

law enforcement officers across Kentucky and the Nation. We are grateful so many have come to town for National Police Week.

We recognize theirs as both an honorable profession and a dangerous one. We recognize that what they do is vitally necessary to maintain peace and order in a civil society.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

#### HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2014— MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 3474, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 332, H.R. 3474, 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.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican whip.

#### DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, it pains me to say that almost every day brings a new story of reported scandals and a long list of failures and abuses within the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The latest scandals are particularly painful to me because they emanate from Texas, and we have a proud tradition of being a State that contributes a large number of uniformed military members from our State—and, of course, we have a huge population of veterans, people who have worn the uniform of the United States proudly, sacrificed so much, and risked it all. But just like the scandals in Fort Collins, CO; Phoenix, AZ; Pittsburgh, PA; and in other cities, the ones in Austin, San Antonio, Harlingen, and Waco are evidence of a callous disregard for the health and well-being of America's heroes.

The new information comes from a pair of whistleblowers. The first one, a VA scheduling clerk named Brian Turner, told the Austin American-Statesman that his supervisors at the VA facilities in Austin, San Antonio, and Waco were directing him to falsify appointment data in hopes of covering up the problem of long wait times.

Meanwhile, the former associate chief of staff at the Harlingen VA Health Care Center, a man by the name of Dr. Richard Krugman, has gone public with a series of disturbing allegations, according to the Washington Examiner, which interviewed Dr. Krugman. Veterans seeking routine colonoscopies—cancer screening, in other words—at the Harlingen center

were forced to endure extremely long wait times and, in some cases, they were denied those cancer screenings altogether. He said, as a result, up to “15,000 patients [veterans all] who should have gotten colonoscopies either did not get them or were examined only after long and needless delays.”

Dr. Krugman believes that some of these veterans actually died as a result of the lack of cancer screening and addressing their symptoms.

He also told the Examiner that “an office secretary deleted about 1,800 orders for medical tests or other services to eliminate a backlog that threatened a certification inspection from an outside group.”

Sadly, these allegations fit within a larger pattern of VA abuses. At VA clinics across the country, reports have been made that staffers and administrators have failed to provide veterans with reliable access to medical care and have fraudulently concealed long wait times. Given all these examples, they are not just an individual data point, but in connecting these data points it appears that the problems with the Veterans Administration are systemic.

What we have is nothing less than a betrayal, a betrayal of our Nation's veterans, and a betrayal of the American people, all of whom deserve to know the truth about what their government is or is not doing to support our American heroes. Of course, we have heard in Phoenix that this betrayal has had tragic consequences, with an estimated up to 40 people dying after lingering on a secret waiting list—never receiving the treatment that they were entitled to.

We still don't know exactly how many veterans have died or otherwise have suffered because of the VA's assorted failures and abuses, but we do know that it is disgraceful and unacceptable for even one veteran to needlessly die or suffer because of bureaucratic malfeasance. The evidence of such malfeasance is now growing, of course. The only questions are: How can we get our veterans the care and support they need in the fastest possible way; and what is the best way to restore genuine accountability and genuine safeguards within the VA system?

Whenever I think about the ongoing VA scandals and the broader set of challenges facing America's veterans, I think of an annual tradition that we have in Texas. Every year on Memorial Day I host young Texans who are being sent off to their service academies. These are inspiring young men and women. Anyone who is feeling a little bit uncertain about our Nation's future needs to meet these young men and women who go to our service academies. They are the best of the best and are an inspiration to me.

This is a wonderful event and easily one of the highlights of my year. Yet I can't think of how badly the VA is failing not only our current generation

but tainting that promise of our commitment to the next generation of our military servicemembers and veterans. The generation that is now preparing to embark for places such as West Point, Annapolis, and Colorado Springs—these young people should be given not just a promise but an iron-clad commitment that after serving our Nation with honor and courage they will get the support they have earned and they deserve.

Anything less is just not acceptable. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

#### EXPIRE ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, the Senate is now debating the EXPIRE Act.

This is bipartisan legislation. I again thank the distinguished Senator from Utah Mr. HATCH. He has been so constructive in trying to build a bipartisan piece of legislation, a bill that came out of the Senate Finance Committee several weeks ago with very substantial bipartisan support.

It really is designed to deal with a number of tax provisions that are temporary in nature and it, in effect, extends those temporary tax provisions until the end of 2015. In consultation with the distinguished Senator from Utah, I thought it was important to call this bill the EXPIRE Act. It was important because this legislation actually does expire after 2 years.

It, in effect, says—and I said—on my watch as chair of the Senate Finance Committee there will not be another extenders bill. It is not going to happen on my watch. This is it.

In effect, by extending these important provisions now for one last time, the Congress can give itself and the Finance Committee—on a bipartisan basis—the space that is needed to take on the challenge of comprehensive tax reform.

It is not going to be easy, but it is absolutely imperative for the future of the American economy. I know it can be done. I know we can get Senators of both political parties together and build a bipartisan tax reform plan. I know this because I have—and other Senators do as well—a fair amount of sweat equity in this cause.

Our former colleague Senator Gregg of New Hampshire sat next to me on a sofa for more than 2 years to build what still is the only bipartisan Senate comprehensive tax reform bill in the last 30 years. With Senator Gregg's retirement, to their credit, Senator COATS and Senator BEGICH pitched in.

So we know that there has already been a lot of bipartisan work on comprehensive tax reform and, suffice it to say, again building on this bipartisan lineage. My colleague from Utah, the senior Senator Mr. HATCH, and Ambassador Baucus and Chairman CAMP in the other body, have also put in years of work and laid a strong foundation for tax reform.

So once the Senate passes the EXPIRE Act, the job of the Finance Committee will be to focus in a kind of