burr	Johanns	Sanders
Cantwell	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Scott
Casey	Kirk	Shaheen
Coats	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Landrieu	Tester
Coons	Leahy	Thune
Corker	Levin	Udall (CO)
Crapo	Manchin	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	Markey	Walsh
Durbin	McCain	Warner
Feinstein	McCaskill	Warren
Flake	Menendez	Whitehouse
Franken	Merkley	Wicker
Gillibrand	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—21

Barrasso	Hatch	Risch
Boozman	Inhofe	Roberts
Chambliss	Johnson (WI)	Rubio
Cochran	Lee	Sessions
Enzi	McConnell	Shelby
Fischer	Moran	Toomey
Grassley	Paul	Vitter

NOT VOTING—4

Bennet	Cornyn
Coburn	Cruz

The nomination was confirmed.

NOMINATION OF TERRELL McSWEENY TO BE A FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSIONER

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

The bill clerk read the nomination of Terrell McSweeny, of the District of Columbia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the unexpired term of seven years from September 26, 2010.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will now be 2 minutes of debate equally divided in the usual form.

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today the Senate is voting to confirm Terrell McSweeny's nomination to an open seat on the Federal Trade Commission. This vote is long overdue as the FTC has lacked a full complement of Commissioners for more than a year. The confirmation of Ms. McSweeny will bring the Commission to a full complement of Commissioners and ensure that the mission of consumer protection can be fully realized.

Ms. McSweeny is a highly qualified candidate. She has already served as Domestic Policy Advisor to Vice President JOE BIDEN. She has worked here in the Senate—first as a page while still in high school and later as then-Senator BIDEN's Deputy Chief of Staff and Policy Director, and she has been a lawyer in private practice. She is a graduate of Harvard University and Georgetown University Law School. I have had the privilege of knowing Terrell McSweeney for a number of years, and I have every confidence that she will make an excellent FTC Commissioner.

The FTC undertakes critical work to ensure that Americans are protected from deceptive and misleading advertising and marketing and to ensure that American businesses do not engage in unfair and anticompetitive practices. I would like to commend the Senate for taking up her nomination and urge my colleagues to support Ms. McSweeny's confirmation as a Commissioner on the Federal Trade Commission.

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

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 Terrell McSweeny, of the District of Columbia, to be a Federal Trade Commissioner for the unexpired term of 7 years from September 26, 2010?

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, 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 bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) would have voted ''yea'' and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) would have voted ''yea''.

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

The result was announced—yeas 95, nays 1, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 105 Ex.]

YEAS—95

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

NAYS—1

Vitter

NOT VOTING—4

Bennet	Cornyn
Coburn	Cruz

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. We have a number of votes scheduled. They are going to go by voice, I am told.

Mr. President, we are going to have a cloture vote an hour after we come in tomorrow morning, and there is no reason we cannot be finished tomorrow, but that doesn't mean we will be finished tomorrow.

We will have to cooperate and have to work out the time problems we have with the matters that will be pending after we complete the votes on these two measures now.

So we could finish tomorrow. It is up to all of us. Otherwise, we may have to spill over a little into late on Friday.

NOMINATION OF DEBRA L. MILLER TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

NOMINATION OF STEVEN JOEL ANTHONY TO BE A MEMBER OF THE RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

NOMINATION OF DANIEL W. YOHANNES TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to consideration of the following nominations which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nominations of Debra L. Miller, of Kansas, to be a Member of the Surface Transportation Board; Steven Joel Anthony, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Railroad Retirement Board; Daniel W. Yohannes, of Colorado, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, 2 minutes will be equally divided for the Miller nomination.

Who yields time?

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

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

All time is yielded back.

VOTE ON MILLER NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Debra L. Miller, of Kansas, to be a Member of

the Surface Transportation Board for a term expiring December 31, 2017?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON ANTHONY NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the Anthony nomination.

Who yields time?

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

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 Steven Joel Anthony, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Railroad Retirement Board for a term expiring August 28, 2018?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON YOHANNES NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on the Yohannes nomination.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I yield back all time.

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 Daniel W. Yohannes, of Colorado, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, with the rank of Ambassador?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table. The President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative business.

PAYCHECK FAIRNESS ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Rhode Island.

The Senate will be in order.

Mr. REED. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MINIMUM WAGE FAIRNESS ACT

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I rise to speak about the Minimum Wage Fairness Act, which I strongly support. The minimum wage, first instituted in 1938, has served as a key way to protect workers in our economy, ensuring they are able to earn enough money to provide basic living necessities. However, the current minimum wage set at $7.25 fails to do that.

The Federal minimum wage has not been increased since 2009. Today an individual who works 40 hours per week, 52 weeks a year at the Federal minimum wage earns $15,080 per year. This is nearly $5,000 below the Federal poverty level for a family of three and almost $9,000 below the poverty level for a family of four. This means we have hard-working Americans who put in full-time work every week for the entire year yet still live in poverty. This is unacceptable.

If we fail to act, the Federal poverty level will rise with inflation while the minimum wage will not. As a result, families earning $7.25 per hour will continue to fall further and further below the poverty line.

The value of the minimum wage peaked in 1968, and it is now much lower due to inflation. If the minimum wage had kept pace with inflation, it would currently pay $10.74 per hour. While the value of the minimum wage has been on the decline, worker productivity has been on the rise, and that is a disconnect. Increased productivity usually means there are increased wages that reflect that productivity, but that is not the case with the minimum wage. If the minimum wage had increased with rising productivity, it would be worth over $21 per hour today. Yet the minimum wage still stays stuck at $7.25.

If we were paying workers based on the 1968 level, it would be much higher. If we were paying workers based on their productivity and their ability to do the job, it would be exceptionally high.

The bill that will come before us shortly will increase the minimum wage in three installments until it reaches $10.10 per hour and then tie the Federal minimum wage to inflation. This would ensure that the value of the minimum wage will not be eroded over time as it has been. The bill will also increase the minimum wage for tipped workers, whose minimum wage has been fixed at $2.13 for over two decades. I must salute the Presiding Officer for his insistence that this provision be included in the minimum wage bill.

Over 3.5 million Americans currently work at or below the current minimum wage, and there are millions more who work just above it. Raising the minimum wage would therefore increase the wages of everyone making between the current minimum wage and the $10.10 mark.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 16.5 million Americans would see their wages increased by this legislation. The Council of Economic Advisers estimates that 28 million people would benefit from the wage increase.

According to researchers at MIT, a Rhode Island worker supporting a family of four would need to earn $19.17 per hour to have a living wage, a wage in which he or she could adequately support their family. Yet the current minimum wage lags woefully behind, thereby putting many working families in dire financial situations.

The Economic Policy Institute estimates that raising the Federal minimum wage to $10.10 per hour—I would point out that our minimum wage in Rhode Island is $8 and that is higher than the Federal minimum wage—would give over 90,000 Rhode Islanders a raise. That would immediately translate to economic activity in Rhode Island, and it would immediately translate into growth in Rhode Island. That raise would affect almost 20 percent of our workforce. This is a critical way—in order to give families the ability to support themselves—to increase economic growth and also significantly begin to bring together workers at every level. We have seen extraordinary gains at the top level. We have extraordinary stagnation at the mid-level and the low level. We have to start bringing ourselves together rather than pulling ourselves apart.

Providing a raise to these Rhode Island workers would also impact an estimated 40,000 children in those families. Over 3 years, the Economic Policy Institute estimates this will cause the Rhode Island economy to grow by $77 million and support 300 additional jobs. We are talking about economic growth as well as fairness to working Americans.

The benefits of raising the minimum wage are vast both in my State and across this country. According to the CBO, this legislation would lift an estimated 900,000 people out of poverty. It would also help low and middle-income families who have been struggling in this economy. This would have a huge impact—and a positive impact—across the country.

Increasing the minimum wage is especially important to women who disproportionately work minimum wage jobs. Fifty-five percent of all minimum wage workers are women, including over 70 percent of the tipped workers.

Again, thanks to the efforts of the Presiding Officer, we are focusing on this issue of the tipped worker and their minimum wage.

While some have suggested otherwise, this legislation is also good for business. Studies show that higher wages allow businesses to save money because they have less turnover and lower training costs, which leads to increases in worker productivity that helps businesses succeed. An increased minimum wage can also help our Nation's small businesses to compete. It forces the big-box stores to pay wages that are comparable to those that are paid by many small businesses, which levels the playing field in the marketplace.

Finally, this bill will save billions of dollars on the Federal budget. By raising the minimum wage to $10.10, Federal need-based programs would have fewer enrollees and the costs of these programs would drop significantly. Researchers at the Brookings Institution estimate that increasing the minimum wage to $10.10 will save at least $11 billion annually in the Federal budget,

and these savings come both from the lower costs of Federal programs and increased revenues from taxing a higher base salary.

Some critics have suggested that increasing the minimum wage only helps teenagers, but in fact the average age of individuals who will benefit from this legislation is 35 years old. Nationally, over 84 percent of those directly affected by this legislation are at least 20 years old and nearly half are at least 30.

In my State, according to the estimates by the Economic Policy Institute, 77 percent of workers who would see a raise under this bill are at least 20 years old. This is not just the part-time high school student who works a few hours a week making the minimum wage; these are people who are, on average, 30 years or older who are working and struggling not only for themselves but, in many cases, for their families. This bill is something that is beneficial to workers throughout this country.

Opponents of the minimum wage have also argued that increasing the minimum wage will decrease jobs, citing a recent CBO report. However, the CBO report was generated without any new analyses on the part of the CBO, and their estimates are stated with a great deal of uncertainty.

In fact, the CBO's own numbers suggest there is a 16-percent chance that increasing the minimum wage to $10.10 would actually increase employment. Economists at Goldman Sachs and at the Brookings Institution say that the CBO report overstates the likely negative impact on jobs.

Further, over 600 economists, including 7 Nobel Prize winners, sent a letter to President Obama and congressional leaders urging them to support this bill, saying that ''the weight of evidence now [shows] that increases in the minimum wage have had little or no negative effect on the employment of minimum-wage workers, even during times of weakness in the labor market.'' They go on to add that it could help stimulate the economy as higher wages will lead to increased consumer demand and spending.

The most recent research suggests that rather than having job losses, this will contribute to a growing economy. The benefits of raising the minimum wage are immense for families, workers, and the economy as a whole.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation to help restore the minimum wage as a safeguard for workers and their families in this country.

RECOGNIZING 99TH ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REED. Mr. President, this month we solemnly recognize the 99th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Ninety-nine years ago the Young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire summoned and executed over 200 Armenian leaders and intellectuals, beginning an 8-year campaign of oppression and massacre. By 1923, nearly 1.5 million Armenians were killed and over a half a million survivors were exiled. These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and, indeed, throughout the world.

Henry Morgenthau, Sr., who was the U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during President Wilson's administration and who had urged intervention, later remembered the events of the genocide, saying:

> I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915.

The survivors of the Armenian genocide, however, persevered due to their unbreakable spirit and steadfast resolve. They went on to enrich their countries of emigration, including the United States, with their centuries-old customs and culture. That is why today we not only commemorate this grave tragedy, but we celebrate the traditions, the contributions, and the bright future of Armenia.

In particular, I wish to note the incredibly strong Armenian-American community in my home State of Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Armenian-American community, as it does each year, holds events in commemoration of this grave tragedy. One will take place this year at the Martyrs' Monument at the North Burial Ground in Providence. This monument was built 38 years ago in memory of those who were lost in the genocide.

This year I once again join with my Senate colleagues on a resolution that encourages the United States to officially recognize the Armenian genocide. Denial of this history is not consistent with our country's sensitivity to human rights, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. We must continue to educate our young people against this type of hatred and oppression so that we can seek to prevent such crimes against humanity in the future.

I also remain committed to supporting efforts as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee to provide foreign assistance to Armenia to promote economic growth and business competitiveness, strengthen military and security assistance, and support democratic reforms and sustainable development.

I also wish to express my concern regarding the recent fighting and violence that is endangering the Armenian community in Kessab, Syria, and has forced many to flee. This community and so many others continue to struggle in the midst of this conflict.

We must find a way to recognize what happened 99 years ago and show our steadfast support to those who are currently being impacted by persecution. I hope we can come together and do that.

With that, I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I rise today on three matters. First and most importantly is the issue of pay equity. Frankly, we should not be talking about this in 2014—the fact that women still too often do not get equal pay for equal work. Senate Republicans showed this morning—it is disappointing—that too many in this Chamber simply do not think closing the wage gap between men and women—closing the wage gap by which working women are victimized—is that important.

Think back to 1963, the beginning, not of the civil rights movement, of course, but of Congressional action in 1963, 1964, and 1965 on voting rights and civil rights. In 1963, the Equal Pay Act came up first. President Kennedy signed it. Women were earning 60 cents for every dollar men earned. Now, 50 years later, that figure has increased only 17 cents.

How many more years should people in this country wait? In 2012, median earnings for men working full time in Ohio were $46,700; for women $35,900, an earnings ratio of about 77 percent. The Paycheck Fairness Act would shore up the Equal Pay Act and create stronger incentives for employers to follow the law while helping women fight pay discrimination.

The pay gap persists across all occupations and educational levels. From the outset women are paid less than men just 1 year after college in nearly every occupation. The gap grows from there. As the gap grows in pay, the gap grows in pensions. Lilly Ledbetter taught us that. The decidedly lower pay that she received working at Goodyear showed up in a significantly lower pension when she retired. Over the course of a 35-year career, a woman with a college degree will make about $1.2 million less than a man with the same level of education.

As I said, women make less, their families have less, and the retirement income and savings are smaller. For Women 65 and older, their annual median income from all retirement sources—Social Security, pensions, and private savings—is about $11,000 less than men in the same age group. It is even more discouraging for African-American women, who make 64 percent less, and Hispanic women, who earn 53 percent less. That is so, so unacceptable.

As a father of daughters, as a husband, as a grandfather of 2-week-old Jacqueline Sally, I know—and so does America—this pay gap devalues women's work and discourages economic growth because women make up nearly half of today's workforce. At a time when families are struggling to make

ends meet, equal pay for equal work is not just a gender issue; it is a family issue.

In more than one-third of families, women are the primary wage earner. As the main breadwinner, women are asked to carry a greater economic load while making less than they deserve and, frankly, less than they have actually earned.

Many of these woman get up early, they take the bus to work, they stand on their feet all day, they come home, they take care of their children, and they do not ask for a handout. But they are asking for equal pay. If the wage gap were eliminated, an Ohio woman working full time would have enough money for 88 more weeks of food for her family, 9 more months of mortgage and utility payments, 15 months of rent, and 3,000 additional gallons of gas. Our economy would grow, boosting GDP by 2.9 percent, or $450 billion.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

Senator JACK REED was in the Chamber 45 minutes or so ago when I was the Presiding Officer. Senator REED talked about Rhode Island and the minimum wage and the impact of a lower minimum wage than it should be. They have a bit higher one in Rhode Island than in some States, and we have a bit higher one in Ohio than in some States. But raising the minimum wage to 10.10 an hour nationally would mean—he said 90,000 people in Rhode Island. It would be way more, hundreds of thousands in Ohio who would get an increase in the minimum wage and would get a pay raise if this body did what it should, which we are going to try to do in the next 3 or 4 weeks; that is, to raise the minimum wage.

The impact of the minimum wage is especially important for women. What is especially important for women is the so called ''tipped wage.'' This is the tipped wage for people who work in jobs where there are tips. It could be a valet, it could be a waitress or a server or it could be somebody pushing a wheelchair at an airport. Their minimum wage is only $2.13 an hour, plus tips, if people know to tip the man or woman who is pushing the wheelchair in the airport.

I watch pretty closely. I spend a lot of time flying between Cleveland and Washington or Columbus and Washington. I notice that more often than not, people who ride in the carts or are sitting in a wheelchair do not tip the worker whose minimum wage is $2.13 an hour. They do not tip the worker because I think they do not know to tip the worker. I do not think they are cheap. They do not know that worker may be only making $2, $3, $4 or $5 an hour.

But the minimum wage for that tipped worker is only $2.13 an hour. Whether they work in a diner in Gallipolis, or Chillicothe, whether they are working at the Toledo or Cleveland airport driving a cart or pushing a wheelchair, whether they are working as a valet in Cincinnati or Dayton, their tipped wage has been stuck at $2.13 since 1991.

The State of Maryland recently raised their minimum wage. They did not raise the tipped wage which is stuck where it has been for a number of years. Americans do not know this—that typically there is a subminimum wage that is a lot less. Most of the workers—the overwhelming majority of workers that get that tipped wage—are women.

We know that in restaurants the sexual harassment rate of workers is one of the highest in the country because they depend on customers for their tips and they depend on their boss for the distribution of the tips to get their minimum wage—$2.13 an hour. Some restaurants pay $3, $4 or $5—I am not saying none of them do, but to get their minimum wage—their tipped wage—simply up to the minimum wage.

Surely, as some will say, in some restaurants the workers make way, way, way more than the minimum wage. They are more likely than not male workers who work in the highest end restaurants. You are more likely going to see women in the diners and the lower-paid service jobs in restaurants.

DOOLITTLE TOKYO RAIDERS

April 18 will mark the 72nd anniversary of the 1942 Doolittle Raid, the first offensive action by the U.S. military following Pearl Harbor. Eighty men, known today as the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders, volunteered for an ''extremely hazardous mission'' without knowing the target, location or assignment. The Raiders, led by LTC James Doolittle, launched their B–25 Mitchell Bombers 650 miles from their target. After hitting their military and industrial targets in Tokyo and five other cities, they were low on fuel, the weather was deteriorating. All 16 planes were forced to crash-land in China or Russia.

Of the 80 men on the mission, eight Raiders were captured. Of these eight, three were executed; one died of disease; and four returned home. Their mission traveled an average distance of 2,200 miles over 13 hours, making it the longest combat mission ever flown in a B–25 Mitchell Bomber.

I would add that another aviation hero in Vietnam just walked into the Chamber—Senator MCCAIN—right at the time I was talking about the Doolittle Raiders. The Senator has signed our resolution and commendation for a Medal of Honor for them. I thank Senator MCCAIN both for his heroism, especially, and for joining us in this effort.

In 2002, I led a resolution to recognize the 70th anniversary. It passed the Senate unanimously. Early last year, I renewed my efforts to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the Doolittle Tokyo Raiders. We have got 78 cosponsors, nine more than the 67 necessary. This bill passed in the Senate in November by unanimous consent.

On November 9, 2013, the Raiders celebrated their final reunion. They have met every year since the end of—I believe since the end of World War II. They met at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Dayton. The meeting marked the last planned gathering of the living Raiders, which was celebrated by the opening of an 1896 bottle of Hennessy cognac, originally given by their commander, Jimmy Doolittle, on his 60th birthday.

Of the 80 men on the raid, only four remain alive today; only 3 were able to get to the reunion. Time is running out. I appreciate the efforts of Congressman PETE OLSON from Texas who is leading the effort in the House.

I hope the Speaker, the leadership, and both parties will take the final action needed to pass the legislation to honor these heroes.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF GALLAUDET UNIVERSITY

It is appropriate Senator MCCAIN is in the Chamber too. In 2008, Senator MCCAIN, who had served as the Senate designee on the Gallaudet University board of trustees, left during his Presidential run. Senator HARKIN and Senator MCCAIN apparently had recommended that I be the Senate designee on the board at Gallaudet University.

This week Gallaudet celebrated its 150th anniversary. It is an incredible place, as Senator MCCAIN knows. It is the only one of its kind in the world, a school for the deaf, created during the administration of President Lincoln 150 years ago in 1864.

Senator MCCAIN certainly will have reminiscences and stories about serving on this board, but my first dinner my first night at the Gallaudet University board meeting, the students, all deaf, came out and performed a dance for the board. A number of the board hear—as I do, obviously—but a number don't and they signed everything.

The students who were dancing to the music were able to dance because of the vibrations they felt on the floor. You could see this dance troupe, but if you hadn't known better, you wouldn't have known they were deaf because they were dancing an exact rhythm with the percussion, the beat, and the vibrations on the floor in the ballroom where the dinner was for the Gallaudet board.

I wish Gallaudet another 150 years. It is an incredible institution. It has served this country so well. It is partially congressionally funded.

Senator MCCAIN, Senator HARKIN, and now Senator MORAN of Kansas are all particularly interested in it. It is an honor to be part of it. I wish Gallaudet a happy 150th birthday.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator from Ohio for his service on one of the very remarkable experiences that one could have at Gallaudet University—the wonderful, loving, caring people who make us all proud of their success. I thank him for his involvement.

I also thank him for honoring our heroes today of long ago and far away

when the United States was in great jeopardy.

LITTORAL COMBAT SHIP PROGRAM

I rise to bring attention to the Navy's littoral combat ship—with not a great deal of pleasure in doing so. It is a troubled major defense acquisition program that, if not properly addressed, will join a list of failed procurements at the Department of Defense.

From the 13 arduous years LCS has been in development, we have learned yet again an important costly basic lesson: If we don't know what we really want when we procure a weapons system, we are likely not to like what we get, if we get anything. In this case, the Navy's poor planning continues to frustrate its ability to state a clear role for LCS, the littoral combat ship, has led to dramatic cost increases, years of wasted effort, and a ship that the U.S. Pacific Command Commander Admiral Locklear recently conceded only ''partially'' satisfies his operational requirements.

The list of how the Littoral Combat Ship Program has failed is ironic and—given the amount of taxpayers' investment to date—shameful. In LCS we have, No. 1, a supposed warship that apparently can't survive a hostile combat environment; No. 2, a program chosen for affordability that doubled in cost since inception and is subject to the risk of further cost growth as testing continues; No. 3, a ''revolutionary'' design that somehow has managed to be inferior to what came before it on important performance measures; and, No. 4, a system designed for flexibility that cannot successfully demonstrate its most important warfighting functions.

Like so many major programs that preceded it, LCS's failure followed predictably from a chronic lack of careful planning from its very outset in three areas: undefined requirements, unrealistic initial cost estimates, and unreliable assessments of technological and integration risk.

In 2002, the Navy submitted its first request to Congress to authorize funding for the LCS Program. Yet even then the program's lack of defined requirements drew criticism from the Armed Services Committee conferees. The conferees noted that:

> LCS has not been vetted through the [Pentagon's top requirements-setting body, called the] Joint Requirements Oversight Council [and that] the Navy's strategy for the LCS does not clearly identify the plan and funding for development and evaluation of the mission packages upon which the operational capabilities of LCS will depend.

Despite the conferees' concerns, Congress approved funding for the LCS Program and authorized hundreds of millions of dollars for a program without well-defined frozen requirements. The Navy, therefore, charged ahead with production without a stable design or realistic cost estimates. That resulted in frequent costly changes to the ships, even as they were being built.

Originally, the Navy wanted a small, fast, affordable ship to augment larger ships in the fleet, with several interchangeable plug-and-play mission modules that would be used with aluminum and, separately, steel-hull seaframes. LCS was to serve multiple roles operating in coastal or open waters as part of a larger battle force.

The Navy could have easily procured a small warship similar to those already serving in naval fleets around the world. The capabilities of such ships were well-known at the time and would have required much less development.

The Navy could also have upgraded older ships with a proven track record. Without any formal analysis of those reasonable alternatives, the Navy opted instead to develop a high-risk ''revolutionary'' ship that bore little resemblance to anything else in the fleet.

Despite the foreseeable costs of building LCS seaframes while development was still ongoing, LCS's original cost estimates were overly optimistic. Navy officials have since characterized those estimates as ''more of a hopeful forcing function than a realistic appraisal of likely costs.'' I can assure my colleagues that if we had known that was the Navy's cost estimates at the time—hopeful forcing function, more than a realistic appraisal of likely costs—I can assure my colleagues we would never have approved it.

While hope for low costs may spring eternal, reality is a far more helpful basis in generating cost estimates. In this case, a realistic estimate would have allowed legislators and top defense acquisition managers alike to make much more informed decisions on procuring the LCS.

But because of poor planning early in the program, LCS suffered through years of waste while demonstrating little in the way of desired combat capability. Hundreds of millions of dollars continued to pour into LCS each year, even though the program continually failed to deliver useful capability or conclusively flesh out the ship's unstable design.

Finally, in 2007—remember, 5 years later—Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter identified a need to slow down production so that a clear LCS design could be established and fixed-price agreements could be pursued before more taxpayer dollars were wasted. I strongly supported Secretary Winter's actions, and I still believe that he effectively highlighted the extent to which LCS was slipping out of control.

It was not until 2010, however, that the Navy ultimately began to implement guidelines to bring skyrocketing LCS costs under control. With congressional approval, the Navy overhauled and restructured the LCS Program and, since then, the cost of building LCS's seaframes has finally stabilized. But even though the Navy has stabilized these costs, the large investments sunk into the program to date have still not yielded commensurate combat capability.

Since the early stages of LCS procurement, I have attempted to shine a light on the lack of planning that has plagued the program. Last year, I authored legislation to reduce LCS production and require validation by the Department of Defense and the Navy that the program's seaframes and mission packages were on schedule and would meet the capability requirements of combatant commanders prior to additional funding.

Congress spoke resolutely on the issue approving that legislation and sending a clear message the LCS would need to justify its existence with meaningful progress toward becoming operational.

Despite that the cost to complete the construction of the seaframes has stabilized over the past few years, LCS continues to face another potentially crippling consequence of poor planning, and that is a serious lack in capability.

Just last month, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel identified this problem while announcing that the President's budget request for fiscal year 2015 would reduce LCS production by 40 percent, from 52 ships to 32 ships. Secretary Hagel said:

> The LCS was designed to perform certain missions—such as mine-sweeping anti-submarine warfare—in a relatively permissive environment. But we need to closely examine whether the LCS has the independent protection and firepower to operate and survive against a more advanced military adversary and emerging new technologies, especially in the Asia Pacific.

Other Department of Defense leaders have expressed similar doubts about LCS's abilities to survive combat situations. Acting Deputy Secretary of Defense Christine Fox in a speech on February 11, 2014, said:

> Niche platforms that can conduct a certain mission in a permissive environment have a valuable place in the Navy's inventory, yet we need more ships with the protection and firepower to survive against a more advanced military adversary.

The prospect of sending LCS into combat with the lives of American sailors at risk is even more chilling in the aftermath of the Government Accountability Office's July 2013 report on LCS. Early in LCS's development, the Navy intended for the ship to be a self-sufficient combatant that could engage in major combat operations and survive in a battlespace actively contested by enemy forces.

According to the Government Accountability Office, however, more recent Navy assessments suggest that LCS has little chance of survival in a combat scenario. Instead, LCS can only be safely employed in a relatively benign, low-threat environment.

GAO also found deficiencies in the ability of LCS to operate independently in combat, turning a supposedly capable warship into a vessel requiring significant support from larger ships of

the fleet. Such fundamental uncertainty about LCS's capacity to function as a warship in a combat environment demonstrates a lack of clarity regarding LCS's actual capabilities.

Recent GAO assessments continue to highlight major problems regarding the LCS Program. According to an article last Friday, a soon-to-be released GAO report will validate the need for LCS to be subject to rigorous testing and evaluation, not just anecdotal lessons learned from a single overseas deployment. And there is talk of another impending GAO report critical of LCS that will also likely echo the issues I have long cited that continue to plague this program.

GAO is not alone in expressing concern about LCS's capabilities. In January 2014 the Department of Defense Director of Operational Test and Evaluation published his annual report and noted that weapons systems aboard each of the two LCS variants are struggling to demonstrate required capabilities. The report noted:

> The Navy has not yet conducted comprehensive operational testing of the LCS [and is] still developing the concept of employment for these ships in each of the mission areas.

It is worth taking a moment to step back and consider the absurdity of this situation. Planning and development of LCS has been going on for 12 years, roughly triple the time it took to fight and win the Second World War. In that time, the Navy has spent billions of dollars and failed to even figure out how to use the ships it is procuring once those ships demonstrate some semblance of capability.

And lest we forget, whether LCS will ultimately be operationally effective, suitable, and survivable remains at best unclear. Failure this comprehensive is incredible, even for our broken defense procurement system.

The individual mission packages that were supposed to give LCS its real functionality in the fleet present another area of major concern. The LCS's are meant to be outfitted with one of three interchangeable mission packages tailored for particular roles in the fleet—antisubmarine warfare, surface warfare, and mine countermeasures. So far, the mission packages have experienced significant performance issues.

The antisubmarine warfare mission package has suffered particularly severe setbacks in recent years. When the antisubmarine package was tested by the Navy, it actually demonstrated less capability than predecessor systems. The Navy subsequently canceled the package and reportedly revised its entire strategy for procuring that aspect of LCS. The Navy has now stated a goal of fielding the antisubmarine mission package by 2018, but no independent assessment has been performed to evaluate the likelihood the Navy will meet that 2018 goal. The program's performance to date, of course, does not fill me with confidence that the goal will be reached on schedule.

The other mission packages have also experienced major problems. The Navy has taken delivery of early versions of the surface warfare and mine warfare mission packages. But according to GAO, both packages have experienced significant performance issues and neither has yet been fully integrated into the LCS seaframes.

The mine countermeasures mission package, considered by many experts to be the most important, is more than 4 years behind schedule. According to the DOD's Director of Operational Test and Evaluation, the mine countermeasures mission package has yet to demonstrate any of its required capabilities.

Given the utter failure of the mine countermeasures mission package to date, the Navy has altered its plan for acquiring this package. The full package will be delivered over a series of four increments and, if everything goes according to plan, the Navy will successfully demonstrate the capability of the fourth and final increment in 2019, 18 years—18 years—after planning for the LCS Program commenced. Until then, the Navy will be forced to retain the current generation of minesweeping ships.

Today, the Navy plans to purchase its final LCS seaframe in 2019, the same year when the mine countermeasures package is supposed to be ready. If the mine countermeasures package has suffered a delay by that point—and with the history of this program to date, a mere 1-year delay would qualify as an improvement—the Navy will have an entire fleet of LCS's with only two-thirds of their planned capability, even if all the other problems with the ships are fixed.

All of the mission packages need significant further testing and have to overcome major integration challenges. That work is likely to drive up program costs and leave combatant commanders without the tools or capabilities they need for years to come.

The LCS Program faces a daunting combination of capability failures and strategic confusion. The Navy does not know what the LCS seaframes will actually be capable of doing once all of them are purchased in 2019, and it does not know what role they will play, even if development miraculously goes according to plan. Against that backdrop, the need to slow this procurement is clear.

Recently, we learned that, at Secretary Hagel's direction, the Navy has established a task force to determine how LCS can best serve the fleet going forward. The Navy should, above all else, not repeat the mistakes of the past, and Congress must hold the Navy to account at each step in the process. This means establishing requirements and sticking to them, setting a stable design and holding to it, and zealously guarding against further cost growth.

I support Secretary Hagel's decision to limit LCS procurement to 32 ships. I have recommended further reducing the LCS procurement to 24 ships. More important than the raw number of ships, however, is the manner in which the procurement goes forward. As Congress considers the President's 2015 budget request and continues to conduct oversight of LCS and every major defense acquisition program, we would be wise to understand this particular program's failings or risk repeating them.

The program is still clearly riddled with uncertainty about what the ships will be used for and what they will be capable of. Production should not go forward until the Navy and DOD confirm that LCS provides greater capabilities than the legacy ships it is intended to replace and that the mission packages plus the seaframes have demonstrated the combined combat capability that our combatant commanders need.

I understand that in connection with Secretary Hagel's direction to limit LCS's procurement and develop a more capable follow-on ship the Navy is underway brainstorming on possible alternatives to LCS that may provide it reliably with the capabilities it needs at a comparable cost. Before making final decisions on any procurement, however, the Navy must first determine what problem it is trying to solve—exactly what operational requirements do combatant commanders actually have that cannot be met with current capabilities? This is the step the LCS Program originally skipped. Only after that basic question is answered definitively should the Navy start considering what material solution could be brought to bear on that capability gap. On major defense acquisition programs, that should always be our approach—LCS or no LCS.

While history of the LCS procurement supports my recommendation that we should not procure ships until we know what we want them to do, that outcome is also dictated by plain common sense. We live in an age of great fiscal uncertainty due to sequestration and other defense budget cuts. With that fiscal pressure, there is a much smaller margin for error in the procurement world. Every dollar wasted buying ships with unclear capabilities for unspecified missions is a dollar that could have supported a vital defense activity. The wastefulness of excessive concurrency—of buying a system that has not been tested and figuring out requirements and fixes on the fly—is more unacceptable than ever when so many good programs have to make do with sharply reduced funding. I will continue speaking out against wasteful concurrency, that is, acquisition malpractice, as I have done for years.

In today's fiscal world, spending money as we have done in LCS is not just reckless, not just wasteful, it is dangerous. It actually weakens our national defense. It is my sincere hope and firm conviction that in the future we can prove ourselves better stewards

of taxpayer money than we have in the past. And finally getting LCS right would be a big, long overdue step in that direction.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

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

REMEMBERING ERNEST B. HILLENMEYER, JR.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to and lament the passing of a man of great faith from my home State, the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Mr. Ernest B. Hillenmeyer, Jr., devoted his life to serving others. He passed away last Thursday at the age of 92.

Ernest, or ''Ernie'' as he was affectionately known by friends and family, was born on a farm in Lexington, KY, on February 26, 1922. Ernie's formative years occurred when our country was trapped in the depths of the Great Depression. It was during this time that he learned the value of a good education, of family and community, and of faith in God. Through good times and bad, Ernie carried these ideals with him for the rest of his life.

Ernie's daughter, Katy Hillenmeyer, has said that ''we'd all have to live to be 200 to accomplish what he did in his 92 years.'' This is hardly an understatement. After graduating from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Ernie served his country for 10 years in the U.S. Naval Reserve. In 1985, he was ordained as a deacon and served his parish at St. Patrick Church in Maysville and St. James Church in Brooksville. Ernie was heavily involved in establishing the Meadowview Regional Hospital and the Hospice of Hope, both in Maysville, KY. He also chaired the Hayswood Foundation for 10 years, served as a director of the Maysville-Mason County Area Chamber of Commerce, and was the first lay chair of the board of trustees at Thomas Moore College. Those are only a few of Ernie's many accomplishments from a lifetime of service to others.

Ernie is survived by his wife, Mary Agnes Farrell Hillenmeyer, his sister, Mary Hillenmeyer Fiore, 6 children and 11 grandchildren. Said his cousin, Robert F. Houlihan, Jr., ''He's loved and respected. And he was totally unafraid to die. You can't live a bad life and be unafraid of death.'' Although he may have been unafraid, Ernie will undoubtedly be missed by those who knew and loved him. I ask that my Senate colleagues join me in remembrance of the life of Ernest B. Hillenmeyer, Jr.

Mr. President, Ernie's obituary was recently published in the Ledger Independent. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in full in the RECORD.

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

[From The Ledger Independent, Apr. 3, 2014]

HILLENMEYER REMEMBERED FOR LIFE OF SERVICE

MAYSVILLE.—During his 92 years, Ernest B. Hillenmeyer Jr. lived by the motto his father instilled during his boyhood on their Lexington farm: ''Be honest, and be of service to your community.''

Hillenmeyer embodied that creed through the many decades and facets of his life, each guided by love of God, family and his community.

Hillenmeyer, former president of Parker Tobacco Company and a leader in the Catholic Church and civic affairs, died April 3, 2014, at the age of 92, at Maysville Nursing and Rehabilitation Center following a long illness.

He raised seven children in Maysville, where he lived for the past 68 years, and is survived by his wife of more than 52 years, Mary Agnes Farrell Hillenmeyer.

The World War II veteran helped establish Meadowview Regional Medical Center in Maysville and Hospice of Hope, which provides end-of-life care and through which, as its first chaplain, he ministered to patients. In 1985, he was ordained a deacon in the Roman Catholic Church as part of the Diocese of Covington's first class of men to enter the permanent diaconate and served his parish at St. Patrick Church, Maysville, along with St. James Church in Brooksville, where he was pastoral associate from 1998 to 2002. Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, where Hillenmeyer was the first layman to chair the board of trustees, awarded him an honorary doctorate in May 2013 for his lifetime of leadership and volunteerism.

''Deacon Ernie Hillenmeyer was a gentleman and a man of integrity,'' said Sister Justina Franxman, OSB, his friend and spiritual director for a number of years. ''He loved God, his family and the Church. He was committed to his ministry and saw Jesus in the people to whom he ministered. Ernie loved life to the full.''

''Ernie'' Hillenmeyer was born Feb. 26, 1922, in Lexington, to Earnest B. Hillenmeyer Sr. and Mathilde Scott Hillenmeyer and grew up on his father's farm. His passion for gardening and agriculture dates to his youth tending peach and potato crops with his dad, himself the son and grandson of nurserymen.

He attended St. Paul's School in Lexington and later graduated from Campion Jesuit High School in Prairie du Chien, Wis.

He graduated from the United States Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, N.Y., holding a commission from 1942 to 1952 as an officer in the U.S. Naval Reserve, from which he was discharged as a lieutenant.

He spent three and a half years during World War II as a deck officer aboard liberty ships in the Merchant Marine, sailing with the North Atlantic and Pacific fleets.

During the war, he met fellow Kentuckian Ellen Cochrane Parker, a Maysville native whom he married in April 1945.

His father-in-law, S. Alex Parker Sr. hired Hillenmeyer into the family's tobacco business in 1946 and the couple settled in Maysville, where their four children, Zoe, Theresa, Ernie and Cece, were born.

Following his first wife's death in 1960, Hillenmeyer married Mary Agnes Farrell of Ludlow, to whom he was introduced by his childhood friend, the late Msgr. John F. Murphy.

Married in October 1961, the couple had three more children, Ellen, Katy and Paul.

He frequently traveled abroad for business and hosted international guests in the creekside house he built in Huntington Park, one of two contiguous subdivisions he helped to develop in Aberdeen, Ohio.

Whether sailing houseboats, pitching horseshoes, playing bridge or crosswords, betting horses at Keeneland or cheering on the University of Kentucky Wildcats, Hillenmeyer enjoyed recreating with his family and friends, and delighted in competition.

In 1987, Hillenmeyer was a representative attending various Masses when Pope John Paul II visited and met with deacons for a conference, in Detroit, Mich.

In all his years teaching card games to his kids and grandkids, he never threw a hand. He took pride, too, in his vegetable and flower gardens, producing homegrown tomatoes and asparagus into his 90s.

Hillenmeyer began his long association with Thomas More College when in the mid-1950s he was invited to become a member of the Board of Lay Overseers, to which he was selected chairman in 1960. This Board recommended the college's move from downtown Covington to Crestview Hills and the construction there of a new campus.

Along with education, Hillenmeyer worked to advance ecumenism, health care and economic and human development.

As a member of the Limestone Ministerial Association, he led ministers and others to locally observe an annual week of prayer for Christian unity, now in its 42nd year.

He chaired a fund-raising drive to build a new hospital to replace Maysville's outdated Hayswood Hospital. For 10 years, he chaired the Hayswood Foundation, launching its grant program which donated funds to support St. Patrick School, the YMCA, The Boys and Girls Club and other projects in surrounding communities.

A founding member of the Council for Burley Tobacco, Hillenmeyer testified before Congress on behalf of tobacco trade associations, and formerly presided over the Burley Tobacco Dealers Association.

He served two terms as council member and vice mayor of Aberdeen; was local district chairman for the Boy Scouts of America; president of the Maysville Country Club; served as a director of the local Chamber of Commerce; formerly presided over Appalachian Industries in Vanceburg, promoting employment and housing; and was a lifetime member of the UK Alumni Association.

During retirement, he and his wife, Mary, routinely attended daily Mass, and prayer and scriptural reflection, and continued to nurture their deep bonds of affection and eagerness to share their faith with others.

''Ernie is a pillar—gentle and firm at the same time,'' cousin Robert F. Houlihan Jr., of Lexington said. ''He's loved and respected. And he was totally unafraid to die. You can't live a bad life and be unafraid of death.''

He is survived by his wife, Mary Farrell Hillenmeyer; youngest sister, Mary Hillenmeyer Fiore of Kansas City Missouri; six children, 11 grandchildren, beloved in-laws and many other relatives who were dear to him.

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11 a.m., Monday, April 7, at St. Patrick Church, in Maysville.

Visitation is 4 to 8 p.m., April 6, with Vigil Prayers at 7:30 p.m. at the church.

Burial will be in St. Patrick Cemetery.

Following the committal rite at St. Patrick Cemetery, friends and family are invited to gather for food and fellowship at the Limestone Center.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the John J. Brannen Foundation, in care of St. Patrick School, 318 Limestone Street, Maysville, Ky. 41056, or St. Patrick Church, 111 East Third Street, Maysville, Ky. 41056.

Woodhead Funeral Home, Falmouth, is serving the family.

TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER KATHY FELGER

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, today I recognize Commander Kathy Felger, a congressional affairs fellow for the U.S. Coast Guard on the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and other Members of the Committee over the past 2 years.

A native Hoosier, Commander Felger graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in 1997. Since that time she has held various positions in the Coast Guard, most of them at sea as a ship driver. She will next serve as commanding officer of *Thetis*, a Famous class cutter, based out of Key West, FL with the primary missions of law enforcement, search and rescue, homeland security, and national defense.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Commander Felger for all of the fine work she has done and for her continued service to our Nation. I wish her continued success in the years to come.

MARTIN DE PORRES CENTER

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the 10th anniversary of the Martin de Porres Center in Columbus, OH. Named after the Dominican Saint Martin de Porres, and sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of Peace, the center was founded in 2004 as a place for spirituality, education, arts, and ministry outreach to the people of central Ohio.

Over the last decade, the center has become a pillar of the central Ohio community, bringing people together and helping them reach their full potential. For example, through the Dominican Learning Center, members of the community are able to participate in the adult literacy program, which provides free one-on-one tutoring. The center also serves the Columbus region by connecting youth to its older population through discussions and study groups.

I have visited the Martin de Porres Center and have seen firsthand the excellent work of the Dominican Sisters of Peace. The positive contributions made by the center are countless. Its outreach and dedication to the region in spiritual, mental, and artistic growth have been commendable. I thank everyone involved in making the center's first 10 years a success and wish them the best of luck in the coming decades.

COMMENDING OHIO HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to honor 393 high school seniors in eight northeast Ohio counties for their commendable decision to enlist in the United States Armed Forces. Of these 393 seniors from 129 high schools in 106 towns and cities, 91 will enter the Army, 104 will enter the Marine Corps, 47 will enter the Navy, 32 will enter the Air Force, 5 will enter the Coast Guard, 100 will enter our Ohio Army National Guard, and 14 will enter into the Ohio Air National Guard. In the presence of their parents/guardians, and high school counselors, military leaders, city and business leaders, all 393 will be recognized on May 7, 2014 by ''Our Community Salutes of Northeast Ohio.''

In a few short weeks, these young men and women will join their classmates in celebration of their high school graduation. At a time when many of their peers are looking forward to pursuing vocational training or college degrees, or are uncertain about their future, these young men and women instead have chosen to dedicate themselves to military service in defense of our rights, our freedoms and our country. They should know that they have full support of this Senate Chamber, and of the American people, who are with them in whatever challenges may lie ahead.

These 393 young men and women are the cornerstone of our liberty. It is thanks to their dedication and the dedication of an untold number of patriots just like them that we are able to meet here today, in the U.S. Senate, and openly debate the best solutions to the many diverse problems that confront our country. It is thanks to their sacrifices that the United States of America remains a beacon of hope and freedom in a dangerous world. We are grateful to them, and we are grateful to their parents and their communities for instilling in them not only the mental and physical abilities our Armed Forces require, but more importantly the character, the values and the discipline that leads someone to put service to our Nation over self.

I would like to personally thank these 393 graduating seniors for their selflessness and the courage that they have shown by volunteering to risk their lives in defense of our Nation. We owe them, along with all those who serve our country, a deep debt of gratitude.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the names of the 393 high school seniors.

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

UNITED STATES ARMY—91

Anderson—Cuyahoga Falls; Adang—Conneaut; Adkins—Parma; Ashworth—Akron; Baucco—Brunswick; Boyer—Akron; Brewton—Akron; Buchler—Mayfield Heights; Burhoe—Fairlawn; Canfield—Deerfield; Chessar—Mayfield Heights; Clark—Wickliffe; Clay—North Royalton; Cordova—Lorain; Curnutte—Norton; Dangler—North Olmsted; Detzel—Seven Hills; Elkins—Mogadore; Faught—Brunswick; Finn—Akron; Fischbach—Geneva; Ford—Akron; Fuller—Parma Heights; Gadson—Akron; Genovese—Tallmadge; Gertz—Solon; Gilbert—Twinsburg; Glas—Norton; Gonda—North Olmsted; Good—Cuyahoga Falls; Griggs Oneal—Akron; Gromek—Mentor; Hammond—Brooklyn; Hardy—Parma Heights; Hemerlein—Solon; Herman—Rootstown; Holland-Bell—Akron; Hurd—Lakewood; Johns—Cuyahoga Falls; Johnson—Eastlake; Kearney—Garrettsville; Keathley—Lorain; Keathley—Lorain; Kenney—Euclid; Kuhn—Madison; Loomis—Copley; Lucas—Cleveland; Maldonado—Lorain; Martin—North Olmsted; Mehl—Aurora; Mendez—Cleveland; Messner—Cuyahoga Falls; Milczewski—Brooklyn; Minor—Wadsworth; Moran—Litchfield; Morris—Grafton; Nelson—Wadsworth.

Neuman—Independence; Nobles—Akron; Nordstrom—Maple Heights; Norman—Akron; Ornelas Ramirez—Lorain; Packard—Cleveland; Payne—Elyria; Perry—Geneva; Post—Ravenna; Prigmore—Akron; Rees—Brunswick; Rippe—Grafton; Rodriguez—Cleveland; Rush—Willoughby; Rutherford—Medina; Sanchez Gonzalez—Cleveland; Sapper—Cuyahoga Falls; Skudrin—Cleveland; Smith—Mogadore; St. John—Hudson; Strand—Willoughby; Strzala—Middleburg Heights; Sutter—Berea; Sweitzer—Stow; Swisher—Mogadore; Taylor—Cleveland; Thomas—Akron; Tschannen—Wadsworth; Venable—Geneva; Warren—Cuyahoga Falls; Williams—Beachwood; Wilson—Akron; Wray—Akron; Wright—Lakewood.

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS—104

Adigwe—Cleveland; Adkins—Cleveland; Albertson—Akron; Arnold—Berea; Arrington—Canton; Balcomb, Jr.—Ashtabula; Binkley—Canton; Blackman—Cleveland; Blazick—Cuyahoga Falls; Blunk—Berea; Brunner—North Olmsted; Cale—Madison; Caraballo—Lakewood; Carlisle—Cleveland Heights; Carlton—Ashtabula; Carpenter—Barberton; Chandler—Maple Heights; Chasar—Akron; Ciptak—Akron; Colon—Painesville; Corral—Cleveland; Csonka—Hartville; Davis—Massillon; De Hoff—Mantua; Dibble—Akron; Downing—Brook Park; Finlaw—Akron; Fitzgerald—Massillon; Garber—Akron; Gayheart—Ashtabula; Gilbert—Ravenna; Givens—Hartville; Gooch—Cleveland; Gordon—Lakewood; Green—Silver Lake; Greig—Mentor; Hanzak—Madison; Harkenrider—Cleveland; Helsel—Cleveland; Hershberger—Massillon; House—North Olmsted; Imburgia—North Royalton; James—Barberton; Johnson—Canton; Juratovac—Madison.

Knoch-Hawkins—Fairlawn; Koons—Willoughby; Kovats—Rome; Lacy—Copley; Lawson—Lyndhurst; Lemmon—Barberton; Lytle—Mogadore; MacMillan—Bay Village; McGrath—Madison; Meadows—Akron; Metz—Columbia Station; Miker—Parma; Miller, C—Massillon; Miller, R—Massillon; Milton—Westlake; Montecalvo—Akron; Morek—Euclid; Nagle—Columbia Station; Natko—Akron; Nelson—Copley; Novel—Westlake; Osborne—North Royalton; Pare—North Royalton; Patel—Strongsville; Person—Painesville; Price—Shaker Heights; Radisek—Bay Village; Reed—Akron; Rhinehardt—Twinsburg; Richmond—Massillon.

Ries—Massillon; Rivera—Cleveland; Roney—Chagrin Falls; Ryan, D—Mentor; Ryan, R—Parma; Schnell—Canton; Scott—Orwell; Shimek—Ashtabula; Smith, B—Akron; Smith, C—Painesville; Smith, J—Deerfield; Spicer—Norton; Strukel—Mentor; Sutyak—Madison; Tatarko—Twinsburg; Thomsen—Cleveland; Ticherich—Berea; Trevethan—Reminderville; Trump—Canton; Utz—Orwell; Vechik—Brimfield; Wadsworth—Akron; Wagner—Canal Fulton; Wallis—Berea; Warlop—Clinton; Weitendorf—Hudson; Winston—North Olmsted; Wood—Fairlawn; Yost—Akron.

UNITED STATES NAVY—47

Beddard—Bedford; Bowers—Avon Lake; Buga—Vermilion; Burns—South Euclid; Cabalu—Parma; Daily—North Olmsted; DeCesare, Jr.—Sagamore Hills; Donze—Akron; East—Brunswick; Elliott—Cleveland; Gantose—Seville; Gordon—Westlake; Harvey—Wadsworth; Herbert—Painesville; Heyduk—Medina; Hill—Hudson; Hill-Ross—Lorain; Howells—Cleveland; Hruska—Garfield Heights; Johnson—South Euclid; Kopp—Garfield Heights; Long—Barberton; Madonna—Madison; Marks—Barberton; McNeeley—North Olmsted; Mennell—Rittman.

Mutnansky—Elyria; Pacheco—Cleveland; Payne—Elyria; Pikula—Willowick; Poorman II—Canton; Rhodes—Willowick; Rodriguez—Elyria; Schlageter—Mentor; Seamon—Medina; Stropko-Jorgenson—North Olmsted; Surbella—Conneaut; Sweeney—Willoughby; Tokar—Wickliffe; Vorndran—Mentor; Wilkerson—Berea; Williams, Jr.—Cleveland; Wilson—Cleveland; Witten—Cleveland; Wright—South Euclid; Yates—Elyria; Yeager—Barberton.

UNITED STATES AIR FORCE—32

Adamczyk—Medina; Begin—Walton Hills; Cox—Wadsworth; Dyer—Norton; Erb—Fairport Harbor; Estrada—Olmsted Falls; Fitzpatrick—Lorain; Friedrick—Medina; Frye—Parma; Gabel—Stow; Gioiello—Sheffield Lake; Graf—Medina; Gregory—Elyria; Hayes—North Ridgeville; Howard—Wellington; Julius—Avon; Konokpa—Parma; Lane—Cuyahoga Falls; Lomax—East Cleveland; Matheny—Stow; McEntire—Avon Lake; Morgan—Akron; Prukey—Madison; Robbins—Uniontown; Rocazella—Chardon; Saunders—Akron; Sincere—Cuyahoga Falls; Suire—Lakewood; Swit—Cleveland; Todd—University Heights; Turney—Amherst; Wagner—Wellington.

UNITED STATES COAST GUARD—5

Adams—Norton; Bowen—Berea; Milam—Olmsted Township; Montgomery—Fremont; Mozik—Copley.

OHIO ARMY NATIONAL GUARD—100

Acaba—Cleveland; Anderson III—Wellington; Angell—Vermilion; Applegarth—Mogadore; Barker—Norton; Bartch, Jr.—Middleburg Heights; Bohnsack—Concord; Brochu—Avon Lake; Brown—Lorain; Burgess—Wellington; Champe—Amherst; Clements—Cleveland; Collins—Oberlin; Coyne—Thompson; Creakman—Parma Heights; Cuckler—Barberton; Dorrer—Lyndhurst; Dorrough—Cleveland; Duncan—Brook Park; Dungan—North Ridgeville; Dunning—Chardon; Edwards—Cleveland; Fofana—Euclid; Foltz—Grafton; Ford—East Cleveland; Gold—Medina; Gruszka—Macedonia; Harkins—Grand River; Harris—Akron; Hayes—Cleveland; Heath—Akron; Hildreth—Lorain; Hill—Westlake; Holley—Akron; Holzwarth—Twinsburg; Hrusovsky—Seven Hills; Hunt—Brooklyn; Jennings, J—Cleveland; Jennings, S—Akron; Jennings—Akron.

Johns—Brunswick; Kasperski—Independence; Kawkabani—Mentor; Kerrigan—Fairview; Kucho—Akron; Kurzinger—Mentor; Lahetta—Amherst; Lansdale—Akron; Lantz—Uniontown; La Rosa—Berea; Lemley—Cleveland; Lewis—Ravenna; Macklin—Bedford; Manu—Tallmadge; Marek—Brunswick; McClary—Avon; McMillion—Olmsted Falls; Mellone—Chagrin Falls; Milbrandt—Ashtabula; Miller, A—Parma; Miller, M—Chardon; Montgomery—Uniontown; Muckley—Hartville; Mugongo—Cleveland; Munger—Diamond; Naro—Rome; Nazario—Cleveland; Nervo—Stow; Novilla—Northfield; Otto—Ashtabula; Paden—Brunswick; Parker—Willoughby Hills; Perkins—Cleveland; Pyatt—Fairview Park; Remenyi—Uniontown.

Riegelmayer—Berea; Rivera—Cleveland; Robinson—Cleveland; Sabol—Cleveland; Sammon—Parma; Scott-Alston—Lorain; Shull—North Ridgeville; Slitor—Lakewood; Smith, A—Akron; Smith, B—Ashtabula; Smith, J—Euclid; Smith, R—Cleveland; Spickard—Akron; Stewart—Cleveland; Strader—Vermilion; Tarter—Rootstown; Taylor—Andover; Terry—Ravenna; Todt—Broadview Heights; Waleri—Vermilion; Washington—Cleveland; Waterhouse—Akron; Williams—Akron; Wolf—Wadsworth; Wright—Cleveland.

OHIO AIR GUARD—14

Benson—Rootstown; Craft—Rootstown; Fix—Akron; Gearhart—Wadsworth; Head—Novelty; Kociuba—North Royalton; Koltas—Sheffield Lake; Nutter—Norwalk; Steiner—Medina; Stilley—Cuyahoga Falls; Todd—Deerfield; Tyler—Canton; Varnis—Avon Lake; Velez—Lorain.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO DAVID P. SMITH

• Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, it is with great pleasure that I recognize a respected leader from Southwest Colorado, city attorney David P. Smith, of Durango, for his impeccable leadership and service. David retired on April 1, 2014, after a long and distinguished career.

David is a consummate public servant, having served the city of Durango for 37 years. In his capacity as city attorney, David has served at the pleasure of 55 different city councilors. His tenure is the longest of any city attorney in the city of Durango's 133 year history.

David's legal career, which began 45 years ago in general practice, is marked by his outstanding level of professionalism. David is recognized as a leader among legal professionals in Southwest Colorado, fostering cooperative relationships among community stakeholders and governmental entities.

In service to his local community, David is committed to the advancement of high-quality education. David has served as a board member and president of the school board for the 9R School District, on the Durango Foundation for Educational Excellence, and on the advisory board for Animas High School.

After full engagement and an integral role in shaping the future of Durango and Southern Colorado for decades, David is transitioning from his service as the city attorney to enter a well-deserved retirement. I am pleased to recognize David's extraordinary service to the city of Durango before the Senate today. I wish him all the best in his retirement; may the next phase of his life be equally as remarkable.•

REMEMBERING PAUL PAWLAK, SR.

• Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize and honor the life and legacy of Paul Pawlak, Sr. I knew Paul from my work in Connecticut State government. He was a dedicated public servant and family man who worked on behalf of the town of Seymour and the State of Connecticut for his entire life.

Living in Seymour, the town where he graduated from high school, Paul worked as an electrician for more than 40 years. During that time, he also tirelessly served his community in public office, serving as first selectman for 4 years, as second selectman for 8 years, Chairman of Seymour's Board of Education for 12 years, and a member of the Connecticut House of Representatives for 12 years. In the State legislature, he placed particular importance on protecting our natural environment, serving as chair of the Water Resources Committee and helping to fight pollution with the Clean Waters Act.

Paul also believed in the importance of public health and of strong and responsive public institutions to maintain it. He was the first chairman of the Lower Naugatuck Valley Public Health Department, as well as a member of the board of directors of the Public Health Nursing and Homemaker's Services. And he understood that all these institutions needed to work together and cooperate in order to accomplish their missions. He helped to form the Valley Council of Governments and served as its first chairman.

Paul's passing is mourned by all those who knew him and the many people whose lives he affected for the better through his work. Of course, however, those who will miss him the most are those who were closest to him: his wife Mildred, his brother Andrew, his children Paul Jr., Joseph, David, and Richard, and the many other family members and friends he leaves behind.

For his service to Connecticut, and for the legacy of good work and family loyalty that he created, I honor Paul Pawlak, and I know that he will not be forgotten.•

REMEMBERING BUDDY BROWN SPIVEY

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I wish to honor a larger than life personality and a true American hero, Buddy Brown Spivey, who was recently interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

Buddy's story is truly inspirational. While serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, he was deployed to Vietnam. On December 7, 1966, he was severely injured by an explosion that led most of his

unit to believe he died that day. The explosion took Buddy's eyesight, his right leg, and caused brain damage. He refused to allow it to take his spirit.

After years of rehabilitation, Buddy returned to Arkansas with the intention of helping his fellow veterans live happy, productive lives after service. That was the thing about Buddy, he never stopped thinking of others despite the difficult circumstances he found himself in after his own military service.

After earning his master's degree at the University of Arkansas, Buddy went to work for the Blinded Veterans Association, where he served as field representative for 10 years. He later worked as a counseling psychologist and social worker at the VA hospital in Little Rock.

It has been said that he rarely missed a day of work. Helping his fellow veterans was a job he was paid to do until he retired in 2007, but continued to do long after that. That is how dedicated he was to his fellow veterans.

Spivey family members will regale you with stories about Buddy's captivating personality. He was known as a sharp, at times flashy, dresser who wore a suit and tie to work long after business casual became the norm. He was a masterful storyteller, but he also listened to others' stories with the same intensity. After repeat meetings, people were often amazed that Buddy remembered every detail of a person's story from the last time they met.

Most importantly, Buddy inspired people. His sacrifices on the battlefield earned him two Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars. His sacrifices after service earned him accolades of another sort. The lives he touched, the people he helped, will always remember that sharply dressed man who put others first.●

REMEMBERING PAUL RINEBOLD

● Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I wish to honor Paul Rinebold, a dedicated Ohio dairy farmer, great-grandfather, and community member who passed away last month. Ohio and our Nation are made strong by people like Paul—men and women who have dedicated their lives to their family, community, and work.

A son of Fostoria, OH, Paul lived his entire life in his community. After graduating from Hopewell-Loudon High School in Bascom, OH, he joined the U.S. Army and served his country for 7 years. During that time, in 1959, he married Ardith Bloom of Fremont, OH.

Mr. Rinebold was a self-employed dairy farmer who founded PAR 3 Farms, named after himself, Paul (P), his wife, Ardith (AR), and the first three (3) of what would be their four children. PAR 3 Farms has been recognized by both the Ohio State and the National Ayrshire Breeders Associations for its contributions to the dairy business in Seneca County. Mr. Rinebold's family farm is still in operation today.

In 2008, the Ohio Ayrshire Breeders Association presented Paul with the Ohio Ayrshire Distinguished Service Award, a testament to the care with which Mr. Rinebold raised, treated, and bred his cows. It was at this awards ceremony that the association thanked Paul and Ardith for their dedication and expertise in the field of dairy farming. By 2008, the couple had attended more national Ayrshire conventions than any other Ayrshire dairy farm in the country, adding up to a total of 40 years' of conventions.

While he was not working on the farm, Paul dedicated his time to benefitting the community he called home. Active in his community, he was a member of St. John's United Church Christ in Fostoria; the Seneca County Farm Bureau; the State and National Ayrshire Associations; the National Dairy Shrine; and both the State and National level of the Loudon Center Grange. Paul helped each of his four children earn their 4–H club 10-year pins in Seneca County, and he enjoyed working with them on their county fair projects and yearly showcases at the Ohio State Fair. Paul loved farming, dairying and bowling, but most of all, his family.

This week—on what would have been Mr. Rinebold's 76th birthday—I would like to honor him for his dedication, service to our country, and contributions to the Ohio dairy community and his friends and neighbors in Fostoria community. I would also extend my thoughts and condolences to his family—his wife Ardith, sons Jeffrey and Michael, daughters Cheryl Ann and Paula, eight grandchildren, Brian, A.J., Jackson, Brittany, Brayden, Blake, Taylor, and Cameron, and two great-grandchildren, Anistyn and Chase, on their loss.

Emerson wrote ''To know one life has breathed easier because you have lived, that is to have succeeded.'' We have all breathed easier because of Paul.●

USF HEALTH BYRD ALZHEIMER'S INSTITUTE

● Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, we need to find a cure for the devastating disease of Alzheimer's. According to the Alzheimer's Association, there are 5 million people living with Alzheimer's in America today. Last year alone, $213 billion was spent on Alzheimer's care in the United States. And if measures are not taken to address the issue, it is estimated this will rise to $1 trillion a year by midcentury.

As the senior Senator from Florida and the chairman of the Special Committee on Aging, I am well aware of the toll this disease takes on individuals and their families. In 2010, about 450,000 Floridians were living with this disease, but this number is expected to rise to 590,000 by the year 2025.

Florida is the home of groundbreaking research in the field of treating, and hopefully curing, Alzheimer's. Today I will focus on just one of Florida's many research institutes, the University of South Florida, USF, Health Byrd Alzheimer's Institute. A leader in the field, the Byrd Institute is already implementing and routinely practicing key tenets outlined in the milestones of the Federal Government's 2013 National Alzheimer's Plan, including prevention, memory impairment screening, state-of-the-art diagnosis and treatment, supportive services, and education.

As a university-affiliated free-standing Alzheimer's center, the Byrd Institute is one of very few places that can offer high-quality, integrated Alzheimer's care. In fact, USF Magazine boasts that it is ''the largest facility of its kind in the world.'' The Byrd Institute's streamlined approach emphasizes integrated Alzheimer's care among physicians, researchers, therapists, social workers, support groups, caregivers, and other entities that play a crucial role in the comprehensive well-being of Alzheimer's patients. As an active Alzheimer's research site, patients have access to many publicly and privately funded clinical trials. Research productivity at the Byrd Institute has been brisk with $2.7 million in Federal grant expenditures for basic and translational research from 17 new and continuing Federal grants in 2012 and 2013. The Alzheimer's Association, along with several other non-Federal sponsors, provided nearly $1 million in funding to the center.

The institute's strong track record as a regional trailblazer in Alzheimer's care demonstrates the vast potential for the expansion of similar types of care centers on a national level. Moving forward, the Byrd Institute offers hope for accelerated and improved Alzheimer's care. It is a living and breathing testament to what can be accomplished by working together to tackle a problem that affects us all and a true model for the future of Alzheimer's care in this Nation.

I know that many Floridians—as well as advocates from all across the Nation—are visiting with their congressional representatives to urge greater funding for research funding at the National Institutes of Health and caregiver support from the Administration for Community Living. I want all Floridians visiting, as well as all of those who couldn't be here today, to know that I share their commitment for finding a cure for this dreaded disease.●

FAIRFIELD EAGLES

● Mr. TESTER. Mr. President, I wish to honor the Montana Class B Girls Basketball State Champions: the Fairfield Eagles.

In rural Montana, high school basketball is a way of life. Rural towns take pride in their teams' success, and fans often travel hours across the State to see their children, their grandchildren, or their neighbors play. Fairfield, MT, is no exception.

This year, the Eagles won their fourth consecutive State championship

and their 104th consecutive game. And they did it in thrilling fashion, winning a 60-to-55 double overtime game that included a 3-pointer to tie the game as the buzzer sounded at end of the first overtime.

The Eagles basketball team also puts forth the same kind of effort in the classroom; Fairfield has done a great job of turning out some incredible student athletes.

Fairfield principal and girls' head coach Dustin Gordon makes sure of that.

Congratulations on another great season. Go Eagles!●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE FROM APRIL 8, 2014

At 11:43 a.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 bill, without amendment:

S. 404. An act to preserve the Green Mountain Lookout in the Glacier Peak Wilderness of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

The message also announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1872. An act to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to increase transparency in Federal budgeting, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3470. An act to affirm the importance of the Taiwan Relations Act, to provide for the transfer of naval vessels to certain foreign countries, and for other purposes.

H.R. 4323. An act to reauthorize programs authorized under the Debbie Smith Act of 2004, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H. Con. Res. 90. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for a ceremony as part of the commemoration for the days of remembrance of victims of the Holocaust.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 5:48 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker had signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 404. An act to preserve the Green Mountain Lookout in the Glacier Peak Wilderness of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:32 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1871. An act to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to reform the budget baseline.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

The President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY) announced that he had signed the following enrolled bill, previously signed by the Speaker of the House:

S. 404. An act to preserve the Green Mountain Lookout in the Glacier Peak Wilderness of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1871. An act to amend the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 to reform the budget baseline; to the Committee on the Budget.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2223. 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.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, April 9, 2014, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 404. An act to preserve the Green Mountain Lookout in the Glacier Peak Wilderness of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

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–5284. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Visas: Waiver by Joint Action of Visa and Passport Requirements for Members of Armed Forces and Coast Guards of Foreign Countries'' (RIN1400–AD51) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 8, 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–5285. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''List of Approved Spent Fuel Storage Casks: Transnuclear, Inc. Standardized NUHOMS Cask System'' (RIN3150–AJ28) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 7, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5286. A communication from the Vice President, Government Relations, Tennessee Valley Authority, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Authority's Statistical Summary for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–5287. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a financial report relative to the Animal Generic Drug User Fee Act for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5288. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a financial report relative to the Animal Drug User Fee Act for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5289. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a financial report relative to the Generic Drug User Fee Amendments of 2012 for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5290. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a financial report for fiscal year 2013 relative to the Biosimilar User Fee Act of 2012; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5291. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a financial report relative to the Medical Device User Fee Amendments of 2012 for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–5292. A communication from the Director of Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment, Maintenance, and Availability of Records: Amendment to Record Availability Requirements'' ((Docket No. FDA–2002–N–0153, Formerly Docket No. FDA 2002N–0277) (RIN0910–AG73)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 7, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

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–222. A resolution adopted by the Delaware County Board of Supervisors of the State of New York entitled ''In Support of Home Rule 543 'Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013' ''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. ROCKEFELLER for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

*David J. Arroyo, of New York, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting for a term expiring January 31, 2016.

*William P. Doyle, of Pennsylvania, to be a Federal Maritime Commissioner for a term expiring June 30, 2018.

Coast Guard nominations beginning with Linda L. Fagan and ending with James E. Rendon, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on March 10, 2014.

Coast Guard nomination of Rear Adm. William D. Lee, to be Vice Admiral.

Coast Guard nomination of Rear Adm. Charles W. Ray, to be Vice Admiral.

Coast Guard nomination of Rear Adm. Charles D. Michel, to be Vice Admiral.

Coast Guard nomination of Vice Adm. Peter V. Neffenger, to be Vice Admiral.

Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, for the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation I report favorably the following nomination lists which were printed in the RECORDS on the dates indicated, and ask unanimous consent, to save the expense of reprinting on the Executive

Calendar that these nominations lie at the Secretary's desk for the information of Senators.

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

Coast Guard nominations beginning with Ruby L. Collins and ending with Michael W. Wampler, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 16, 2014.

Coast Guard nominations beginning with William C. Adams and ending with Adam K. Young, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on January 16, 2014.

Coast Guard nominations beginning with Kevin J. Lopes and ending with Mariette C. Ogg, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record on February 6, 2014.

By Mr. SCHUMER for the Committee on Rules and Administration.

*Myrna Perez, of Texas, to be a Member of the Election Assistance Commission for a term expiring December 12, 2015.

*Thomas Hicks, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Election Assistance Commission for a term expiring December 12, 2017.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

EXECUTIVE REPORT OF COMMITTEE—TREATY

The following executive report of committee was submitted:

By Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations:

[Treaty Doc. 112–1: Protocol Amending Tax Convention with Swiss Confederation (without printed report)]

The text of the committee-recommended resolution of advice and consent to ratification is as follows:

Section 1. Senate Advice and Consent Subject to a Declaration.

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Swiss Confederation for the Avoidance of Double Taxation With Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Washington October 2, 1996, signed September 23, 2009, at Washington, with a related agreement effected by an exchange of notes September 23, 2009, as corrected by an exchange of notes effected November 16, 2010 (the ''Protocol'') (Treaty Doc. 112–1), subject to the declaration of section 2 and the conditions of section 3.

Sec. 2. Declaration.

The advice and consent of the Senate under section 1 is subject to the following declaration: The Protocol is self-executing.

Sec. 3. Conditions.

The advice and consent of the Senate under section 1 is subject to the following conditions:

(1) Not later than 2 years after the Protocol enters into force and prior to the first arbitration conducted pursuant to the binding arbitration mechanism provided for in the Protocol, the Secretary of the Treasury shall transmit to the Committees on Finance and Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Joint Committee on Taxation the text of the rules of procedure applicable to arbitration panels, including conflict of interest rules to be applied to members of the arbitration panel.

(2)(A) Not later than 60 days after a determination has been reached by an arbitration panel in the tenth arbitration proceeding conducted pursuant to the Protocol or any of the treaties described in subparagraph (B), the Secretary of the Treasury shall prepare and submit to the Joint Committee on Taxation and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, subject to laws relating to taxpayer confidentiality, a detailed report regarding the operation and application of the arbitration mechanism contained in the Protocol and such treaties. The report shall include the following information:

(i) For the Protocol and each such treaty, the aggregate number of cases pending on the respective dates of entry into force of the Protocol and each treaty, including the following information:

(I) The number of such cases by treaty article or articles at issue.

(II) The number of such cases that have been resolved by the competent authorities through a mutual agreement as of the date of the report.

(III) The number of such cases for which arbitration proceedings have commenced as of the date of the report.

(ii) A list of every case presented to the competent authorities after the entry into force of the Protocol and each such treaty, including the following information regarding each case:

(I) The commencement date of the case for purposes of determining when arbitration is available.

(II) Whether the adjustment triggering the case, if any, was made by the United States or the relevant treaty partner.

(III) Which treaty the case relates to.

(IV) The treaty article or articles at issue in the case.

(V) The date the case was resolved by the competent authorities through a mutual agreement, if so resolved.

(VI) The date on which an arbitration proceeding commenced, if an arbitration proceeding commenced.

(VII) The date on which a determination was reached by the arbitration panel, if a determination was reached, and an indication as to whether the panel found in favor of the United States or the relevant treaty partner.

(iii) With respect to each dispute submitted to arbitration and for which a determination was reached by the arbitration panel pursuant to the Protocol or any such treaty, the following information:

(I) In the case of a dispute submitted under the Protocol, an indication as to whether the presenter of the case to the competent authority of a Contracting State submitted a Position Paper for consideration by the arbitration panel.

(II) An indication as to whether the determination of the arbitration panel was accepted by each concerned person.

(III) The amount of income, expense, or taxation at issue in the case as determined by reference to the filings that were sufficient to set the commencement date of the case for purposes of determining when arbitration is available.

(IV) The proposed resolutions (income, expense, or taxation) submitted by each competent authority to the arbitration panel.

(B) The treaties referred to in subparagraph (A) are—

(i) the 2006 Protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital and to Certain Other Taxes, done at Berlin June 1, 2006 (Treaty Doc. 109–20) (the ''2006 German Protocol'');

(ii) the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income, and accompanying protocol, done at Brussels July 9, 1970 (the ''Belgium Convention'') (Treaty Doc. 110–3);

(iii) the Protocol Amending the Convention between the United States of America and Canada with Respect to Taxes on Income and on Capital, signed at Washington September 26, 1980 (the ''2007 Canada Protocol'') (Treaty Doc. 110–15); or

(iv) the Protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the French Republic for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income and Capital, signed at Paris August 31, 1994 (the ''2009 France Protocol'') (Treaty Doc. 111–4).

(3) The Secretary of the Treasury shall prepare and submit the detailed report required under paragraph (2) on March 1 of the year following the year in which the first report is submitted to the Joint Committee on Taxation and the Committee on Finance of the Senate, and on an annual basis thereafter for a period of five years. In each such report, disputes that were resolved, either by a mutual agreement between the relevant competent authorities or by a determination of an arbitration panel, and noted as such in prior reports may be omitted.

(4) The reporting requirements referred to in paragraphs (2) and (3) supersede the reporting requirements contained in paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 3 of the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the 2009 France Protocol, approved by the Senate on December 3, 2009.

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. SCHATZ (for himself, Mr. BROWN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 2224. A bill to enhance the accuracy of credit reporting and provide greater rights to consumers who dispute errors in their credit reports, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (for himself and Mr. CHAMBLISS):

S. 2225. A bill to provide for a smart water resource management pilot program; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (for himself and Mrs. BOXER):

S. 2226. A bill to establish a WaterSense program within the Environmental Protection Agency; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico:

S. 2227. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a credit for property certified by the Environmental Protection Agency under the WaterSense program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico:

S. 2228. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to direct the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to consider projects involving rural communities in the selection of alternative

water source projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 2229. A bill to expand primary care access; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 2230. A bill to provide the legal framework necessary for the growth of innovative private financing options for students to fund postsecondary education, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER):

S. 2231. A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide an individual with a mental health assessment before the individual enlists in the Armed Forces or is commissioned as an officer in the Armed Forces, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. TOOMEY:

S. 2232. A bill to protect the right to freedom of speech secured by the First Amendment to the Constitution, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. BENNET, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2233. A bill to provide tax relief for major disaster areas declared in 2012 and 2013 and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 2234. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax for employees who participate in qualified apprenticeship programs; to the Committee on Finance.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. REID:

S. Con. Res. 35. A concurrent resolution providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and an adjournment of the House of Representatives; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 571

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 571, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to establish a deadline for restricting sewage dumping into the Great Lakes and to fund programs and activities for improving wastewater discharges into the Great Lakes.

S. 1008

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1008, a bill to prohibit the Secretary of Homeland Security from implementing proposed policy changes that would permit passengers to carry small, nonlocking knives on aircraft.

S. 1066

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1066, a bill to allow certain student loan borrowers to refinance Federal student loans.

S. 1150

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1150, a bill to posthumously award a congressional gold medal to Constance Baker Motley.

S. 1422

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1422, a bill to amend the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 respecting the scoring of preventive health savings.

S. 1468

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1468, a bill to require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Network for Manufacturing Innovation and for other purposes.

S. 1596

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1596, a bill to require State educational agencies that receive funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to have in effect policies and procedures on background checks for school employees.

S. 1793

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) 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. 2018

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2018, a bill to provide for the use of hand-propelled vessels in Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton National Park, and the National Elk Refuge, and for other purposes.

S. 2106

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) 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. 2118

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 2142

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2142, a bill to impose targeted sanctions on persons responsible for violations of human rights of antigovernment protesters in Venezuela, to strengthen civil society in Venezuela, and for other purposes.

S. 2156

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2156, a bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to confirm the scope of the authority of the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to deny or restrict the use of defined areas as disposal sites.

S. 2190

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2190, a bill 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.

S. 2199

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 2223

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the names of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY), the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) and the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) were added as cosponsors of S. 2223, 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. CON. RES. 33

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) 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. 369

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 369, a resolution to designate May 22, 2014 as ''United States Foreign Service Day'' in recognition of the men and women who have served, or are presently serving, in the Foreign Service of the United States, and to honor those in the Foreign Service who have given their lives in the line of duty.

S. RES. 418

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 418, a resolution to honor Gallaudet University, a premier institution of higher education for deaf and hard of hearing people in the United States, on the occasion of its 150th anniversary and to recognize the impact of the University on higher education.

AMENDMENT NO. 2962

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2962 intended to be proposed to S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2963

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2963 intended to be proposed to S. 2199, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. BOOKER (for himself and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 2234. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow employers a credit against income tax for employees who participate in qualified apprenticeship programs; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce with my colleague, Senator TIM SCOTT of South Carolina, the Leveraging and Energizing America's Apprenticeship Programs or LEAP Act, which provides a tax credit to employers to help increase the number of registered apprenticeships in the U.S. and put more young Americans to work.

Today, there are still more than 10 million unemployed Americans, and our young people continue to be especially hard hit. Nearly six years after the start of the Great Recession, 16 percent of 16 to 24 year olds are without a job. The numbers are far worse among youth of color and for those without college degrees.

Yet 4 million jobs remain unfilled in the U.S., and part of the reason is that key gaps persist between the skills of young adults and workforce needs. By 2020, the United States is expected to experience a shortage of 3 million workers with associate's degrees or higher and 5 million workers with technical certificates and credentials.

Apprenticeships are a proven way to help young people develop in-demand skills and to meet the needs of employers, yet they comprise just 0.2 percent of the U.S. workforce.

While competitor nations around the world are investing in robust apprenticeship programs, the U.S., by contrast, had just 358,000 active, registered apprenticeships in 2012. That is 7 percent of what England offered when adjusted for population. In Germany, nearly half of all young people go through apprenticeship programs.

We can't let America continue to lag behind. That's why Senator SCOTT and I are introducing the LEAP Act, an initiative that provides a paid-for Federal tax credit to businesses to develop apprenticeship programs that are registered with the Department of Labor or a state apprenticeship agency. The bill addresses the fact that the average age of apprentices is currently as high as 29 years, by offering a tax credit of $1,500 for apprentices under the age of 25. The tax credit for apprentices 25 or over is $1,000. The cost of the tax credits are offset by a provision that cuts printing waste by barring the Federal Government from producing publications that are available online, unless the printing is for seniors, Medicare recipients or communities with limited Internet access.

A thriving apprenticeship system should be an essential element of an effective workforce development strategy; registered apprenticeship programs help individuals attain a recognized post-secondary credential and provide workers with the education and on-the-job training needed to succeed.

Studies show that apprenticeships are a wise investment for both participants and the U.S. government: individuals who complete registered apprenticeship programs earn over $240,000 more over their careers than people who did not participate in such programs, and the tax return on every Federal Government dollar invested in registered apprenticeship programs is $27.

Our future competitiveness—our economic strength as a nation—depends on the innovation and skill of our workforce. I am proud to join with Senator SCOTT in putting forward this bipartisan legislation that will create opportunities for more Americans to learn the in-demand skills that will help meet employers' needs and fuel our economy. I look forward to working with my colleagues to build support for and pass this bill.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 35—PROVIDING FOR A CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE SENATE AND AN ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. REID submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 35

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That when the Senate recesses or adjourns on any day from Thursday, April 10, 2014, through Thursday, April 24, 2014, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand recessed or adjourned until 12:00 noon on Monday, April 28, 2014, or such other time on that day as may be specified by its Majority Leader or his designee in the motion to recess or adjourn, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 2 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first; and that when the House adjourns on any legislative day from Thursday, April 10, 2014, through Thursday, April 24, 2014, on a motion offered pursuant to this concurrent resolution by its Majority Leader or his designee, it stand adjourned until 2:00 p.m. on Monday, April 28, 2014, or until the time of any reassembly pursuant to section 3 of this concurrent resolution, whichever occurs first.

SEC. 2. (a) The Majority Leader of the Senate or his designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader of the Senate, shall notify the Members of the Senate to reassemble at such place and time he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the Senate adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the Senate shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

SEC. 3. (a) The Speaker of his designee, after consultation with the Minority Leader of the House, shall notify Members of the House to reassemble at such place and time he may designate if, in his opinion, the public interest shall warrant it.

(b) After reassembling pursuant to subsection (a), when the House adjourns on a motion offered pursuant to this subsection by its Majority Leader or his designee, the House shall again stand adjourned pursuant to the first section of this concurrent resolution.

AUTHORITIES FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on, April 9, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''From Here to Mars.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on, April 9, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. LEAHY. 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 April 9, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Addressing Primary Care Access and Workforce Challenges: Voices from the Field.''

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on, April 9, 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Indian Education Series: Indian Students in Public Schools—Cultivating the Next Generation.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, April 9, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room SH–216 of the Hart Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Examining the Comcast-Time Warner Cable Merger and the Impact on Consumers.''

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

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 9, 2014, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Election Administration: Making Voter Rolls More Complete and More Accurate.''

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

COMMITTEE ON RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 9, 2014, at 10:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 9, 2014, at 11 a.m. in room 428A of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Fiscal Year 2015 Budget for the Small Business Administration.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AIRLAND

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Airland of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 9, 2014, at 9:15 a.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Personnel of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 9, 2014, at 10 a.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES

Mr. LEAHY. 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 April 9, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, I ask that Alexandra Merrill, my intern, be given floor privileges for the duration of the day.

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

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Micah Murphy, a Navy fellow assigned to the office of Senator MCCAIN, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 113th Congress.

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, and all nominations placed on the Secretary's desk in the Marine Corps; that the nominations be confirmed en bloc; that 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 to any of the nominations; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

The nominations considered and confirmed en bloc are as follows:

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following Air National-Guard of the United States officers for appointment in the Reserve of the Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., sections 12203 and 12212:

To be brigadier general

Colonel David P. Baczewski
Colonel Jeffrey W. Burkett
Colonel Conrad C. Caldwell, III
Colonel Jeffrey B. Cashman
Colonel Charles W. Chappuis
Colonel Joel A. Clark
Colonel Patrick J. Cobb
Colonel Thomas B. Cucchi
Colonel John B. Daniel
Colonel George M. Degnon
Colonel William D. DeHaes
Colonel William D. Dockery, Jr.
Colonel Andrew E. Halter
Colonel Timothy J. Harmeson
Colonel Paul G. Havel
Colonel Jill L. Hendra
Colonel Alan K. Hodgdon
Colonel Joseph M. Jabara
Colonel Wendy K. Johnson
Colonel Timothy M. Jones
Colonel Thomas J. Kennett
Colonel Kerry L. Muehlenbeck
Colonel Timothy A. Mullen
Colonel John W. Ogle, III
Colonel Ryan T. Okahara
Colonel Russell A. Rushe
Colonel David P. San Clemente
Colonel Diana M. Shoop
Colonel Jesse T. Simmons, Jr.
Colonel David A. Simon
Colonel Mark C. Snyder
Colonel John G. Sotos
Colonel Ronald C. Stamps
Colonel Randolph J. Staudenraus
Colonel Scott A. Studer
Colonel Michael R. Taheri
Colonel Ronald B. Turk
Colonel Steven C. Warren
Colonel Roger E. Williams, Jr.
Colonel Ronald W. Wilson
Colonel Bryan F. Witeof
Colonel Brett A. Wyrick
Colonel Ricky G. Yoder

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be general

Lt. Gen. John E. Hyten

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. Wendy M. Masiello

IN THE NAVY

The following named officer for appointment as Chief of Chaplains, United States Navy, and appointment to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 5142:

To be rear admiral

Rear Adm. (lh) Margaret G. Kibben

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

Capt. Brent W. Scott

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated while assigned to a position of importance and responsibility under title 10, U.S.C., section 601:

To be vice admiral

Vice Adm. Sean A. Pybus

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 5046:

To be major general

Col. John R. Ewers, Jr.

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN1309 MARINE CORPS nominations (82) beginning BAMIDELE J. ABOGUNRIN, and ending PHILLIP M. ZEMAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 7, 2014.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the agriculture committee be discharged from further consideration of S. Con. Res. 33.

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

The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 33) celebrating the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the nationwide Cooperative Extension System.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 33) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of Thursday, February 27, 2014, under ''Resolutions Submitted.'')

CONDITIONAL ADJOURNMENT OR RECESS OF THE SENATE AND ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 35, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 35) providing for a conditional adjournment or recess of the Senate and an adjournment of the House of Representatives.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 35) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the President pro tempore, upon the recommendation of the majority leader, pursuant to Public Law 105–292, as amended by Public Law 106–55, and as further amended by Public Law 107–228, and 112–75, reappoints the following individual to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom: Katrina Lantos Swett of New Hampshire.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, April 10, 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 time until 10:30 a.m. be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; and that at 10:30 a.m., the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on Executive Calendar No. 574.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. At 10:30 a.m. tomorrow there will be a rollcall vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the nomination of Michelle Friedland to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Ninth Circuit. If cloture is invoked, there would be up to 30 hours for debate prior to a vote on confirmation of the nomination, unless an agreement can be reached. Upon disposition of the Friedland nomination, there will be a cloture vote on the Weil nomination to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division at the Department of Labor. There could then be up to 8 hours for debate prior to a vote on confirmation of the Weil nomination.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:52 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, April 10, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate April 9, 2014:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

DEBRA L. MILLER, OF KANSAS, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 31, 2017.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

TERRELL MCSWEENY, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSIONER FOR THE UNEXPIRED TERM OF SEVEN YEARS FROM SEPTEMBER 26, 2010.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DANIEL W. YOHANNES, OF COLORADO, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR.

RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD

STEVEN JOEL ANTHONY, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE RAILROAD RETIREMENT BOARD FOR A TERM EXPIRING AUGUST 28, 2018.

EXPORT–IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

WANDA FELTON, OF NEW YORK, TO BE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT OF THE EXPORT–IMPORT BANK OF THE UNITED STATES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 20, 2017.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COLONEL DAVID P. BACZEWSKI
COLONEL JEFFREY W. BURKETT
COLONEL CONRAD C. CALDWELL III
COLONEL JEFFREY B. CASHMAN
COLONEL CHARLES W. CHAPPUIS
COLONEL JOEL A. CLARK
COLONEL PATRICK J. COBB
COLONEL THOMAS B. CUCCHI
COLONEL JOHN B. DANIEL
COLONEL GEORGE M. DEGNON
COLONEL WILLIAM D. DEHAES
COLONEL WILLIAM D. DOCKERY, JR.
COLONEL ANDREW E. HALTER
COLONEL TIMOTHY J. HARMESON
COLONEL PAUL G. HAVEL
COLONEL JILL L. HENDRA
COLONEL ALAN K. HODGDON
COLONEL JOSEPH M. JABARA
COLONEL WENDY K. JOHNSON
COLONEL TIMOTHY M. JONES
COLONEL THOMAS J. KENNETT
COLONEL KERRY L. MUEHLENBECK
COLONEL TIMOTHY A. MULLEN
COLONEL JOHN W. OGLE III
COLONEL RYAN T. OKAHARA
COLONEL RUSSELL A. RUSHE
COLONEL DAVID P. SAN CLEMENTE
COLONEL DIANA M. SHOOP
COLONEL JESSE T. SIMMONS, JR.
COLONEL DAVID A. SIMON
COLONEL MARK C. SNYDER
COLONEL JOHN G. SOTOS
COLONEL RONALD C. STAMPS
COLONEL RANDOLPH J. STAUDENRAUS
COLONEL SCOTT A. STUDER
COLONEL MICHAEL R. TAHERI
COLONEL RONALD B. TURK
COLONEL STEVEN C. WARREN
COLONEL ROGER E. WILLIAMS, JR.
COLONEL RONALD W. WILSON
COLONEL BRYAN F. WITEOF
COLONEL BRETT A. WYRICK
COLONEL RICKY G. YODER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be general

LT. GEN. JOHN E. HYTEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be lieutenant general

MAJ. GEN. WENDY M. MASIELLO

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS CHIEF OF CHAPLAINS, UNITED STATES NAVY, AND APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 5142:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) MARGARET G. KIBBEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral (lower half)

CAPT. BRENT W. SCOTT

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE ASSIGNED TO A POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 601:

To be vice admiral

VICE ADM. SEAN A. PYBUS

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 5046:

To be major general

COL. JOHN R. EWERS, JR.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH BAMIDELE J. ABOGUNRIN AND ENDING WITH PHILLIP M. ZEMAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 7, 2014.