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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Creator, redeemer, sustainer, You called us out of darkness into Your marvelous light. Dispel the shadows of confusion in our lives, replacing them with charity and peace. What we do not know, teach us. What we can't see, show us. What we don't have, give us. What we aren't, make us.

Abide with our Senators in their labors, using them as vessels for Your service. Lord, keep them on the path of integrity, strengthened and sustained by Your grace. Bless and keep them. Make Your face shine upon them and be gracious to them. Lift the light of Your countenance upon them and give them Your peace.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATIONAL HUNTING, FISHING, AND SHOOTING—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 384, S. 2363, which is the Hagan sportsmen's legislation.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to S. 2363, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 1:45 today, with the time until then equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or our designees, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans the second 30 minutes. Additionally, Senator LEAHY will control the final 5 minutes and Senator PAUL will control the 5 minutes prior to that.

At 1:45 p.m. there will be two rollcall votes. The first vote will be on confirmation of the nomination of David Barron to be U.S. circuit judge for the First Circuit, and the second vote will be on the adoption of the conference report to accompany H.R. 3060, the WRRDA bill.

TAX EXTENDERS

This week Senate Republicans voted against tax cuts that most of them have said they like. The legislation is widely applauded around the country. I have a letter from 152 different entities that say they love this legislation, and they said it should pass, two of which are the Chamber of Commerce, which is certainly no leftwing group, and the National Association of Manufacturers—the same—and there are scores of others. It seems the only Republicans who do not want this tax cut are the Republicans in Congress. Republicans around the country want these tax cuts, Democrats want these tax cuts, and so do Independents.

This legislation is very important because it would bolster nearly every segment of our society. It helps students and teachers, workers and employers, American families and businesses, all while saving money and growing our economy.

These 152 organizations that signed this letter to me are pleading with the Senate to extend these tax provisions because not doing so would ''inject instability and uncertainty into our economy.''

Republicans say the reason they voted against the bill is because they want to vote on amendments. Yet the only amendment they have identified was a poison pill amendment. Of course, what was the subject matter? Their favorite subject—ObamaCare. It has nothing to do with the extenders.

But we have seen this game play out before. The Senate is not going to vote on ''gotcha'' amendments designed to score political points. This legislation is too important. I have said all along that I am willing to undertake reasonable, germane amendments. That is certainly appropriate. That is what they did in the Finance Committee. They had an extended markup of this bill in the Finance Committee. The rule they have there is that amendments have to be germane. That rule applied to this bill, as it should, and that is what should be applied here on the floor.

So if Republican Senators can come up with a list of reasonable, germane amendments, I am more than happy to return to the tax extenders bill. Those are amendments I would not pick. They always say: Well, REID is picking our amendments.

Those are their amendments. They can file reasonable, germane amendments. There are a multitude of amendments they could offer.

So let's see if Republicans want to get something done on this legislation. We can debate back and forth on the finer points of Senate procedure endlessly, as has happened around here in the last 5½ years. But at the end of the day it comes down to a simple question: Do you want to get something done for the middle class? Do you want

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

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to get something done for business? Or do you want to impose more gridlock and obstruction and delay for the sake of delay?

We are here because we want to get something done for the middle class. That is how we feel on this side of the aisle. It is a shame my Republican colleagues cannot say the same.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WALSH). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 1:45, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans controlling the second 30 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, later today we are going to vote on the confirmation of David Barron, who has been nominated for a vacancy on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

Yesterday, we were able to overcome the unjustified Republican filibuster of this extraordinary nominee. Now, I have had the privilege of serving longer in this body than any other Senator here. I have never seen so many filibusters of judicial nominees by any President, Republican or Democratic. In fact, Republicans filibustered the very first judge President Obama sent to this body, a judge who was strongly supported by the Senators from his State, one of whom was the most senior Republican in this body, the other a moderate Democrat. Fortunately, enough Senators joined together to overcome that filibuster.

David Barron is currently a professor at Harvard Law School. He is a nationally recognized expert in constitutional law and the separation of powers, administrative law, and federalism. He clerked on the U.S. Supreme Court for Justice John Paul Stevens. In fact, I recall that Justice Stevens had so much regard for him that he attended Mr. Barron's nomination hearing.

I am in full support of Mr. Barron's nomination. It is almost as if he was sent to central casting for who should be a court of appeals judge. I have not seen any judicial nominee with better qualifications by either a Republican or Democratic President.

Let me respond to some of the criticisms levied against him with respect to the so-called drone memos as well as allegations that he would not be an independent judge who adheres to the rule of law. I reject both of those criticisms.

Over the last few weeks, I have spoken extensively about the issue of the drone materials and would refer specifically to my statement of May 14 of this year. While Senators may disagree with the administration's policies regarding the use of drones for lethal counterterrorism operations—and I have raised concerns about some of those operations—it is important not to conflate the confirmation of David Barron with the disclosure of Justice Department memoranda over which he had no control. He wrote an analysis of the law. Others make the decision of what they will do.

Yesterday the Justice Department made the right decision by agreeing to publicly release the redacted version of the legal justification for the government's potential use of lethal force against U.S. citizens in counterterrorism operations. I welcome the administration's additional step toward greater transparency.

Incidentally, these materials have been available to all Senators in recent weeks. We have had them in the unredacted form in a secure room here in the Capitol. We did that so that nobody could claim: Well, if only I knew what was in those memos, I could make up my mind. Every single Senator has had an opportunity to read them before today's vote.

We have heard some Senators argue that the Justice Department legal analysis provides the government with a blank check to use lethal force against Americans in places such as Germany or Canada. Oh my God, talk about grasping at straws. We are dealing with reality here, not Alice in Wonderland. Such a claim is simply inaccurate, inconsistent with the understanding anybody would have reading these materials.

In any event, the Attorney General has confirmed that Anwar al-Awlaki is the only American who was specifically targeted and killed since 2009. Awlaki was a senior operational leader of all of Al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula, located in Yemen. He directed the failed attempt to blow up an airliner over Detroit on Christmas Day 2009. He was continuing to plot attacks against the United States when he was killed, according to the Attorney General.

I am glad a number of Senators share my deep regard for the constitutional rights of Americans and have spoken about that on the floor. I hope that after Mr. Barron is confirmed, they will show they really believe what they have been saying by joining me and 21 other Senators in cosponsoring the USA FREEDOM Act to help restore America's constitutional and privacy rights.

Finally, both Mr. Barron and a long list of bipartisan supporters have forcefully refuted any indication that he views the role of a judge as that of a policymaker. In a response to a question from Senator GRASSLEY, Mr. Barron stated the following under oath:

> The judicial obligation is to set aside whatever personal views one may have and to decide the particular case at issue. A judge must base the decision in any case solely on the facts and the law, while respectfully considering the arguments of the litigants. I would take that obligation to be an inexorable one, just as I felt obliged to set aside any personal views I may have had in providing legal advice within the executive branch while serving as the Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel and as a career lawyer in that Office. I believe the best way to ensure one honors that obligation is to immerse oneself fully in the particular facts of the case and the law relevant to it and then to apply the law faithfully to those facts.

Mr. Barron's respect for the rule of law was recently reaffirmed by Stanford Law Professor Michael McConnell, a well-respected conservative scholar and former George W. Bush appointee to the Tenth Circuit. In a letter dated May 7, 2014 in support of Mr. Barron's nomination, Professor McConnell stated:

> I suspect that on particular controversial issues, Barron and I disagree more often than not. But I have read much of his academic work, and followed his performance as acting head of the Office of Legal Counsel. In my opinion, his writings and opinions have demonstrated not only intelligence (even where we disagree) but respect for the rule of law. In the Office of Legal Counsel, whose functions closely resemble those of a judge, Barron's publicly released opinions indicated that he was consistently a force for legal regularity and respect for the constitution and laws of the United States. That is an important and precious thing.

I ask unanimous consent that Professor McConnell's letter be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

It should be clear from Mr. Barron's testimony and Professor McConnell's letter that David Barron would faithfully discharge his duty as a judge in a manner consistent with the Constitution. Senator GRASSLEY cited yesterday to some statements made by Mr. Barron in his academic writings, but as Professor McConnell noted in his letter:

> It is important to bear in mind that academic legal writing in constitutional law is often exploratory and provocative. No one should assume that an academic would take the same approach toward deciding cases that he does in writing about cases.

Professor McConnell should know, as he is a prolific academic who was similarly able to discharge his duty as a judge faithfully and consistently with the Constitution when he served on the bench. As a reminder to Republicans who are currently opposing Mr. Barron's nomination on these grounds, I will note that the Senate unanimously confirmed Professor McConnell's nomination to the Tenth Circuit by voice vote in 2002 during the George W. Bush administration.

Mr. Barron is truly an outstanding nominee. So outstanding, in fact, that Professor McConnell called him ''one of President Obama's two or three best nominations to the appellate courts.'' I would urge all Senators to vote to confirm Mr. Barron to the First Circuit.

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

STANFORD LAW SCHOOL,
May 7, 2014.

Hon. Senator HARRY REID,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. Senator MITCH MCCONNELL,
Republican Leader, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. Senator PATRICK J. LEAHY,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Hon. Senator CHARLES GRASSLEY,
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.
Re Letter of support for David Barron.

DEAR SENATORS REID, MCCONNELL, LEAHY, AND GRASSLEY: I do not often interject myself into the politics of judicial confirmations, but in the case of David Barron I make an exception. In my opinion, David Barron is one of President Obama's two or three best nominations to the appellate courts. Based on his scholarship and record of public service, he has the potential to be one of this nation's outstanding jurists.

It should be obvious that my assessment does not stem from political agreement. Barron has described himself as an advocate of ''progressive constitutionalism''; I believe the Constitution should be interpreted without a partisan lens, in terms of the principles reflected in its text and history. I suspect that on particular controversial issues, Barron and I disagree more often than not. But I have read much of his academic work, and followed his performance as acting head of the Office of Legal Counsel. In my opinion, his writings and opinions have demonstrated not only intelligence (even where we disagree) but respect for the rule of law. In the Office of Legal Counsel, whose functions closely resemble those of a judge, Barron's publicly released opinions indicated that he was consistently a force for legal regularity and respect for the constitution and laws of the United States. That is an important and precious thing.

Some groups have been described Barron as ''an unabashed proponent of judicial activism.'' That characterization, frankly, demonstrates a lack of familiarity with the tone of much academic debate over constitutional issues. Within that framework, Barron stands out as an advocate of lawyerly restraint. It is important to bear in mind that academic legal writing in constitutional law is often exploratory and provocative. No one should assume that an academic would take the same approach toward deciding cases that he does in writing about cases.

In ordinary times, Barron's legal ability and professional integrity would suffice to ensure his confirmation. But unfortunately, in recent decades, and especially during President George W. Bush's presidency, the opposition party has taken a more ideological and adversarial posture toward judicial nominations than the framers of our Constitution intended. It is understandable that Republicans today would apply the same adversarial standards to President Obama's nominations as the Democrats applied to exemplary nominees of his predecessor. It is my hope that eventually, this process of mutually assured destruction will pass, for nominees of both parties. That cannot be expected to occur without mutual accommodation and confidence that the same standards apply to nominees from both sides.

Nonetheless, David Barron's nomination should be supported by Senators of both parties. Perhaps the most significant constitutional questions of our time arise from the unilateral use of executive power in both the domestic and international arenas. David Barron has written powerfully on this subject, demonstrating a balance between the need for an energetic executive and the centrality of law and the legislative branch. He has supported efforts to adopt laws to enable judicial review of executive actions that might otherwise escape judicial review because of lack of standing, and has written powerfully about the need for constitutional limits on executive excesses.

Some may wonder whether Barron's defense of separation of powers against executive unilateralism, which he articulated in the context of the Bush presidency, will survive intact in a presidency he supports. That is a legitimate question. No one knows the answer. But speaking as a fellow legal academic and sometime nominee, I believe that David Barron is a straight shooter and will not trim the sails of his deep-felt constitutional convictions on account of the different direction of political winds. One of this nation's proudest claims is that the limitations of constitutionalism hold firm without regard to which party is in power. I believe David Barron will carry on that tradition.

Beyond generalizations about judicial philosophy, this nomination has encountered resistance because of Barron's authorship of opinions in the Office of Legal Counsel justifying drone attacks by American forces on specified individuals abroad. The Administration's public legal defense of these strikes, especially by Attorney General Eric Holder, have been less than convincing as a legal matter. It is important for Congress to consider the legality of these strikes, but I strongly urge that Barron's nomination to the First Circuit not be collateral damage to this debate.

The pertinent question for this nomination cannot be whether any Senator agrees or disagrees with the practice of drone strikes. Barron was not Commander in Chief and he did not order the strikes. He has not been nominated to a position with authority over drone strikes, so his view of those strikes is relevant only to the more general question of his suitability to be an appellate judge on a court of broad jurisdiction. His job as acting head of the Office of Legal Counsel was to advise the President based on the traditional legal authorities of text, history, and precedent. He must be evaluated in light of that role.

Of course, neither I nor anyone else can evaluate the legal arguments made in Barron's OLC opinions until they are released. But whatever their content, it is difficult to imagine that they would place Barron outside the mainstream of professional legal judgment. The question of drone strikes is novel and much debated, and the authoritative legal sources are scant. It is far from clear that the Due Process Clause even applies to military attacks on targets in places abroad where American law does not run. If it does, it is equally unclear what kind of process is required when split-second decisions are made that could save countless innocent lives. These are discussions that should occur in the proper place, but a judicial nomination is not the forum for their resolution.

Ultimately, this confirmation requires a judgment about judicial character. The most important characteristic of a great judge is not brainpower or empathy, but the willingness to apply rules of law dispassionately and unflinchingly to all cases, regardless of the political context. My sense from long conversations with David Barron, and review of his writings and legal opinions, is that he is such a person. I urge members of the Senate to give their advice and consent.

Best regards,

MICHAEL W. MCCONNELL.

Mr. LEAHY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

EXPIRE ACT

Mr. WYDEN. I wish to speak for a few minutes about the urgency of passing the tax extender bill and describe to our colleagues all the bipartisanship that has gone into this important effort.

This bill is truly urgent because America's employers file their taxes quarterly, which means they are paying higher taxes today without this tax extender package, which means less money for hiring and training workers, less money for buying new equipment, and less money for investing in innovation and growing jobs at home.

For example, a restaurant owner who needs to replace a walk-in freezer to keep their business running is going to pay higher taxes because they can't, in effect, hold down the costs through the provision in the tax bill. That means they will be cutting shifts and cutting workers.

This bill is just as urgent for millions of other American families; for example, a family with a college student who is registering for summer school this week and is going to lose a tuition tax break and homeowners whose place is now worth less than they paid for it. They finally caught a break recently from their lender, and without this legislation they will now face a real tax increase on phantom income. So that is why this bill is so timely, so urgent.

I am going to spend a few minutes talking about the extraordinary bipartisan team effort that went into putting this legislation together, getting it through the Finance Committee, and sending it to the Senate floor. The process began almost immediately after Chairman Baucus went to China, when my staff and I began working with Senator HATCH and his staff, as well as other committee members on both sides of the aisle.

We recognized that this would not be an easy bill to write, so Senator HATCH and I agreed to limit the focus of the legislation to tax extenders, the stop-and-go tax policies that we both think should end with comprehensive tax reform. After a lot of sweat equity put in by Democrats and Republicans on the committee, I introduced the EXPIRE Act, and that was the beginning of the bipartisan odyssey to make sure this bill was passed—and passed quickly—so as to deal with those urgent needs I described.

Before the committee met for markup, Senators offered 93 amendments, including 36 from Republicans. My team and I worked with both sides of the committee to incorporate 13 amendments into a modified bill. Eleven of them had Republican sponsors or cosponsors.

Then when the committee got together for markup, there were additional amendments—seven more approved, including three from Republicans.

This bill is thoroughly bipartisan. The committee held to the agreement Senator HATCH and I struck to keep the focus on tax extender policies, and I want to make one thing very clear. Those bipartisan amendments—the ones we have already included—have made the legislation better. If you want the best proof, look at the amendment offered by our colleagues Senator ROBERTS and Senator SCHUMER, a Democrat and a Republican. It did important work to strengthen the tax credit for research and development. By the way, this bipartisan amendment built on another bipartisan idea, a first-rate idea from Senator COONS and Senator ENZI to improve the credit; in particular, to make it more attractive for the small businesses, those businesses across the country starting in a garage. It would allow innovative startups to use the R&D credit to help pay their employees' wages.

This is smart policy—not Democratic policy or Republican policy—because it encourages American innovation, the engine of economic progress, and makes that engine stronger than it is today. It is going to make it easier for young companies to hire new workers, and it is exactly the kind of bipartisanship that the country is making it clear it is hungry for.

There are other bipartisan examples I could cite that all prove the same point, but I wish to wrap up by saying now the Senate has the chance, using exactly that procedure, to make the bill even stronger. It was made clear last week by the majority leader, by myself, and others that we are open to amendments that build on what went on in the committee. By the way, there are lots of them.

I was here on Friday until late week and through the weekend talking to colleagues, an equal number of Democrats and Republicans. It would be one thing if there weren't a lot of germane issues, relevant issues, to choose from. That is not the case. There are dozens of amendments from Senators on both sides of the aisle that directly relate to the topic in question—these stop-and-go provisions that have expired—and if we don't move to renew them, our economy is going to get hurt in ways I have described.

Our goal all along on the Senate floor has been to replicate exactly the kind of bipartisanship that went on in the Finance Committee. I absolutely believe that is still possible. That is why I described it.

As soon as the vote was cast last week, I spent the weekend looking for a bipartisan pathway. We had encouraging calls over the weekend indicating that both sides of the aisle wanted to work together to make progress. We had additional conversations about this through the week. Some Senators were concerned they wouldn't have a chance to offer any amendments whether they focused on tax extenders or not. But as I said then, and I repeat now, I am open to hearing from colleagues on both sides of the aisle about their amendments. I can keep repeating it again and again, but I hope the point is getting through.

If I had brought a billboard to the floor, as sometimes people do, the billboard would say: ''BRING ON THE AMENDMENTS'' in big capital letters.

I will wrap up by saying I know the bill is not the legislation that every Senator wants, and—if I had my first choice—we would be working on comprehensive tax reform rather than the extenders, but it hasn't been possible to do that. Today the Senate needs to focus on the urgent business at hand; that is, making sure our people don't get punished.

If the Senate doesn't act on this bill, we would be punishing veterans coming home looking for jobs, we would punish innovators, we would be punishing small businesses, punishing those homeowners who are underwater on their mortgages, and punishing students with the mountains of debt.

I close by saying any colleague who is for that let me know because I don't know of a single Senator, not one, who thinks that is a good idea—when our economy is so fragile—to weigh it down with a tax hike. There aren't any Senators who are telling me they want to subject American families and business to yet more uncertainty about their tax bill.

So our legislation, our bipartisan legislation, would keep that from happening. It is absolutely essential that the Senate come together in a bipartisan way, build on exactly what we did in the Senate Finance Committee, and get this legislation across the goal line.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. First, let me compliment our new chairman of the Finance Committee. He is doing a great job on this bill. He is keeping the tenor bipartisan as he has done throughout his whole career. He has only been there a short while, but he is taking to the chairmanship like a fish to water.

I wish to follow up. There is so much that is bipartisan in this bill. It was a bipartisan bill that passed out of committee unanimously. I worked on an amendment with Senator ROBERTS that Senator COONS had originated for the R&D credit with Senators CARDIN, ISAKSON, and BLUNT to improve the section 181 live production incentive so we keep the film industry here, not London or Canada; Senators PORTMAN and CARDIN worked on energy efficiency; Senators BROWN and PORTMAN on disadvantaged workers; and CANTWELL and ROBERTS on low-income housing tax credit. The list goes on and on. As a result, this bill has broad support: the Business Roundtable, Grover Norquist, as well as the NEA and Feeding America.

So where are we. And I would like to further elaborate on what the chairman has said. We are willing to vote on amendments.

I always think of my dear friend from Tennessee, LAMAR ALEXANDER, who remembers how the place used to work and constantly reminds us—and that is a very good and salutary thing in this body. He would say on most bills there would be bipartisan support in the committee. The ranking member and the chair would get together with a list of amendments, each for his or her side, and they would come up with the list.

We are willing to do that. In fact, Leader REID has been extremely generous. He said we are not going to decide it should be this one and not that one, as long as the amendments are germane to this extenders bill. Of course we can't open the whole Tax Code for debate or debate the merits of the ACA on this bill. This is not the type of bill to do that.

It is a bipartisan bill, as Chairman WYDEN outlined, that is very necessary. So we would plead, almost, with our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, for the sake of the country, come up with some amendments, a list. If it is 100, obviously Senators WYDEN and HATCH will have to whittle it down. If it is five or six from your side and five or six from our side and they are germane to extenders, we will have to vote them up or down.

But the cry from the other side—which I have sympathy with, even though I don't agree that they tell the whole story—is let us do amendments. We are answering that plea. Leader REID has made it clear, Chairman WYDEN has made it clear we are not going to pick and say we will do this one and not that one.

The only two limits that I can tell are time—we can't do 100 or 200 of these, but as the Senator from Tennessee constantly reminds us, that is not going to happen—nor can we go far afield way beyond the bounds of this bill. Germaneness makes sense in such a bipartisan and important bill, but other than that, let's let it rip.

I know my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are discussing this. I know they are very serious about it. I have talked to colleagues on the floor, in the gym, and in the corridors of these bodies about getting this done.

It is so important for the country. Even beyond that, if we can't work in a bipartisan way on this bill, which was put together by Senators WYDEN and HATCH in such a bipartisan way, which has so much input from both sides of the aisle and where the offer is let's do amendments, not picking and choosing—we will pick this one, not that one—simply limited to what the bill is all about, germaneness, then we will not get anything done.

I want my colleagues on both sides of the aisle—on my side of the aisle, so many Members—and I sympathize with them—who desire to legislate and do

amendments, we have made that offer. HARRY, the leader, the chairman, and I am fully part of this, have made the offer to let's do amendments.

We hope the folks on the other side—it is sort of a little bit of a test. I am not throwing down any kind of gauntlet, but if we can't come up with a way to legislate on this bill, a bipartisan bill that has the support of the left, right, and center, that everyone agrees with, as Senator WYDEN outlined how much America needs them, what are we going to be able to be legislate?

We have a little time. We have 1 week where we can discuss this while we are in our districts working away. Let's get this done. I plead with my colleagues—''plead'' is the right word, the right verb—come up with a list. We will come up with our list, and then let's roll up our sleeves, get to work on the floor, and pass this bill.

I believe if we do, the other body will. The other body—one other point—has different ideas. They want to make a few of these permanent. That is a legitimate amendment in the bounds that Leader REID has talked about. Let's vote on it. Let's debate it and vote on it. That is what we are supposed to do. If the other body's wisdom prevails, it will make it easier to pass the bill. Even if the other body's wisdom doesn't prevail, they will see that our body has a chance to debate it and decide on it.

Again, we are willing not to pick amendments—I know there is a complaint on the other side of the aisle that our leadership picks which amendments. We are not doing that. All we are saying is they ought to be germane to tax extenders, focused on the issue at hand, which is the extenders. This is not a bill that came out of a figment of the imagination of four Democratic Senators with no Republican input.

If we can't legislate on this bill, then what bill can we? I would ask my colleagues on the other side of the aisle, ask them to get us the list they come up with of amendments they wish to vote on.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WRRDA CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. COBURN. Mr. President, I wanted to spend a moment or two talking about the Water Resources Reform and Development Act conference report, and I want to say to my colleagues, both in this Chamber and in the House, some improvement in the WRRDA reauthorization has happened, but it is not nearly enough.

From 1986 to 2010, the average new authorizations were over $3 billion a year, and the average amount of money was $1.8 billion a year. So we have been going backwards all that time. In this report, they did deauthorize less than 10 percent of the $80 billion in backlogged projects. Their attempt to take some of the political nature out of it is a good attempt, but it is not nearly complete and will be gamed, just as we have seen in the past.

What really hasn't happened in the WRRDA bill, and partly because they do not have the authority to do it, is to change the Corps of Engineers. There has never been a project the Corps of Engineers doesn't want to build, and there has never been a study they do not want to do, because what that means is their budget continues and their jobs continue. So we do not have that distinct independent voice we can rely upon because bureaucratic malaise and self-interest trumps it every time.

There is another critical problem with this report. The inland waterways trust fund is out of money. We steal it every year. Like Social Security, the money has been stolen and spent. Yet they change the requirement for inland waterway repairs. It used to be if it was under $8 million, we would pay for it out of the general fund—not the trust fund—but now they have moved that to $20 million. In essence, what that says is we are going to do things that are the responsibility of the trust fund but we are going to charge the American taxpayer rather than the users of the inland waterway to do these repairs. We have a lot of those in need of repair on the McClellan-Kerr waterway in Oklahoma.

So there is a little sleight of hand, another smoke and mirrors set from the Congress of the United States to the American people about not being truthful about what they are doing. We need a priority of projects. We need discipline within the Corps of Engineers. There is none. There is no discipline. It is turf protection and bureaucratic excess continued as normal.

What we should have done is to deauthorize about $40 billion worth of the projects that are presently in line and really put a priority on what is most important for the Nation, not what is most important for a certain Congressman or a certain Senator to look good at home. Unfortunately, we didn't have the courage to do that. We didn't have the strength of character to do that. We wouldn't stand and defend that. So what we did is make minimal progress—and there is some progress; I will admit it—but it is certainly not enough to get my vote. When we fix symptoms of disease rather than fixing the real disease, all we do is delay the onset of the cure, and that is exactly what we have done with the water resources conference report.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ISAKSON. 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. ISAKSON. I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate for up to 5 minutes as if in morning business.

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

HONORING OUR VETERANS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, on the last Monday of every May our country pauses to commemorate Memorial Day and honor the men and women who died in wars around the world in defense of freedom, liberty, peace, and the United States of America.

This coming Monday is no exception. I urge my fellow Members of the Senate, all Georgians, and all Americans, to take a moment sometime over this weekend to pause and give thanks for the sacrifices made so we can do what we are doing here today, and so Georgians and Americans can do what they do on the lakes, beaches, and mountains of our country as they celebrate Memorial Day.

I was honored and pleased to travel to eight of the American cemeteries in Europe—in Italy, Luxembourg, Great Britain, and France, particularly Normandy, on the 70th anniversary of D-day, which is coming up—and pay tribute to the thousands of graves of Americans who went overseas in World War I or World War II and gave their life—sacrificed and died—so we can live in freedom and peace today.

Our Armed Forces are a great gift to us. They never ask for anything in return. They always give their service to our country. They swear their allegiance to protect and defend our domestic tranquility, and every single time they do the job.

Today we know they are deployed in Afghanistan, we know they are deployed in Africa, we know they are at sea—both on top of the sea and under the sea—and in the air, always looking to see that America is safe and free from harm.

I encourage all of my fellow citizens to say a special prayer of thanks this weekend for the men and women who sacrificed and died on behalf of our country, and on behalf of freedom, liberty, and peace for all mankind.

There is no secret that there is a scandal at the Veterans' Administration. We don't know how pervasive and we don't know how deep. But it surrounds the appointments and the cooking of the books in terms of appointments and services to our veterans and the VA health care system.

I know they have a hard job, but their first job and their main responsibility is to see to it our veterans get the health care they deserve, the health care we promised them, and the health care we are going to see to it they get.

I want the President to exhibit leadership and make sure we have a rudder

in the water so we sail the ship of state in the right direction in terms of the VA, and let the chips fall where they may—including if the Department of Justice should be involved in case there is any criminal intent or criminal activity. To cook the books or lie to the Federal Government would, in my opinion, be a crime and people should be held accountable. But to call for the head of just one person without going through the entire VA is wrong.

Last August I held a hearing in Atlanta because we had three untimely deaths in the Atlanta VA—two by suicide, one by drug overdose. All three were determined to be the fault of the VA in terms of the mental health ward in particular and the lack or failure to follow up on appointments. That was the beginning of my awareness of what was happening in Georgia.

To Georgia's and Secretary Shinseki's credit, we replaced the Director in Georgia with Ms. Wiggins. Ms. Wiggins now meets with me on an every-other-month basis to go over the activities in the VA—and when we had an incident 6 weeks ago, she was the first to call me before the news media, saying a mistake had been made and punishment had been issued, and she was going to see to it that VA had a 100-percent record of service to the veterans. We need that attitude and approach in every single VA hospital, VA clinic, and VA medical facility in the country.

I hope the President will exhibit the leadership necessary to call on every element of government—from the inspector general, to the Justice Department, to the VA itself—to get to the bottom of what has gone wrong, because it is intolerable, it is unacceptable, and it is wrong, here on the doorstep of a holiday where we celebrate those who sacrificed their life for our freedom, if there are veterans losing their life because of our inability to serve them in the VA hospitals.

I hope the President will exhibit that leadership. I hope we get to the bottom of it. As one member of the veterans committee, I pledge my commitment to get to the bottom of it. Our veterans deserve no less.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from South Dakota.

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

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

INTERNET TAX FREEDOM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the Internet Tax Freedom Forever Act, legislation I introduced on a bipartisan basis with my colleague Senator RON WYDEN to make the expiring Internet tax moratorium permanent. Because of the moratorium Americans have not been taxed on Internet access for 16 years, but this is going to change and new taxes will be levied starting in November if Congress doesn't act soon.

I am proud to work with Senator WYDEN on this bill, the lead Senate sponsor of the original Internet Tax Freedom Act that passed in 1998. This landmark law known as ITFA imposed a Federal moratorium that stopped State and local governments from placing taxes on Internet access. This moratorium has been extended three times, and it has been critical to the rapid growth of the Internet.

As we all know, the Internet provides unprecedented economic and social benefits. Mom and pop businesses in places such as South Dakota, Oregon, and across America found access to consumers and new business opportunities that are only possible through the Internet. Job seekers and entrepreneurs are finding opportunities that were once difficult to discover. Educators are exploring innovative tools and techniques that are powered by the Internet to equip students with the skills they will need for the 21st Century, and health care professionals are remotely providing services that are saving lives in rural areas. The idea behind the moratorium is straightforward. By not taxing Internet access we encourage broadband adoption and investment, which spurs all of the exciting activities that I just mentioned.

The Internet is a gateway to tremendous societal benefits. It is, frankly, astounding when you consider that it wasn't very long ago that the Internet was considered a novelty and only for the tech savvy. Today it is a must-have resource, the existence of which we almost take for granted. We cannot take for granted, however, that the moratorium on Internet access taxes has contributed to the Internet being accessed by hundreds of millions of Americans every single day. Thanks to the 16-year ban, consumer access to the Internet is free from State and local taxation for nearly all Americans. This gives consumers a welcome break on their monthly bills.

In the commerce committee we talk a lot about finding ways to encourage greater broadband deployment across all of America, and as cochair of the Congressional Internet Caucus, I worked with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to find ways to promote the Internet as an engine of economic growth and economic freedom. One of the ways that we can do that is by making broadband more affordable.

State taxation of Internet service will make broadband more expensive, which is at cross-purposes with our goal of encouraging Internet access and deployment. This doesn't make a lot of sense. The moratorium also benefits consumers by prohibiting multiple and discriminatory taxes on goods and services sold over the Internet. This means consumers won't be taxed by multiple States on the same sale and States won't tax Internet sales more than mail order or telephone sales.

Unfortunately, the Internet tax moratorium is set to expire on November 1. Because of this, many Internet service providers are planning to send out notices to their customers informing them that they may have to start paying taxes on Internet access if Congress fails to act. I expect that many millions of Americans who use the Internet will not be happy when they realize that their phone or Internet bill is going to suddenly increase. Two things are for sure: Expiration of ITFA will not encourage more Americans to get online to do commerce, civic engagement, or social media; and countless Americans will be calling Congress demanding that we keep taxes off of Internet access.

Rather than wait for angry constituents, let us be proactive and pass the Internet Tax Freedom Forever Act without delay. My bill with Finance Committee Chairman WYDEN provides for a permanent extension of the moratorium. By passing a permanent extension we will provide certainty to Internet consumers in every State. Making the moratorium permanent also means that Congress won't have to waste time and energy passing yet another extension, year after year, into the future. There are plenty of other areas for Congress to focus on.

Our bill also eliminates the grandfather clause that currently allows 6 States to tax Internet access. Eliminating the moratorium's grandfather provision will provide consumers and businesses with a tax break. This includes consumers and businesses in my State of South Dakota, where our legislation will make Internet access less expensive, thus helping to encourage broadband deployment.

The Internet Tax Freedom Forever Act currently has 46 cosponsors, nearly half of the Senate. The bipartisan cosponsors of the legislation understand the tremendous benefits provided by ensuring Internet access is not taxed and the discriminatory taxes are not applied to the Internet. I strongly encourage my colleagues in the Senate to join Senator WYDEN and me and the 46 other cosponsors in this fight. When the Senate reconvenes after the Memorial Day recess, we should move quickly to extend the tax moratorium and to ensure that Americans don't wake up on November 2 with new, unexpected taxes.

In the coming weeks and months, I plan to continue raising the need to pass our bipartisan legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

WRRDA CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, later today we are going to have the opportunity to pass a very important bill,

the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, the WRRDA bill. The Presiding Officer knows firsthand the importance of this legislation to our ports of New Jersey and Maryland. This is a very important bill, and it is going to get passed. It is going to get signed by the President. It is a bipartisan bill.

I congratulate Senator BOXER and Senator VITTER, our chair and ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, for developing a process where Democrats and Republicans, all members of the Senate, could work to develop the very best water resources bill for our country. This follows in the best traditions of the last Congress, when we were able to pass MAP–21, the surface transportation reauthorization that provided for the building of our roads, our bridges, our transit systems, and the FAA, which dealt with our air highways, dealing with the most modern air system that we could have. We are now moving forward with the Water Resources Reform and Development Act that deals with our Nation's locks, levees, dams, ports, channels, and harbors. There is something in common with both this bill and the two other bills I talked about, the highway and Transportation bill, and the aviation bill. They all involve economic progress and growth, planning for our future, creating the types of job opportunities we need, and having a modern infrastructure in order to carry that out.

This bill is vitally important for my State of Maryland. The Port of Baltimore is an economic engine for the State of Maryland. We have the ninth busiest port in the Nation in Baltimore. The port is No. 1 in the country as far as the roll-on/roll-off automobile and truck import-export service. We are also ranked No. 1 on ores, sugar, and gypsum—the bulk products. Our port is critically important to this country, critically important to our national economy, and vitally important to the Maryland economy.

Last summer the Port of Baltimore entered into a new contract with several car manufacturers—including Mazda—in order to increase its traffic within the Port of Baltimore.

My point is that there are tens of thousands of jobs in my community directly and indirectly related to the activities of the port.

Why is this legislation so important? I will give many reasons, but the primary reason is that we need to make sure we have acceptable sites to deal with the dredge material in order to maintain our harbor's depth so that the big cargo ships can come into our port. That has been a continuous struggle for many years.

Several years ago in Maryland we developed the Poplar Island solution. Poplar Island is a barrier island that was disappearing in the Chesapeake. At one time it was habitable, but it is no longer habitable. It was just about gone. Before Poplar Island, the popular thought was to just pick a site and dump the material and not worry about it. But Poplar Island is not only a site where we can put the dredge material, it is an environmental restoration. It provides a haven or wildlife, birds, and habitat. It offers the original purpose for a barrier island, and that is to protect against the extreme effects of storms. So this is a win-win situation. It gives us a dredge site for the materials so we can keep the harbor at the proper depth, it gives us an environmental plus so we can deal with wildlife in the Chesapeake, and it protects against the extreme weather conditions that occur too often.

It was absolutely essential to change the authorization in order to be able to continue to use Poplar Island as a site for dredge material. In this legislation, we get that done. We accelerated the Army Corps' reports, we got it back in time, and now that location will be available for many years to come in order to accept the dredge materials so we can keep the harbor dredged at the appropriate level.

There is also authorization in this bill to make sure our harbor is maintained at its current depth. We have gone even further than that. We have planned far into the future by now authorizing Mid Bay, the next Poplar Island for the Chesapeake. It is a barrier island that is disappearing, and it will be restored and used for economic purposes and dredge material, and it will also be converted into a positive for the environment and protect us against storms.

That is what this bill means to my State, and that is just one example. We could mention examples all over the country.

With regard to the Chesapeake Bay, I have taken to the floor many times to talk about it. Mr. President, $1 trillion of our economy comes from the bay. Watermen, fisheries, tourists, commerce, and real estate values are all affected by the quality of the Chesapeake Bay.

We made commonsense reforms to the environmental restoration program in the bill we will be voting on this afternoon. There is a lot in here.

I thank Senator WARNER, my colleague from Virginia. The oyster restoration program is also in this bill, which is vital in order to restore the oyster crops in the Chesapeake Bay. We are making progress on oysters in the bay, and we need to continue that effort. The bill we will have a chance to vote on this afternoon will allow us to continue to make progress on oyster restoration in the Chesapeake Bay.

There is a continuing authorities program—reforms to those programs. I mention that because some people may not pick this up, the legal significance of the changes we are making on the continuing authorization programs. Those programs will help our smaller communities.

In Maryland and New Jersey there are a lot of smaller communities that very much depend upon projects which may not be as big as Poplar Island or Mid Bay, but they are very important for the local community.

For example, in Cumberland we have a dam that needs to be removed. As a result of the enactment of the legislation we are going to be taking up this afternoon, it is going to be easier to get that type of project accomplished.

We have barrier island restorations off Crisfield on the lower Eastern Shore which will be assisted by the changes we make in this legislation. We deauthorize certain portions of two channels of the lower shore. That is important because the community needs and wants to have boat slips in that area. By deauthorizing, they can do that, and that will improve the community.

Those are the commonsense changes we have made as a result of the legislation we will be voting on this afternoon.

I want to mention one other provision that is in this bill, and I really want to thank the conferees. I was proud to be a part of the conference committee. Senator BOXER and Senator VITTER conferred with us frequently, and we came out with a good, bipartisan, bicameral bill. This is a responsible bill that will help the economy.

We also put in the report reauthorization of the State revolving fund. We have not reauthorized the State revolving fund since 1993. This is a program that is critical to our State and local governments in dealing with how we treat our waste. The wastewater treatment facility plants get their funding from the State revolving fund. It is important to get it authorized, and that is in the bill we will be taking up this afternoon.

I introduced the reauthorization bill in 2009. In that bill I would have liked to have seen the program more robust than it is today. This is a reauthorization that allows us to at least make some significant improvements in the State revolving fund.

We deal with green infrastructure and make it easier for green infrastructure in our wastewater treatment plants. We address water recapture and reuse. Water is a valuable commodity. We take steps in this bill to do that.

As to energy efficiency, we waste a lot of energy in our water infrastructure. This bill makes us more energy efficient, which helps our country and helps our environment. It helps economically disadvantaged communities have a better shot at dealing with wastewater issues.

There is a lot in here that will help everything from the smallest to the largest community and our economy. This is a good day for our Nation because we are going to pass the bill. The bill passed with over 400 votes in the House of Representatives. We are going to pass this bill and the President is going to sign it. This is a good day. Our water infrastructure will have a brighter future. The modernization of our

water infrastructure gives us a brighter future for our economy.

I was proud to be on the conference committee that developed the bill and proud to join the Presiding Officer from New Jersey in moving this bill forward, and I look forward to the vote this afternoon.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. 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. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise today in strong support of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act. We are going to be considering the final conference report on that legislation and voting on it in a few hours. This WRRDA bill is a strong, bipartisan bill. It is a jobs bill. It is very much needed in our weak economy. That is why we need to move forward and finally pass this into law. It is also a pretty good example of how this place should work, how we can work in a bipartisan, constructive way, how we can move forward as an institution and find common ground on these sorts of important matters.

Earlier this week the House passed the WRRDA bill 412 to 4. That is pretty much unheard of. I am not sure resolutions expressing admiration for Mother Teresa passed by that vote in the House, so that is a strong testament to the broad, bipartisan, pro-jobs nature of the bill. Again, it is because WRRDA has a sharp focus on what our country desperately needs right now: job creation, as well as improved storm and flood protection, and enhanced national commerce, particularly in our maritime sector.

This bill invests in our Nation's waterborne assets and landside infrastructure to grow jobs and to keep us competitive in global markets. Ensuring our ports and waterways are operated and maintained, thereby improving the flow of commerce in that way, will create jobs. Being prepared for the Panama Canal expansion will increase imports and exports, and that will create jobs. Providing flood and storm damage protection for communities large and small and businesses all along our Nation's coasts and waterways is necessary, it is important, and will also create jobs. So let me underscore: The WRRDA bill will not only grow our economy, it will directly put Americans back to work.

Let me mention some of the specifics of the bill. Before I talk about what the bill does, let me start with what it doesn't do. It absolutely does not increase the deficit. It absolutely does not contain any earmarks as defined under our rules or the House rules. In fact, the Wall Street Journal recently editorialized in strong support of the bill as a fiscally responsible way to address infrastructure needs. In fact, the bill even has a deauthorization provision—a mechanism to provide authorization offsets for the important and necessary positive authorizations the bill contains.

Now what does the bill do? Well, Corps of Engineers reform and accountability, No. 1. That is very important. It includes commonsense solutions to streamline project delivery and environmental decisionmaking.

The bill went to great lengths in making the Corps transparent and accountable to Congress and their non-Federal partners. For instance, this WRRDA requires the Corps to open their financial ledgers to show how taxpayer dollars are being spent and mandates timeframes and costs for feasibility studies which have taken several years and millions of dollars to complete. So it narrows those issues and constrains them.

To strengthen the project delivery timeline, the bill includes language to speed up the environmental review process to ensure there are not unreasonable delays in getting projects built.

The bill will also implement, for the first time ever, monetary penalties on the Corps for missed deadlines and reports. Failure to provide a specific report means funds from the general expenses account of the Civil Works Program are subtracted from that part of the Corps, and they go to the division of the Corps with responsibility for getting the work done. So there is appropriate penalty and incentive to make sure the work is done.

WRRDA also authorizes 34 Corps projects for navigation, flood protection, and ecosystem restoration. But, as I said, it also includes a real deauthorization process to decrease the nearly $60 billion construction backlog and offset these new authorizations with equal or greater deauthorizations. I thank Senator BARRASSO for this key provision. He authored it. It was refined and expanded by our colleagues in the House. I think it is a very important initiative.

We also include a provision that began as a stand-alone bill by myself and Senator NELSON last year. It puts significant project management control in the hands of State, local, and private entities to try that on a pilot basis and to see if it leads to reduced delays and reduced costs. That is what we do with most highway projects. The Federal Highway Administration is not the project manager of those projects. It doesn't take the lead. That is what we should do with water projects as well and not demand that an already overburdened Corps of Engineers has to be the lead project manager on all of those projects.

The second important category in this bill is the harbor maintenance trust fund. In order to advance our Nation's waterborne commerce and help drive our Nation's economy, this bill makes sweeping reforms to that trust fund. It is no secret that the harbor maintenance trust fund is grossly mismanaged and that in a good year half of the revenue going into that so-called trust fund is stolen—taken out—for completely unrelated purposes, even though that revenue is supposed to be dedicated for the purposes of the trust fund. We have to stop that. So WRRDA changes that status quo and requires a ramp-up in annual funding, incremental increases over 10 years to get to a full spend-out of trust fund revenue in 2025. Additional yearly harbor maintenance trust fund monies will be prioritized with ports which move 99 percent of our Nation's commerce—those high- and medium-use ports getting the highest prioritization. But there is also a limited but important low-use and underserved port set-aside to ensure adequate maintenance there and economic growth.

WRRDA also adds additional metrics to the harbor maintenance trust fund, in addition to commercial tonnage. We now include oil and gas activity, commercial fishing, and transportation of persons—important metrics that were ignored previously in an unfair way.

Without the full utilization of the harbor maintenance trust fund, negative impacts will be felt by manufacturers, producers, shippers, and carriers throughout America. They ultimately contribute to this trust fund to get dredging and other work done. We need to live up to our end of the deal and make sure that money is used for its intended purpose. That has never been more important than now with the expansion of the Panama Canal. We need to do the dredging. We need to be prepared for that economic opportunity.

A third important category in the bill is the inland waterways trust fund—another trust fund also with significant but different problems. WRRDA looks beyond our harbors to address serious concerns related to the delivery of projects on that inland waterway system and helps accelerate the construction of aging locks and dams, many of which have far exceeded their project design life. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the average age of our locks is over 60 years old and that continues to cause unwanted delays in the shipment of goods. By the year 2020, more than 80 percent of these locks will be functionally obsolete. This is extremely concerning, considering that more than 70 percent of our imports and exports travel this inland waterway system.

Again, the American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that underinvestment in this inland waterway system cost our businesses $33 billion in 2010, and that could rise to $49 billion in 2020 unless we act. This WRRDA bill takes action in the inland waterway trust fund, clears out some of the backlog

and clears out some of the things preventing important projects under that trust fund from getting done.

Another very important category which I certainly deeply care about, considering the State I represent, is flood protection and levee safety. Not only does WRRDA authorize critical flood protection projects, but it also strengthens levee safety initiatives to provide critical funds to State and local agencies to make sure levees and flood protection systems stay up to par. There are over 15,000 miles of Federal levees and almost 100,000 miles of non-Federal levees protecting communities all around the country. However, many are graded as in unsatisfactory condition. These levees protect nearly 43 percent of the Nation's population, so we need to make sure they are strong and adequate. This levee safety initiative will provide national and local leadership the resources they need to promote sound technical practices and to keep up with aging levee and protection systems.

Most important for this program is levee rehabilitation funding. It is imperative that our non-Federal sponsors have the ability, both technical and financial, to repair and rehabilitate levees. Storm surge and floodwaters are damaging to our economy. We must address this. In the experience of Hurricane Katrina, for instance, about 80 percent of the catastrophic flooding of the city of New Orleans was due directly to breaches in the levee system due to inadequate design or maintenance—flawed design at the beginning and inadequate maintenance continuing. Literally 80 percent of that catastrophic flooding was completely avoidable, completely manmade—that part of the disaster. We need to make sure that never happens again.

Certainly, in all of these categories I am talking about, there are major benefits to Louisiana. I thank all of my Louisiana partners who have done so much to give me the information and the expertise we needed to address these important areas, including Morganza to the gulf, which is very important to Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes, as well as our ecosystem restoration projects under the Louisiana Coastal Area Program, and many other important Louisiana priorities. Again, we could only address those properly with the full help and partnership of those Louisiana partners.

In closing, I wish to thank many folks, and I will start with those Louisiana partners. As I said, they were instrumental in helping us get the Louisiana piece right, and I thank them, and that work will continue and that partnership will continue.

I thank Chairman BARBARA BOXER, a Washington, DC, partner on this bill. As she has said many times, the two of us don't agree on a whole lot of things, but we do agree on infrastructure needs and we do agree on this WRRDA bill, and we came together, as a result, very constructively, very productively on this infrastructure work, as we are doing right now on the next highway bill. Certainly that has been an important tradition at the EPW Committee, which we are continuing. The crucial element there is the will and determination to do it, and she always provided that will and determination, as did I. I thank her for being such a great partner.

We also had great House partners: Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member RAHALL. They exhibited real leadership in getting a House bill done to begin with and then working with us on a productive conference committee. I thank them and their staffs for all of their work.

Speaking of staffs, I am deeply indebted to all of the staff work that went into this bill. It was very significant. The chair and I personally dealt with probably a couple dozen issues and semicrises that would crop up over time. Our staffs, in contrast, did that multiple times over—hundreds and hundreds of problems and issues before they developed to the Member level, literally hundreds and hundreds.

I thank both staffs, but I am particularly indebted to my staff for all of their hard work, particularly Charles Brittingham, Zak Baig, Chris Tomassi, Sarah Veatch, Rebecca Louviere, Jill Landry, Luke Bolar, and Cheyenne Steel. They put enormous hours into this bill and I truly appreciate their work.

I certainly want to also recognize and thank Chairman BOXER's staff, particularly Bettina Poirier, Jason Albritton, Ted Illston, Mary Kerr, and Kate Gilman.

In closing, I strongly commend this WRRDA bill to the Senate. It is a strong bipartisan jobs and infrastructure bill. It is what we need to do more of, and it is the model we need to adopt more in the Senate: working together on important projects across party lines. One key reason we were able to do it successfully is we had a strong bipartisan process and an open process that invited participation from all sides, including significant floor amendments to the Senate bill. That was absolutely crucial to moving the bill in a productive way through the process.

We will try to implement the same approach with the highway bill. We reported a strong bipartisan highway bill out of our committee unanimously last week, but we need to bring it to the Senate floor. We need to act well in advance of the highway trust fund running out of money around August. I hope we expand on this work. I hope we use this model, including an open-floor process, in many other areas on many other bills.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this WRRDA bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come to the floor to speak in support of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, also known as the WRRDA bill.

I thank Senator VITTER for his work on this bill. Of course, I also thank Chairman BOXER for her leadership in shepherding this bill through, when I think many people thought it would be a very difficult year to get a major infrastructure bill done. She was able to do it, work with Senator VITTER, work with the House most significantly, and we are very pleased with this bill.

I support this legislation because it will keep invasive carp out of Minnesota's northern lakes. It will help towns across the country advance critical flood protection projects. It will address overdue port and harbor maintenance on the Great Lakes. It will also ensure that navigation will remain strong on the inland waterways system, including the powerful and important Mississippi River, which of course starts in my State in Itasca State Park, where one can literally walk over the mighty Mississippi.

Minnesota's fishing and boating industries contribute around $4 billion to our State's economy every single year. For Minnesotans, being on the water is more than just a way of life. It is also part of our State's culture, part of our heritage, and it is certainly part of our economic engine, but that way of life is under threat right now because of invasive species of carp, also called Asian carp. They were imported and accidentally released into the Mississippi River years ago. How I would love to reverse that moment when they were accidentally released in the Southern States into the Mississippi River, but it happened, and years later we are still stuck with the consequences.

Anyone who has not seen the YouTube video, I would suggest you view it—of these Asian carp literally jumping out of the water, hitting fishermen in the head because they eat so much every single day, and of course they are eating the fish we have come to rely on in our State for great food and also great recreation.

As these invasive carp have worked their way farther upstream, we have learned they are not deterred by cold winters, which was once thought to be the case. Today invasive species of carp are knocking on our doorstep. They have been found around Winona, MN, and they are already in the St. Croix River.

Minnesotans know we cannot simply wish the problem away. The problem is literally swimming and jumping into our lives. That is why I authored the Upper Mississippi CARP Act, which would close the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock in Minneapolis. My lock closure provision included in the Water Resources Reform and Development Act conference report will simply require the Army Corps of Engineers to close the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock within 1 year following the date of enactment.

The language is a product of years of working with State and local stakeholders, and today, with the passage of this provision, we will take a significant step forward in the fight against invasive species to make sure they do not move up into Minnesota's northern lakes.

This provision has the support of Senator FRANKEN and also Representatives ELLISON, PAULSEN, WALZ, and NOLAN in the House. It was bipartisan. It was supported by Governor Dayton and the City of Minneapolis, as well as a large number of environmental and wildlife organizations, including Minnesota Trout Unlimited, the National Wildlife Federation, the Mississippi River Fund, the Minnesota Izaak Walton League, the National Parks Conservation Association, and the Friends of the Mississippi River, just to name a few.

It is also supported by countless anglers across Minnesota, and I appreciate the broad support we have had. It is not easy closing a lock, and we know there were some limited uses of the lock by certain businesses that during the winter do not use the lock but use barges, and we know the city will be working with them. We also know the kayaking community was using the lock, and I truly appreciate their support in closing down this lock. We had a tour boat that was using this lock, and they no longer use it.

Then of course we had the Army Corps there. We worked with them. It was not easy at first, but I have appreciated their work. We know in an emergency the lock could be opened again. But this is not just a study; this closes down this lock in 1 year.

I also want to thank my colleagues who worked with me on this provision who may have similar locks and dams and were concerned about what precedent this would set. We were able to make this a very focused provision, so we did not get resistance in the end, and they actually worked with me on compromise language, got it in the Senate, and I thank my colleagues in the House for using this exact provision in the House bill.

Closing this lock is supported by many people. I remember meeting with a group of kayakers who, despite being impacted by the lock closure, told me: ''We're with you on this!''

Recreational users of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock have taken voluntary steps, as I mentioned, to limit their use of the lock to reduce the chance of allowing invasive carp to spread upstream, but we knew we had to go further, and that is what we are doing today with the passage of this provision.

Although making the decision to close the lock was not done lightly, it is right for our State. We know invasive species of carp can dominate the environment and make up an astounding 90 percent of the biomass in the river. They outcompete prized sport fish. They make waterskiing unsafe for families, and they make boating in our lakes and rivers smelly and even dangerous.

In Minnesota, the Department of Natural Resources and the Metropolitan Council studied the economic impact of closing the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and also the economic value of recreation activities upstream of this lock. They found that for every one job dependent on the lock staying open, over eight jobs rely on recreational boat trips upstream of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock.

Closing the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock is a key part of a strategy to protect Minnesota's waters for future generations, but the fight against invasive carp does not end here. I will continue to fight for an ''all of the above'' solution to this challenge that includes closing this lock while also supporting research and carp barriers to protect other bodies of water in Minnesota.

Solving this problem will require the continued cooperation of Federal, State, and local stakeholders all working together, and the passage of the lock closure provision is a leap forward, but of course it only helps with Minnesota's northern lakes. We are already seeing problems in the southern rivers, and we need to develop that research.

There must be a way to eliminate these carp—by giving them food that will not kill other fish, by doing things with bubble barriers, and other ideas that have been brought forward. I know the State of Minnesota is working on that. I know the State of Wisconsin is working on that—and people all over the country. The Federal Government must play a role, and we must protect our Great Lakes, but we also must not forget our waterways.

The WRRDA bill also advances critical flood protection projects, including the Fargo-Moorhead—or as I like to call it, being from Minnesota: the Moorhead-Fargo—diversion project which will protect Moorhead, MN, and Fargo, ND, from flooding caused by the Red River of the North.

I have seen firsthand how hard people in the Red River Valley work to prepare for a potential flood. The Presiding Officer knows what this is like in New Jersey with his hurricanes, but I can tell you in Minnesota we literally have to plan for it every single year. They literally have warehouses for people putting sand in bags, anticipating this flooding. In a number of years we nearly lost these two major cities.

This is not the way to do this, as much as we love our volunteers—our seniors, our school kids, and everyone else—who have gathered together to get this project done and have stopped their lives for weeks. It would be much better to have permanent flood protection.

I have worked with Senator HOEVEN, of course, and Senator HEITKAMP. They have both taken a lead, as well as Senator FRANKEN, to get this done.

The region avoided flooding this year. The river has been, however, in major flood stage 6 out of the last 8 years. In 2009—the year of the record flood—the river rose to more than 40 feet. In Minnesota and North Dakota, the Red River does not divide us. Working together, it actually brings us together and unites us, and it is that spirit of solidarity that drives our efforts in the Red River Basin.

Floods damage homes, destroy crops, and hold entire cities hostage. The Fargo-Moorhead flood diversion project is critical to safety and economic development in the region, and finding a permanent solution to the issue makes much more economic sense than continuing to fight the flooding and repair damages year after year.

The WRRDA bill also helps address flood protection for Roseau, MN. Roseau has recovered from a flood in 2002 that caused widespread damage, but the area needs flood protection to reduce the flood stages in the city. The next phase of the Roseau diversion project will reduce future flood damages by nearly 86 percent. I thank COLLIN PETERSON, the Representative who represents Roseau, for his work on getting this funding. The families and businesses of Roseau have waited too long for flood protection, and the WRRDA bill ensures the project will be completed.

But the WRRDA bill does not just protect property; it also strengthens our economy. The competitiveness of our economy is directly tied to the strength of our infrastructure. This includes upgrading and modernizing our ports, our harbors, and our waterways.

The harbor maintenance trust fund collects $700 million more each year than it spends on dredging and maintenance. Meanwhile, our ports and navigation channels wait for basic maintenance.

Coming from New Jersey, the Presiding Officer may think of New Jersey as having ports. Well, we have a major port—one of the biggest ports—in Duluth, MN, that connects goods from the Midwest—not just from Minnesota, from all over the Midwest—to the Great Lakes through the St. Lawrence Seaway. It is a major port and brings goods in from the rest of the world.

The backlog of sediment due to insufficient dredging is more than 18 million cubic yards and is estimated to cost $200 million. The WRRDA bill helps correct this disparity and ensures that funds are spent to address the needs of shippers and that the Great Lakes system does not fall into further disrepair.

When ships on the Great Lakes have to light load—which means they have about 10 percent less cargo than they should have—when they have to reduce their cargo because channels are not deep enough, our whole economy suffers, not just the shippers, not just the people who are producing the goods. Our whole economy suffers when we have to ship 10 percent less than we could on these ships and instead we are bringing it in from other parts of the world. This does not make any sense at all.

That is why I cosponsored an amendment with Senator LEVIN that establishes the Great Lakes ports as a single navigation system and sets aside additional funding for the Great Lakes ports.

This provision will help ensure maintenance and dredging is done throughout the Great Lakes system. We are so excited about this. It is finally warming up in Duluth. In northern Minnesota, it is no longer colder than Mars. Our ships are ready to go and transport goods. We want them to be at their full capacity. The only way we can achieve this is by dredging some of these areas where we have seen some major problems.

The bill also makes critical reforms to our Nation's rivers and waterways. The inland waterways system in this country spans 38 States and handles approximately one-half of all inland freight. With many maintenance and construction projects years overdue, the inland waterways are in dire need of major rehabilitation.

The inland waterways trust fund, which funds these projects, is in steady decline. If we do not strengthen it, the industries that so heavily depend on the inland waterways system and the people that work for these industries—critical jobs—will suffer. That is why I cosponsored the RIVER Act with Senators CASEY and LANDRIEU to help move forward major construction projects on the inland waterways system, including much-needed rehabilitation of the locks and dams on the Mississippi River.

A number of the provisions of the RIVER Act are included in the final WRRDA bill, including reforms to the project management process that will help ensure waterways projects are completed on time and cost overruns are minimized.

I also supported Senator CASEY's amendment to increase the inland waterways user fee. Let me emphasize that the user who pays this fee asked for it. They agreed to pay this fee. We have a case of a win-win situation where the businesses that use these locks and dams want to actually pay more money to upgrade them because they need to carry their goods to market.

I think the Presiding Officer knows the only way we are going to advance here in this economy on an international basis is if we are making stuff, inventing things, and sending them overseas instead of everyone sending their goods to America. We are not going to do that without a modern transportation system. Here we have businesses that are employing tens of thousands of people, hundreds of thousands of people, that are willing to pay extra money to upgrade our locks and dams. That is all this is about.

Industry partners, from farmers to shippers to companies such as Cargill in my State, strongly support this user fee increase. The increase was their idea. They know this modest change will go a long way to ensuring that our Nation's rivers are viable for years to come. The fee increase did not make it into the WRRDA bill because it is a tax provision. There are some good things in this bill for locks and dams. I do appreciate how the industry worked so well with me on allowing this provision of the closure of the one lock in Minnesota to stop the invasive species from going up into our northern lakes.

But I also am continuing to work with them to upgrade our locks and dams throughout the country. One aspect that would truly help is this fee that businesses are willing to pay. It is exactly what we want—private money going to upgrade our infrastructure. So we need to get this done. I will work with them in the future to get it on any bill we can so we can upgrade this country's locks and dams.

Again, I commend Chairman BOXER and Ranking Member VITTER and all of the WRRDA conferees for putting together this bipartisan legislation. From keeping invasive carp out of our waters, to fighting to protect towns from flooding, investing in critical waterway infrastructure, to making sure our harbors are at 100 percent, this legislation is vital to the economy, our environment, our cities and towns. I will be proud to vote for it today.

I yield the floor.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MENENDEZ. I thank the distinguished Senator from Arizona and a distinguished member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for his courtesy. I know he will be making comments in which I share his concerns and for which he has been very outspoken. I will try to condense my effort here.

On Monday, the Department of Justice announced that Swiss bank Credit Suisse pled guilty to the criminal charge of helping American citizens cheat on their taxes, and agreed to pay a $2.6 billion fine. The bank admitted to using bogus entities to disguise undeclared U.S. accounts from American tax authorities, and it admitted to helping its clients arrange large cash transactions to skirt U.S. reporting requirements.

The guilty plea means that the bank will be punished for its transgressions, and it serves as a warning to others who would engage in or enable tax evasion. But astoundingly, Credit Suisse will not be required to disclose additional names of U.S. citizens who hired the bank to help them cheat on their taxes and evade prosecution by U.S. authorities.

As the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations reported earlier this year, the Justice Department has only been able to obtain the names of 238 Credit Suisse customers out of 22,000 U.S.-owned accounts at the bank. The reason for this is simple. Swiss bank secrecy laws forbid Credit Suisse and other Swiss banks from sharing information about their clients with U.S. tax authorities, even if those clients are actively violating U.S. tax laws.

Luckily, we have a simple solution, one which we could enact right now with the agreement from this body. On April 1, the Foreign Relations Committee, with strong bipartisan support, reported out favorably a new protocol amending our tax treaty with Switzerland. For decades, tax treaties have played a key role in facilitating greater and more transparent trade and investment. They have helped protect American companies from double taxation and made it easier for them to explore new markets and business opportunities.

They do this all while simultaneously protecting U.S. taxpayer privacy and information confidentiality. They enhance our efforts to prevent tax avoidance or evasion. The new protocol with Switzerland would not permit Swiss banks, like Credit Suisse, to withhold information on U.S. individuals who have, for years, hidden behind Swiss bank secrecy laws to avoid paying U.S. taxes.

The protocol brings our tax treaty with Switzerland into conformity with both the entire internationally accepted standards on the information exchange as well as the most recent U.S. model tax treaty. It includes an arbitration provision to ensure that when disputes arise between the U.S. and Swiss tax authorities over issues like the exchange of information, these disputes will be resolved expeditiously, rather than dragging on and frustrating cross-border tax enforcement.

The Swiss government has already ratified the protocol. We should do the same. Credit Suisse pled guilty to abetting tax evasion—a criminal charge. But they were not forced to disclose the names of actual tax evaders because doing so would violate Swiss bank secrecy laws. Ratifying the treaty with Switzerland is therefore necessary.

It will enable U.S. authorities to obtain information about these and other tax evaders who are still taking advantage of bank secrecy laws to avoid paying their fair share.

I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 9, treaty document No. 112–1; that the treaty be considered as having advanced through the various parliamentary stages up to and including the presentation of resolutions of ratification; that any committee declarations be agreed to as applicable; that any statements be printed in the RECORD as if read; that if the resolution of ratification is agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Is there objection?

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, reserving the right to object, as you know, I have been a critic of these treaties for some time. This discussion has gone on for quite a while. I disagree with many of the implications of where these treaties would take us. But I realize there are some beneficial aspects of the treaties.

But because of the critical invasion of privacy that these treaties would allow, I cannot support them. These treaties are an encroachment on our privacy and our constitutional right to privacy. Many of the previous treaties that we have had in the past focused on information specific to tax fraud.

I am not opposed to getting the information of those who have committed fraud or broken the law, but you must have an accusation, you must submit some proof.

We are going to have bulk collection of records without suspicion.

As previously stated in the previous treaties, the information that was exchanged in the past under the current treaties had to show that they were for preventing tax fraud. The new treaty, though, is going to change the standard from looking for tax fraud—which seems to be what everybody is talking about—to saying that we will look for financial information that may be relevant.

What we are doing is taking the standard down to something ''may be relevant,'' which could be a dragnet for getting everyone's information. It will be a deterrent to foreign investors both in our country as well as in other countries. I think at the very least every American, whether at home or abroad, deserves the right to the fourth amendment protections guaranteed by the Constitution.

I want the record to be very clear. I certainly do not condone Americans who have not followed the letter of the law, but I can't support a law that endangers regular foreign investment and punishes every American regardless of whether there is suspicion that they have committed a crime.

While I want the important benefits included in the tax treaties to be ratified, I cannot support a treaty that would pave the way for a law that would permit the IRS to share information of customers at U.S. banks with foreign governments. Imagine, we will be conceivably sharing information about customers here with governments that may well not even be our friends. Also, I cannot support a treaty that may facilitate the bulk collection of private financial data for all U.S. citizens living abroad. For those reasons, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Very briefly, I am disappointed because basically what we are going to do—those of us who are law-abiding and pay our taxes have to suffer the consequences of those who cheat and go abroad to do so. When they do that, they undermine the ability of this government to have the resources to arm the men and women who serve us abroad, protect them, take care of their health care, and deal with the challenges of educating the next generation of Americans.

Let me just say that this question that the treaty somehow infringes—first of all, if Switzerland is not a friendly country, I don't know what is. It is not a question of a country that isn't friendly, so let's remove that objection.

The treaty supposedly infringes on the fourth amendment rights of U.S. citizens. Look, these bilateral tax treaties only permit the exchange of information that is foreseeably relevant to the collection of taxes.

The proposed treaty also provides protection against fishing expeditions. To exchange information, the requesting country must demonstrate that the individuals targeted have engaged in activities that suggested they are engaging in fraud.

The existing treaty with Switzerland requires the requesting country to establish tax fraud or fraudulent misconduct as a basis for the exchange. That standard has clearly proven to be too narrow for the purposes of prosecuting tax evasion, as demonstrated by the outcome of this Credit Suisse settlement, where the bank still does not have to hand over the names of individuals who use Credit Suisse accounts to hide their income.

Now the wages and U.S. bank account interests of Americans are both reported to the IRS. There is no reason why people with foreign bank accounts should be able to hide their money from the IRS in a way that average, hard-working Americans cannot. It boggles my mind that we are going to treat average, hard-working Americans in a different way than those who have the money to cheat and ultimately avoid their responsibility to our collective society, so we will continue to raise this issue.

I won't expound upon it any more—I have plenty to say—in deference to the Senator from Arizona, who was gracious enough to yield the floor.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

SYRIA

Mr. MCCAIN. The Middle East today is engulfed in an escalating regional conflict. The space for moderate politics in country after country is collapsing, and a process of radicalization is increasingly destabilizing the entire region. At the center of this growing conflict stands Syria, where for over 3 years now the Syrian people have faced an onslaught of unspeakable violence from President Bashar al-Assad and his forces.

As of today more than 160,000 Syrians have been killed, over half of the population is in urgent need of humanitarian assistance, and 9.3 million people have been driven from their homes in what the United Nations has described ''as the greatest humanitarian tragedy of our times.'' To give some sense for the scale of the growing refugee crisis, there are now 1 million registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon. That makes up one-fourth of the total population of the country. This does not include the thousands who are living there unofficially and unregistered. This is as if the entire population of Canada were uprooted and became refugees in the United States of America—twice over.

Without understanding the scale, it is hard to comprehend the stress on resources and the escalating tensions that these refugees have caused in neighboring countries. Can you imagine what we would do as Americans if we were dealing with the entire population of Canada living as refugees in our country? Inside Syria, they are confronted with the inhumane cruelty of Mr. Assad and his forces every day.

We have seen evidence of this systematic abuse, torture, starvation, and killing of approximately 100,000 detainees, in what clearly amounts to war crimes and crimes against humanity. The United Nations has detailed the further arrest, detention, torture, and sexual abuse of thousands of children by government forces. Human Rights Watch has documented how Syrian authorities have deliberately used explosives and bulldozers to demolish entire neighborhoods for no military reason whatsoever, just as a form of collective punishment of Syrian civilians.

The United Nations has also documented the toll of the Syrian government's air strike campaign, and, in particular, the regime's use of crude cluster munitions that have become known as barrel bombs. Their sole purpose is to maim, kill, and terrorize as many civilians as possible when indiscriminately dropped on schools, bakeries, and mosques.

Worse yet, evidence is piling up that Assad's forces have been equipping these barrel bombs with chlorine gas. Just last week French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius said that France has evidence of at least 14 chlorine-based chemical attacks carried out by Syrian Government forces since 2013, adding, ''The regime is still capable of producing chemical weapons and is determined to use them.''

Around the same time, a senior Israeli defense official stated that ''from the day that he signed the deal, Assad has used chemical weapons over thirty times, and in every case citizens were killed.''

The State Department has further verified these reports, stating there

were ''indications'' of the use of chlorine—though it was quick to point out that this is not one of the chemicals Syria was obliged to surrender.

So it appears that we are faced with a situation in which the Assad regime has agreed to give up certain chemical weapons after using them to murder nearly 1,400 civilians last year, but it is also using other chemicals—less lethal but nonetheless effective—to continue gassing civilians to death, and the world does nothing about it. Why? Because technically this is permitted under the chemical weapons agreement. That is shameful and outrageous.

What is more, months after the deadline for removing all of its chemical weapons stockpiles, the Syrian Government has yet to fulfill its obligations under the treaty and is using its remaining stockpiles to bargain over the terms of the original agreement in the hopes of retaining its storage and production facilities.

As we are once again faced with images of men, women, and children writhing on the ground and gasping for breath, Assad appears to be disregarding some of his chemical weapons commitments and continuing to commit mass atrocities. Again, redlines are tested and crossed, and the United States of America and the world do nothing.

These are just some of the many reasons our Director of National Intelligence referred to the Syria crisis as ''an apocalyptic disaster.'' But this apocalyptic disaster in Syria is no longer just a humanitarian tragedy for one country; it is a regional conflict and an emerging national security threat to us all. No one should believe that we will be immune to what is happening in Syria. None of us are.

For those of you who look at these far-away events and say what Neville Chamberlain once told himself about a different problem from Hell in an earlier time—that this is ''a quarrel in a far away country between people of whom we know nothing''—don't think that events in Syria won't have repercussions much closer to home. The terrorist sanctuary that Al Qaeda and its associated forces now enjoy in Syria and Iraq increasingly pose a direct threat to U.S. national security and that of our closest allies and partners. Indeed, the Secretary of Homeland Security, Mr. Jeh Johnson, has said, ''Syria is now a matter of homeland security.'' The Director of National Intelligence, James Clapper, has also repeatedly warned that Al Qaeda-affiliated terrorists in Syria now aspire to attack the homeland.

If the September 11 attacks should have taught us anything, it is that global terrorists who occupy ungoverned spaces and seek to plot and plan attacks against us can pose a direct threat to our national security. That was Afghanistan on September 10, 2001, and that is what top officials in this administration are now warning us Syria is becoming today.

The latest U.S. intelligence estimates say that more than 100 Americans have traveled to fight in Syria alongside extremists, joining some of the most dangerous terrorist organizations in the world today.

Earlier this month, FBI Director James Comey stated:

> All of us with a memory of the '80s and '90s saw the line drawn from Afghanistan to September 11. We see Syria as that, but an order of magnitude worse in a couple of respects: Far more people are going there, and far easier to travel to and back from.

Already, senior intelligence officials believe that between 6 and 12 Americans who have gone to Syria to fight have now returned to America, possibly with the intention to carry out attacks here. ''We know where some are,'' stated one senior U.S. intelligence official. Some? But what about the others? Does that reassure you?

The sheer scale of foreign fighters with Western passports traveling to fight in Syria has our senior-most intelligence officers worrying about how easy it would be for these people to slip through the cracks. In March the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, Matthew Olsen, testified that the NSA simply does not have the ability to track the thousands of jihadists now flocking to Syria. He testified:

> This raises our concern that radicalized individuals with extremist contacts and battlefield experience could return to their home countries to commit violence on their own initiative or participate in al Qaeda-directed plots aimed at Western targets outside of Syria.

First indoctrinated, then trained and equipped, the foreign fighters now joining groups such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, known as ISIS—a group who proved too radical even for Al Qaeda's senior leadership—presents a challenge that rises above a mere counterterrorism problem. ISIS no longer exists in small, concentrated cells, conducting operations limited in nature and scope. It has become a real nascent state actor, similar in organization and power to the Taliban of the late 1990s and possessing a real army of foreign recruits capable of carrying out attacks across the world. The territory it possesses is no longer a safe haven within a state. It has become a de facto state that serves as a safe haven and an even more vibrant incubator for international terrorism than did pre-9/11 Afghanistan. It is a saddening irony that as our efforts to eradicate the Al Qaeda safe haven in Afghanistan are proving successful, we see an even more dangerous terrorist sanctuary emerging on the border of Europe between Damascus and Baghdad.

My friends, here is the tragic reality of the war in Syria. After more than 3 years of horror, suffering, devastation, and growing threats to international security, the conflict in Syria continues to get worse and worse both for Syria and for the world. But the United States and the international community have no effective policy to help bring this conflict to a responsible end. The Geneva peace talks have failed entirely, as predicted. Ambassador Brahimi, the U.N. Special Representative, has himself given up on the process and resigned last week. This should surprise no one. The United States and the international community have been reluctant to provide the opposition with much needed material support. Meanwhile, Assad has the active support of Hezbollah, Iran, and Russia and is using nearly every weapon in his arsenal to kill his way to victory, and he is winning. So why would he want to negotiate himself out of power now?

Can we finally stop hiding behind the fantasy of Geneva and admit what has been painfully obvious from the start: that there is no hope for a negotiated solution until the momentum on the battlefield changes against the Assad regime. And that will only happen through greater international intervention of some sort.

After painful and costly experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, a war-weary American public does not appear eager for an active, internationalist foreign policy, and President Obama has sought to give the American people what they want. While it is understandable and unsurprising that the American public has been reluctant to get more engaged with events in Syria and the wider Middle East, the tide of war does not recede simply because we wish it so.

The outcome of the administration's disengagement has been a consistent failure to support more responsible forces in Syria when that support would have mattered—the descent of Syria into chaos and growing international instability, the use of Syria as a training ground for Al Qaeda affiliates and other terrorist organizations, the ceding of regional leadership to our international adversaries, and the tolerance of war crimes and crimes against humanity. In short, all of the awful things that critics said would happen if we got more involved in Syria have happened because we have not gotten more involved.

We continue to hear from the administration that there are no good options in Syria—as if there ever were good options in the real world—and that the only alternative to our current disengagement is a full-scale ground invasion and war without end. The President frequently has said as much, recently stating:

> It is very difficult to imagine a scenario in which our involvement in Syria would have led to a better outcome, short of us being willing to undertake an effort in size and scope similar to what we did in Iraq.

But this claim has been directly contradicted by other administration officials who recognize that our inaction in Syria is not because we lack options or capability but, rather, the will.

In an April 30 speech at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, our own Ambassador to the United Nations, Samantha Power, said:

To those who would argue that a head of state or government has to choose only between doing nothing and sending in the military—I maintain that is a constructed and false choice, an accompaniment only to disengagement and passivity.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius has also highlighted this false choice, recently expressing his regrets that Western nations did not carry out threatened airstrikes against the regime following the August 2013 chemical attack and that more had not been done to stop the abominable behavior of the Assad regime. He stated:

We regret it [not carrying out threatened airstrikes] because we think it would have changed everything.

That is a French Foreign Minister who regrets that we didn't carry out the airstrikes because ''we think it would have changed everything.'' In his comments he made it clear that a limited surgical strike would have made all the difference in Syria and would have stopped the chemical attacks that continue today, saved the lives of thousands of people, and prevented the devastating consequences that have reverberated around the world since that red line was crossed.

It is true our options to help end the conflict in Syria were never good, and they are much worse and fewer now. But as Mr. Fabius pointed out, as bad as our options in Syria may be, we still have options. No one should believe that doing something meaningful to help in Syria requires total war or invasion. Literally no one is calling for that, and it is intellectually dishonest to suggest so. This is not a question of options or costs or capabilities but a question of will.

The continued violence in Syria is expected to kill tens of thousands more and produce millions of refugees by the year's end. This is a humanitarian tragedy, to be sure, but one with immediate strategic consequences. The longer the devastation goes on, the more difficult it will be to put Syria back together again. Failing to do so will leave a dangerous conflagration in the heart of the Middle East—a failed state at war with itself where extremism and instability will fester and terrorists of all brands will find ample space, resources, and recruits to menace the region and eventually attack the United States.

If ever there was a case that should remind us that our interests are indivisible from our values, it is Syria. We cannot afford to go numb to this human tragedy. I have seen my fair share of suffering and death in the world, but the images and stories coming out of Syria haunt me most. In the time I have been speaking, at least two Syrians have been killed, 45 Syrians have become refugees, and 15 Syrian families have been forced from their homes. In another 15 minutes from now, two more will be killed, 45 more will become refugees, and 15 more families will be forced from their homes. Is that acceptable to us?

Neither the United States, Europe, nor the Syrian people can afford the cost of defeatism. The price of abandonment includes not only a failed state in Syria but an entire region teetering on the brink of disaster, and it means emboldening our adversaries and conceding a safe haven and a state to the world's most dangerous terrorist groups. While these are the real, tangible consequences we face, it also means conceding the moral sources of our great power and giving up on every principle our Nation was built on.

All of us, Americans and Europeans, must recognize that our power confers a responsibility on us. If the most powerful nations in the world have the capabilities and the options to help bring to an end one of the most horrific mass atrocities in modern times, what does it say about us that we have not done so? History will render a bitter and scathing judgment on America and the world for our failure in Syria, and I pray we will finally recognize that and take the necessary actions to help the Syrian people write a better end to this sad chapter of world affairs.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD two articles, one entitled ''FBI Director: Number of Americans traveling to fight in Syria increasing,'' and the other entitled ''Exclusive: Al Qaeda's American Fighters Are Coming Home—and U.S. Intelligence Can't Find Them.''

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

[From the Washington Post, May 2, 2014]

FBI DIRECTOR: NUMBER OF AMERICANS TRAVELING TO FIGHT IN SYRIA INCREASING

(By Sari Horwitz and Adam Goldman)

FBI Director James B. Comey said Friday that the problem of Americans traveling to Syria to fight in the civil war there has worsened in recent months and remains a major concern to U.S. law enforcement and intelligence officials.

In a wide-ranging interview with reporters at FBI headquarters, Comey said the FBI is worried that the Americans who have joined extremist groups allied with al-Qaeda in Syria will return to the United States to carry out terrorist attacks.

''All of us with a memory of the '80s and '90s saw the line drawn from Afghanistan in the '80s and '90s to Sept. 11,'' Comey said. ''We see Syria as that, but an order of magnitude worse in a couple of respects. Far more people going there. Far easier to travel to and back from. So, there's going to be a diaspora out of Syria at some point and we are determined not to let lines be drawn from Syria today to a future 9/11.''

Comey declined to give a precise figure for Americans believed to be involved in the Syrian struggle but said the numbers are ''getting worse.''

''I said dozens last time,'' said Comey, referring to an interview with reporters four months ago. ''It's still dozens, just a couple more dozen.''

A senior U.S. counterterrorism official estimated this year that 60 to 70 Americans have traveled to fight in Syria. Comey said that Americans in Syria are actively recruiting other Americans to join the fight.

Comey said the threat associated with foreign fighters in Syria is of concern not only to the United States but also is ''a huge focus'' of European intelligence officials.

''It's the first thing we talk about when I go visit a counterpart,'' said Comey, who has visited 13 FBI legal attache offices abroad since he became director in September.

Comey said thousands of fighters are traveling to Syria from European countries, and they are a focus for the FBI because many of them could easily get into the United States.

''They're visa-waiver countries,'' Comey said. ''If someone flows out of Syria, they can flow in here very easily.''

Comey said the al-Qaeda affiliate in Yemen remains the greatest threat to the United States. He said the terrorist group is bent on attacking America and that he was very concerned about the group's bombmaking expertise.

[From the Daily Beast, May 20, 2014]

EXCLUSIVE: AL QAEDA'S AMERICAN FIGHTERS ARE COMING HOME—AND U.S. INTELLIGENCE CAN'T FIND THEM

(By Eli Lake)

The number of American extremists who have flocked to Syria is higher than previously understood, American intelligence sources say. And some of the fighters are coming home.

Western intelligence services have been warning that European and American jihadists have been flocking to Syria to fight. But they've been reluctant to say how many Americans have joined the extremist forces there—until now. The latest U.S. intelligence estimates say that more than 100 Americans have joined the jihad in Syria to fight alongside Sunni terrorists there.

Senior American intelligence officials tell The Daily Beast that they believe between six and 12 Americans who have gone to Syria to fight Assad have now returned to America. ''We know where some are,'' one senior U.S. intelligence official told The Daily Beast. ''The concern is the scale of the problem we are dealing with.''

The scale of that problem by all accounts has gotten worse. Last fall, the official U.S. estimate on Americans specifically who have joined the jihad in Syria was in the low double digits. In January, the New York Times reported that at least 70 Americans have either traveled or attempted to travel to Syria. Earlier this month FBI Director James Comey told reporters that he believed ''dozens'' of Americans were suspected to be foreign fighters in Syria, but declined to give a more precise number.

In recent months, the U.S. intelligence community has made the tracking of all Westerners going to fight into Syria a top priority. Speaking in March before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Matthew Olsen, the director of the National Counter-Terrorism Center, described in vague terms an effort by the whole government to find Western citizens traveling to Syria and to track their travel.

''In light of the large foreign fighter component in Syria crisis, we are working together to gather every piece of information we can about the identity of these individuals,'' he said at the time.

More recently, the issue of Western foreign fighters came up in top-level meetings between the Syrian opposition delegation and the Obama administration last week to Washington, D.C.

''We view all foreign fighters as a threat and they are not welcome. There is a convergence of interests between the moderate Syrian opposition and the international community in fighting these foreign fighters and insuring they do not use Syria as a launching pad for external attacks,'' said Oubai Shabandar, a strategic communications adviser to the Syrian opposition's foreign mission in Washington. ''This was a major topic

of conversation this month in meetings with the Syrian opposition delegation and top U.S. officials.''

The problem, U.S. counter-terrorism and intelligence officials tell The Daily Beast, is that there are just so many jihadists with Western passports traveling to fight in Syria that they worry some of them may slip back into the United States without being detected.

''The NSA does not have the ability to track thousands of bad guys—and on the human intelligence side, this is even more difficult,'' another senior U.S. intelligence official told The Daily Beast. ''So we are worried that people are slipping through the cracks.''

Olsen in his March testimony said there were thousands of foreign fighters in Syria and that hundreds of those fighters held Western passports.

''This raises our concern that radicalized individuals with extremist contacts and battlefield experience could return to their home countries to commit violence on their own initiative or participate in al Qaeda-directed plots aimed at Western targets outside of Syria,'' he said. Olsen also said that a group of ''al Qaeda veterans'' from Afghanistan and Pakistan have gone to Syria, making the prospect of recruiting new members for the organization even more likely.

Aaron Zelin, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy who closely tracks the flow of foreign fighters into Syria, said, ''In the past when we've seen Americans go abroad to fight in foreign countries and a number of individuals have been trained to go back to attempt attacks on the homeland.'' The best example he said is Faisal al-Shahzad, the Pakistani American who traveled to Taliban training camps in Pakistan and then attempted to set off a bomb in Times Square in 2010. Al-Shahzad failed to properly detonate his bomb and was reported to the New York police by a Muslim-American street vendor.

''It's not just Americans who are going to Syria, but there are up to 3,000 European citizens from countries that have visa waivers with the United States who have also joined the jihad in Syria,'' Zelin said. ''This is why so many Western counter-terrorism officials are so worried, it's much easier to get into our country with a Western passport.''

Those Americans that have gone off to fight in Syria also do not fit the typical terrorist profile. Last May, the Detroit Free Press reported that Nicole Lynn Mansfield, a convert to Islam, was killed in fighting in Syria fighting Assad. In April of 2013, a federal court charged Eric Harroun, a former U.S. Army private, with firing a rocket-propelled grenade while fighting alongside al-Nusra, al Qaeda's official affiliate in Syria. If U.S. intelligence estimates are correct, these cases could be unfortunate harbingers of things to come.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, this weekend Americans will gather to remember all who have fought and perished so that we might live in freedom. Memorial Day is our chance to honor their extraordinary sacrifices.

Of course, Kentucky has long played a proud and vital role in the defense of our Nation. I am honored to represent so many Kentuckians in the Armed Forces, including those stationed at Fort Knox, Fort Campbell, the Blue Grass Army Depot, and members of the Reserves and Kentucky National Guard.

One of the reasons Memorial Day is so important to me is because it allows Americans to reflect and give thanks for all that we have—to recognize that none of it would have been possible without so many Americans we have never met putting everything on the line for us. That is why the men and women who protect us deserve our full support when they are deployed, when they are training, and when they return home. Most Americans certainly agree with that statement.

Yet as we have recently learned, that is not what is happening. So many Americans now turn on the evening news just to be sickened by the steady drip, drip from the Obama administration's growing veterans scandal. The denial of care to our veterans is a national disgrace and the scandal only seems to increase in scope by the day.

We first heard about 1 hospital in Phoenix, then we heard about 10 medical centers across the Nation, now there are at least 2 dozen VA facilities under investigation. It all leads to an obvious question: How widespread is this failure to treat our veterans?

We need answers from the President and his administration. The White House claims the President didn't even know about the latest scandal until hearing about it on the news, even though a top official testified he knew of inappropriate scheduling practices at VA health care clinics as far back as 2010. It sure raises a lot of questions.

It is a curious thing. President Obama, the most powerful man in the free world, always seems to be the last to know about what is going on in his own administration. From the Obama administration's IRS scandal to its ObamaCare Web site fiasco, just about every time, the President claims to be in the dark until the wrongdoing surfaces on its own—usually in the press. The pattern is incredibly worrying.

If it is true he learns so much through the press—if he knows that little about what is going on in his own administration—then I recommend he get reengaged. Right now. Right now. Because American Presidential leadership is needed today. This scandal appears to be a failure of huge magnitude, and the people we represent are demanding he rise to the challenge.

Our veterans are counting on him to work with both parties to get to the truth and to pursue solutions that can make things better—solutions such as the VA reform bill that passed the House yesterday with strong bipartisan support. That legislation, which I have cosponsored and which Senator RUBIO has been the leader on, would make it easier to remove high-level VA employees for performance failures. It is a smart idea. There is no reason for us not to pass it quickly right here in the Senate. The President should call for its passage right away too. That would be one positive step forward for him—a small one, but a positive one, even though, for some reason, the White House has been ambivalent about the bill.

Look, we all remember how engaged the President was when healthcare.gov flopped. He was very engaged. He didn't just send a staffer out to Phoenix; he didn't just give a secretary a stern talking to; he didn't say he wouldn't stand for it. He pulled out all the stops. He made it his No. 1 priority to get that Web site running, even if that is still not done. What I am saying is the President should put more effort into helping our veterans than his attempt to fix a Web site. Only he can work with us to get to the truth. Our veterans deserve it. They deserve answers. They deserve accountability, and they deserve solutions.

As we look ahead to Memorial Day, I hope the President will work constructively with us to give them just that—to prove how grateful we are to the brave men and women who protect us every single day.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

BARRON NOMINATION

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I rise today to speak in favor of the confirmation of David Barron to the First Circuit Court of Appeals.

As a Harvard Law professor, he has broad bipartisan support from those who know him best—his colleagues. Larry Tribe and Charles Fried—two professors at Harvard who could not be further apart politically—both agree—and this is the joint quote—''Barron is a brilliant lawyer who will make an excellent judge. What is clear to us is that Barron will decide cases based solely on the relevant sources of legal authority, including binding precedent, and that his political views would in no way distort his legal judgment.''

This is the kind of unequivocal support we want for a judicial nominee, and David Barron is just the kind of judge we should confirm.

I stand alongside those of my colleagues who believe transparency is paramount and that we need a public debate on drone policy. Indeed, I support a robust debate on our entire drone policy, not simply the use of a drone to kill an American citizen who was plotting the annihilation of his fellow Americans.

Importantly, the White House just announced that it will release to the general public the key memo Professor Barron wrote, so all Americans will be able to take part in this debate.

But let us be clear: David Barron is not responsible for the administration's delay in releasing the memos he

and others in the Office of Legal Counsel were directed to produce. He is certainly not responsible for the administration's drone policy or the decision to authorize an attack. He is a lawyer who was asked to do legal analysis for his client, the President of the United States.

Entangling David Barron's nomination with the policy of drone deployment is unfair to him and unfair to the people of Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Puerto Rico who need the vacancy on the First Circuit filled by someone as qualified as David Barron.

I believe David Barron will be an excellent judge, and that is why he has my support.

WRRDA CONFERENCE REPORT

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I commend the Senate on taking final action on the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, known as WRRDA. Today's bill includes the $310 million Boston Harbor dredging project which will deepen Boston Harbor's main navigation channels.

Boston Harbor is an economic anchor for the entire New England region, and this investment will help ensure its future as a port of world class distinction. Improving the harbor to accommodate more and larger ships will bring more jobs, more investments, and more economic activity to the harbor, extending Boston's position as a shining city upon a hill as well as on the shore.

Dredging the harbor will double the number of containers on ships coming into Boston. The project will also allow the port to accommodate ships being built to serve the expanded Panama Canal, which is planned to open next year.

The Army Corps projects that for every dollar spent on construction, there will be $9 returned in increased economic activity, resulting in a $2.7 billion economic benefit for the entire New England region.

I thank Chairman BOXER and Ranking Member VITTER for their hard work getting this bill over the finish line. I also thank Senator WARREN and Congressman CAPUANO, Congressman LYNCH, and the entire Massachusetts congressional delegation for their leadership and commitment in securing this vital funding.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask the courtesy of the Senator from Nevada to do a brief unanimous consent request.

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, that is fine with me.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 3080

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that following the vote on H.R. 3080, the WRRDA legislation, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Executive Calendar No. 638, the Frank nomination, and vote on confirmation thereof; further, that there be 2 minutes for debate prior to the vote, equally divided in the usual form; further, that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action of debate; that no further motions be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that President Obama be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, with this agreement, at 1:45 p.m., there could be as many as three rollcall votes; however, we expect only two rollcall votes.

I appreciate again the courtesy of my friend from Nevada.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, on Monday, May 26, our Nation will pause to remember all those who paid the ultimate price while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. It is a solemn day on which we recognize these brave heroes for their valor, their courage, and their commitment to our country.

As we honor and remember those who died fighting for our freedom, Congress must also remember we still have a promise to fulfill to the veterans who thankfully returned home—many with visible and invisible wounds of war. Our Nation has a proud history of caring for its wounded and disabled servicemembers and their families.

When these men and women volunteered their service, the United States guaranteed they would be cared for. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I believe that promise has not been kept.

It is no secret the Department of Veterans Affairs is facing a significant challenge with accountability at all levels of their agency. This failure of responsibility has an impact on the hundreds of thousands of veterans in my home State of Nevada.

Last month I was honored to have a number of veterans join me for a roundtable in Las Vegas. This was an opportunity for me to listen and hear their concerns. By far, nearly every veteran in attendance expressed frustrations with the VA's claims backlog and the health care they are receiving. These veterans told me they feel discouraged and hopeless, that the VA does not and will not keep its promise.

They told me about the negative impact delays in benefits and care have on veterans and their families. Such comments should come as no surprise given the difficulties Nevada veterans are facing. Look no further than the problem of the claims backlog here in Nevada.

Although the Secretary of the VA promised there would be changes to address this problem, Nevada veterans are still waiting the longest in the Nation—up to 352 days on average—for their disability benefits claims to be processed. This is nearly three times the VA's deadline of 125 days to complete a claim.

These issues in Nevada and the allegations raised across the country are causing veterans to lose faith in the VA, and I have raised all these concerns to the Secretary in a letter I sent 2 weeks ago. I asked for immediate answers about the lack of accountability on the local level and whether VA leadership finally plans to do something about it. Although I requested a response by Wednesday, May 21, the VA still has not responded. What these problems ultimately amount to is a lack of accountability in the VA leadership.

When I questioned the Secretary at a Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing last week, he agreed he was ultimately responsible for the problems with VA care and health benefits. Despite this admission and admitting that veterans are not receiving the care they were promised, he said he does not plan to resign. So my question is: If the Secretary does not plan to resign, who is held accountable in the VA?

The VA has been given enough chances to change and do better, but these were empty promises that have not produced any results. It is now up to Members of Congress to take action. That is why I have already taken a number of steps to exert oversight, demand transparency, and develop solutions to the problems facing the VA.

During last week's hearing I asked the Secretary for assurances that the audits being conducted by the VA at its medical facilities would include all of Nevada's hospitals and clinics and the results would be shared with me and the rest of our delegation. As promised by the Secretary, I look forward to receiving these results as soon as possible, and I expect substantive immediate action should Nevada have any reports of mistreatment or delayed care of veterans.

I also visited again with Las Vegas hospital officials last Friday to ensure veterans at this facility are receiving the care they have earned and that the facility is properly handling its appointment waiting times.

It is critical that the Las Vegas VA hospital constantly work to improve its services and follows recommendations from the VA inspector general so that patients do not endure long waits—like the blind female VA veteran who waited for 5 hours before being seen in the emergency room.

I believe the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee should continue to exert

oversight and hold hearings to keep VA officials accountable and transparent to Congress, veterans, and the American public.

Furthermore, I believe, now more than ever, it is time for Congress to take legislative action to fix one of the biggest challenges at the VA—the disability claims backlog.

Despite opportunities for improvement, 293,000 veterans Nationwide and 3,700 veterans in Nevada have waited over 125 days for their claims to be processed so they can get the compensation they have earned and the VA medical care they desperately need.

To address this issue I introduced the VA Backlog Working Group March 2014 Report, along with a bipartisan group of Senators, including Senators CASEY, MORAN, HEINRICH, VITTER, and TESTER. This report outlines the claims process, explains the history of the VA's claims backlog, and offers targeted solutions to help the VA develop an efficient and accurate benefits delivery system that will ensure our veterans will never again have to wait more than 125 days to receive a decision on their claims.

What our working group found was that the process is not only complex, but the backlog has been a consistent problem for more than two decades, largely because the VA is using a 1945 process in the 21st century. I sent every Member of this Chamber a copy of this report and encourage my colleagues to take a look at it to understand how we got to where we are today and what it will take to fix the claims process permanently.

To put this report's targeted solutions into action, our working group introduced the 21st Century Veterans Benefit Delivery Act. This comprehensive, bipartisan piece of legislation addresses three areas of the claims process: claims submission, VA regional office practices, and Federal agency responses to VA requests.

I thank my colleagues—Senators CASEY, MORAN, HEINRICH, VITTER, TESTER, MURKOWSKI, CARDIN, WARREN, KLOBUCHAR, WARNER, TOOMEY, THUNE, ROBERTS, and PRYOR—for joining me to address this very critical issue.

I recognize because the claims process is complex and there is no silver bullet that is going to solve this problem overnight, the VA's current efforts will not eliminate this backlog. It is commonsense, targeted solutions from Congress that will address some of the inefficiencies keeping veterans from receiving a timely decision.

That is why this bill has been endorsed by a number of veterans service organizations, including the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, and the Association of the United States Navy. I thank these VSOs for their support and collaborating with the working group to develop solutions to fix this problem.

Time and again we have asked our men and women in uniform to answer the call of duty, and they do so without hesitation. Ensuring veterans receive disability benefits and quality VA medical care in a timely manner is the least we can do to thank them for their service.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, it is my role and responsibility to get answers for Nevada's veterans, and I will uphold that commitment to oversight.

In the coming weeks I will be watching the VA closely for changes and improvements to mitigate the very serious lapse in care and services that have occurred. If the VA continues on the course it is currently on, then I think it is time to look for changes at the highest level.

Again, I thank all of our veterans—including the nearly 300,000 that call Nevada home—for defending this country and for preserving Americans' liberties. Their commitment and sacrifice will not be forgotten nor taken for granted.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

LETTER TO THE NFL

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I come to the floor this afternoon to thank my colleagues who have signed on to a letter to the NFL asking that they change the name of the Washington football team. I also thank Leader REID for his leadership on this issue and for trying to accentuate the care and concern he has for 22 tribes in the State of Nevada and their interest in seeing the dignity and respect of those tribes with the name change as well.

I also come to the floor and ask my colleagues who have not signed to sign on to a letter asking the NFL to take action as aggressively as the NBA took action and to move on this issue. I will be sending a letter to each of my colleagues asking them to either sign on to this letter or to write their own letter, as one of our colleagues did. I am convinced that if each Member of this body speaks on this issue and is forceful in their resolve, we can help initiate change.

I know not everybody in America may understand why this is so important. Having personally worked with 29 tribes in the State of Washington, and for a short period of time having served as the chair of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, and having been a Member of that my entire time in the Senate—this may not even be the top issue in Indian Country. We certainly have understaffed hospitals, challenging school situations, decaying infrastructure challenges, and concerns about fishing rights—whether they are the challenges that ocean acidification has to our fishing ability in the Pacific Northwest or whether it is in Alaska making sure that Alaska Natives who are on subsistence fishing are able to continue to do what they do.

There are many issues in what we refer to as Indian Country that are about the health, safety, and welfare of those individuals. Yet this issue is a reminder to all of us that intolerance in our communities is a problem.

We are here to say that we respect these tribal entities that have requested this name change. We are saying that we have a trust responsibility with these organizations and these individual tribes.

So when the National Congress of American Indians—an organization that represents millions of Americans with Native American backgrounds—calls for a change, the fact that we ignore that is a disrespect to those tribal entities.

There are many organizations across the United States of America who have joined this battle as well: the NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the New York State Assembly, the National Congress of American Indians, the DC city council, the Prince George's County council. Even the President of the United States has spoken out on this issue.

So what is it going to take to get the name of this team changed? I say to my colleagues that even the Patent Office—the Federal agency determining whether a word can be protected in commerce—has said this term is derogatory slang and is disparaging to Native Americans.

We believe Commissioner Goodell should act; that he needs to do what the NBA did and make sure that one of their owners puts an end to the wrong use of a football term and to join the right side of history. We are not going to give up this battle.

Similarly, like organizations who have a Web site on changethemascot.org—which is a great 2-minute to 3-minute video of why Native Americans care so much about this issue—we need to continue to respect the dignity of these individuals, and it is time to update the relationship.

Yesterday at the White House there was an unbelievable ceremony, of which I am of course very proud of—the welcoming of the world champion Seahawks football team. They were walking into the White House where many Native Americans from the State of Washington were all decked out in Seahawks gear. I don't know if it was protocol for the White House. Even though they said nobody was to take pictures, telling a crowd from Seattle not to use digital devices is pretty hard to accomplish.

But there they were—Native Americans from our State who are partners with the Seattle Seahawks. They are advertising partners. They are suite owners. They advertise and participate together. The logo of the Seahawks was designed by a Native American. That is the relationship of the NFL and Native Americans today in the Pacific Northwest. Juxtapose that to here in

the Washington, DC, area where many people have spoken out and yet the owner remains in opposition of changing a name that has been clear to him is found to be racially offensive to Native Americans.

So we are here today to ask our colleagues on the other side of the aisle to join us. Join us because it was hard to unite our side, but I know with a few of their voices we can move this issue further.

Why is tolerance so important? In the words of Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the United Nations:

> Tolerance, intercultural dialogue, and respect for diversity are more essential than ever in a world where people are becoming more and more closely interconnected.

While that is a global view of the challenge we face, we need to practice that in reality here. That is why I was so happy we passed the Violence Against Women Act with a provision in it making sure that women in Indian Country would also be protected. We have to ask ourselves why did it take us so long to get that provision.

Even the U.N. Special Envoy on Indigenous Rights for Peoples around the world, James Anaya, also said that the NFL should change, basically saying it is a hurtful reminder and represents a long history of mistreatment in the United States of America. He cited the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples:

> They use stereotypes to obscure the understanding and reality of Native Americans today and instead help to keep alive a racially discriminatory attitude.

So even the U.N., the world community, is calling on this community to deal with this issue and we should act. I hope my colleagues will help us in this effort to get the NFL to do the right thing.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

BARRON NOMINATION

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. There has been considerable discussion on the floor about the nominee to the First Circuit, David Barron, that has hinged around his tenure in the Office of Legal Counsel and an opinion he wrote specifying the outer bounds of Presidential authority in the area of defending our national security against Americans who have signed up with organizations that do us harm. I wish briefly to bring to the attention of this Chamber that it is not the only issue with respect to David Barron and the Office of Legal Counsel.

The Office of Legal Counsel has indeed had a scandal, and it is indeed related to David Barron, but it is related to David Barron in the best possible way, in that he is the one who cleaned up the scandal. The scandal in question—the Presiding Officer is a former attorney general of her State and she will understand this very clearly—the scandal in question related to the shabby opinions that were written by the Office of Legal Counsel to justify the torture program that was run by the Bush administration. When I say shabby, these were awful opinions. They were hidden from most peer scrutiny because they would not have stood up to peer scrutiny. They made errors as basic as failing to cite Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decisions right on point.

There actually had been an incident in which the Department of Justice, where the Office of Legal Counsel is located, prosecuted a Texas sheriff for waterboarding victims in order to get confessions out of them. He was prosecuted as a criminal. He was convicted. The case went to the Fifth Circuit on appeal and in the course of their written decision on appeal, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals of the United States—one row below the U.S. Supreme Court—described the technique of water torture that was used, the waterboarding, and on a dozen separate occasions used the word ''torture'' to describe what was being done.

Look for that case in the Office of Legal Counsel. Look for that case in the opinion of Office of Legal Counsel about whether torture is accomplished by waterboarding, whether waterboarding is torture. It is not there. They didn't even cite the case. It was a case they could have found in their own files because the Department of Justice was the organization that had prosecuted this sheriff as a criminal for that act.

If you wanted to bring it up as a case and try to find a way to distinguish it, I could accept that. I probably would disagree with that analysis, but the failure to even cite the case, knowing how difficult it would be for the torture program to go forward, I think is a sign of either the worst kind of incompetence or a deliberate fix being put into the opinion of the Office of Legal Counsel.

Having served as a U.S. attorney as well, I think the Department of Justice should have the best lawyers in the country, and within the Department of Justice the OLC prides itself on being the best of the best. It was a disgraceful departure of that standard when the torture opinions were allowed to pass. They simply don't meet any reasonable test of adequacy. So on April 15, 2009, the Department of Justice withdrew the Office of Legal Counsel's CIA interrogation opinions. The memorandum for the Attorney General effecting that withdrawal was signed by none other than David Barron. This was the instance of a man who absolutely did the right thing. He helped clean up a terrible mess that had been left at the Department of Justice. We should be proud of the conduct of David Barron at the Office of Legal Counsel.

I ask unanimous consent that the 1-page memorandum for the Attorney General signed by David Barron be printed in the RECORD.

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

WITHDRAWAL OF OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL CIA INTERROGATION OPINIONS

Four previous opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel concerning interrogations by the Central Intelligence Agency are withdrawn and no longer represent the views of the Office.

APRIL 15, 2009.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Sections 3(a) and 3(b) of Executive Order 13491 (2009) set forth restrictions on the use of interrogation methods. In section 3(c) of that Order, the President further directed that ''unless the Attorney General with appropriate consultation provides further guidance, officers, employees, and other agents of the United States Government may not, in conducting interrogations, rely upon any interpretation of the law governing interrogation . . . issued by the Department of Justice between September 11, 2001, and January 20, 2009.'' That direction encompasses, among other things, four opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel: Memorandum for John Rizzo, Acting General Counsel of the Central Intelligence Agency, from Jay S. Bybee, Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, Re: Interrogation of al Qaeda Operative (Aug. 1, 2002); Memorandum for John A. Rizzo, Senior Deputy General Counsel, Central Intelligence Agency, from Steven G. Bradbury, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, Re: Application of 18 U.S.C. §§2340–2340A to Certain Techniques That May Be Used in the Interrogation of a High Value al Qaeda Detainee (May 10, 2005); Memorandum for John A. Rizzo, Senior Deputy General Counsel, Central Intelligence Agency, from Steven G. Bradbury, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, Re: Application of 18 U.S.C. §§234–2340A to the Combined Use of Certain Techniques in the Interrogation of High Value al Qaeda Detainees (May 10, 2005); and Memorandum for John A. Rizzo, Senior Deputy General Counsel, Central Intelligence Agency, from Steven G. Bradbury, Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, Re: Application of United States Obligations Under Article 16 of the Convention Against Torture to Certain Techniques that May be Used in the Interrogation of High Value al Qaeda Detainees (May 30, 2005).

In connection with the consideration of these opinions for possible public release, the Office has reviewed them and has decided to withdraw them. They no longer represent the views of the Office of Legal Counsel.

DAVID J. BARRON,
Acting Assistant Attorney General.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor and note the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUESTS—H.R. 4031 and S. 1982

Mr. RUBIO. Thank you, Madam President.

I am here on the floor today to talk about an issue that has received a tremendous amount of attention, and

rightfully so, in the last few weeks and it is the outrage of what is happening at the Veterans' Administration.

Let me start by saying certainly people need to be held accountable. This should not be and it surely is not a partisan issue. I think we all have a deep commitment to helping our veterans, the men and women who spend time away from their families and put their lives on the line to defend this country, to whom were made promises that when they come back home they will be taken care of, especially those who have been harmed when serving their country.

We are heartbroken and outraged at the news that, in fact, the agency that is supposed to take care of them is not doing so. I think what is even more troubling is that this appears to be a systemic problem. This is not simply an isolated incident in Phoenix or some other institution in the country. This is now rearing its ugly head in every part of this country that we look into. You can imagine not just as an American am I deeply concerned about this but as a Floridian. Florida is a State with an enormous veterans population, including my brother—men and women who have served our country and have done so with great courage and dignity who now have health care needs that require immediate and urgent attention.

Just a moment ago on a television interview it was brought to my attention the story of a young man, a gulf war veteran who has a brain injury, who has been waiting for weeks to even be able to see anyone, in fact has been waiting for months with no end in sight as to when that is going to end. This needs to be addressed.

Yesterday we all watched with great attention as the President addressed this issue and expressed outrage, rightfully so, of what is occurring. What the President said is that over the next week there will be an initial report and ultimately a report at the end of the month about what needs to be done to improve the system and, more importantly, who needs to be held accountable. I think that is critical here, because one of the things we are learning is not simply that there is a systemic problem in the Veterans' Administration, but that there has been a deliberate effort by some within the Veterans' Administration to cover it up or to make things look better than they actually are. That should trouble us even more because the immediate reaction when an agency is confronted with a problem should be ''we need to fix this'' and instead the reaction by some seems to be ''we need to cover this. We need to make this look better than it really is. We need to diminish this.''

This is completely unacceptable and people need to be held accountable for this. If in the Senate among the men and women who serve and work here for us some were derelict in their duties, they would lose their job. If in the private sector someone did not do their job, they would lose that job. In the military chain of command, if a commanding officer of a unit did not do his or her job, they would lose their job, and their superiors would have the ability to immediately discipline them.

So I think many Americans would be shocked to learn that even if the Secretary wanted today to fire executive managers within the agency, he cannot. Instead, he has to institute a long and drawn-out process, leading to this absurd conclusion that you are more likely to receive a bonus or promotion than you are to have been fired because of mismanagement and dereliction of duty. That is completely unacceptable.

We have to remember that the vast majority of the VA's more than 300,000 employees and executives are dedicated and hard-working people. Their Department's well-documented reluctance to ensure that leaders are being held accountable for mistakes is not only tarnishing its reputation, it unfortunately is impacting many of these hard-working men and women who are doing their jobs within the agency.

What I did a few weeks ago, in conjunction with my colleague from Florida, JEFF MILLER, is file a bill. It is a very simple and straightforward bill. The bill states that the VA Management Accountability Act of 2014 would simply give the VA Secretary the power to fire or demote senior executive service employees based on their performance. It is a power similar to the power the Secretary of Defense already has, for example, to remove military general officers from command, and, of course, it is the same power any one of our 100 Senators has to remove a member of their staff.

This bill passed yesterday in the House of Representatives, and it is sitting here on the desk in the Senate. It passed yesterday with an overwhelming bipartisan majority of Members of both parties who are outraged by what is occurring and want to bring accountability.

In a press conference yesterday, the White House indicated that they are very open to this concept and that they were interacting with leaders on it. We called the White House and asked them about it. They also indicated an openness to it, although they shared that they did have some concerns. They didn't make any suggested edits to the bill. They simply said they had some concerns, but in general they were supportive of this concept.

Earlier today during an Appropriations Committee meeting, Senator MORAN offered this very bill as an amendment, and it was adopted by voice vote without a single objection.

Here is where we stand: I have come to the floor today to give my colleagues the opportunity to send this to the President before we leave for the Memorial Day recess. We have an opportunity right now to take up the bill that the House just passed by an overwhelming bipartisan majority, enact it into law by unanimous consent, and send it to the President so he can sign it. So when the results of that investigation come to his desk in a week or month from now, and that of the Secretary, they can discipline and/or fire the people who have not done their jobs and put our veterans in harm's way with regard to services the VA is supposed to offer. That is all this bill does—nothing more and nothing less.

We are giving the Secretary—appointed by this President and confirmed by this Senate—the opportunity to be able to fire employees of his agency who are not doing their jobs. That is all we are asking for. It is not more complicated than that. I do not understand why anyone would not support that concept.

It is right here for us. To everyone around here who is talking about how we need to quickly act, here is your chance. This is a very straightforward bill. My hope is that it will pass unanimously so we can truly say it is bipartisan.

We are not telling them whom they need to fire; we are giving the Secretary the power to hold the people who work under him accountable. This will also apply to future Secretaries as well. That is all this bill does. I hope we will be able to do that today.

I think if it were put to a rollcall vote on the floor, it would pass by an overwhelming majority. That is why, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 4031, which was received from the House, and I further ask consent that the bill be read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, without any intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. SANDERS. Reserving the right to object, Madam President, I thank Senator RUBIO for his remarks, and I think many of us share the exact same concerns he has raised. When men and women put their lives on the line to defend our country, they are entitled to the best quality health care we can provide to them.

In my view and I think in the view of virtually every veterans organization, the VA does provide good-quality health care to those people who access the VA system, but there are very serious problems in terms of access, there are serious problems regarding waiting lists, there are serious problems regarding the possibility of hospitals keeping two sets of books, and we are going to get to the root of those issues.

The one thing we do not want to do is politicize the well-being of America's heroes.

I have a quote from an editorial in the Washington Post:

> The men and women who have served their country in uniform deserve better than delay or denial of the medical care they need and have earned. So it is crucial to get to the bottom of allegations of misconduct at the

nation's veterans hospitals. America's veterans also deserve not to be treated as so many pawns in election-years gamesmanship—but that sadly is proving to be the case in Congress's increasingly hyperbolic response.

It goes on:

That the extent of wrongdoing is unclear doesn't seem to matter much to those more interested in scoring political points. How else to explain the knee-jerk calls, mainly by Republicans in the House and Senate, for the ouster of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki or the ill-advised and punitive legislation aimed at VA workers?

I will just make this point: I happen to think the bill that was passed in the House yesterday has many important provisions with which I happen to agree. But as the Senator from Florida knows, we have not held a hearing on this legislation, and some of us are old-fashioned enough to know that maybe folks in the Senate might want to know what is in the bill before we vote on it.

The Senator from Florida is right—it passed with very strong support in the House. In my view, a similar bill containing some of the salient provisions in the House bill will pass the Senate, but it is important that we discuss that bill.

One of the concerns I have is that I do not want to see the VA politicized. It is one thing to say—which I agree with—that if a hospital administrator is incompetent, the Secretary should be able to get rid of that administrator without a whole lot of paperwork. I agree with that. It is another thing to say that if a new administration comes in—whether it is Democratic or Republican—somebody sitting in the Secretary's office can say: I want to get rid of 20 or 30 or 50 hospital administrators because we have other people we want in there. We can just get rid of them, and they don't have a right to defend themselves.

I worry about that.

Clearly we have to discuss the issue. I suggest that the Senator from Florida understands that it is probably a good idea to discuss an issue before we vote on it.

The bottom line for me is, yes, every top administrator at the VA has to be held accountable. I do not want to see an enormous amount of paperwork and obstruction go forward before we can get rid of incompetent people. But before we vote on legislation, it might be a good idea to understand the full implications of that legislation, and there are some aspects of it with which I think some of us have concerns.

I have a few more points on that issue. I hope the Senator from Florida agrees with me that we have to be certain the VA is able to recruit and retain high-quality leaders and managers, especially when the VA is in competition with other Federal agencies for those leaders. To that end it is vital to ensure we are fostering an environment at the VA where individuals feel as if they are protected from the political whims of their leaders. That is the point I made earlier.

There are other areas that concern me in terms of setting precedents that may not be a good idea, but the bottom line is I think there are important provisions in the bill that passed the House. I want to work with Senator RUBIO on this matter, and I think the administration wants to work with him.

If I might, I will make another point, which is that I was very happy to see so much concern being paid to veterans' needs over the last few weeks. As chairman of the committee, I am very happy to see that.

I say to the Senator from Florida and others that he is well aware that the veterans community faces many serious problems above and beyond what we have been hearing over the last few weeks with regard to the VA. We have 200,000 men and women who have come back from Iraq and Afghanistan either with PTSD or TBI. I would assume my friend from Florida agrees they need to get the quality care they deserve.

An hour or so ago I had the privilege of being honored by the Gold Star Wives. They are the widows of men who died in action. I brought legislation to the floor that would have made it possible for Gold Star Wives to be able to get a college education under the post-9/11 GI bill. That bill received 56 votes. One Senator was absent; otherwise, we would have had 57 votes. Only two Republicans supported that bill. I suspect that Senator RUBIO and many others support that. That is in the bill I brought to the floor.

Right now we have—as I am sure Senator RUBIO knows because the problem exists in Vermont, so it most likely exists in Florida as well—70-year-old women, in most cases, who are taking care of disabled vets, and they don't get the support they need. They are on duty 24/7, and they save the government money because those wounded veterans are staying at home. They need some help. I want to see them get help, and I hope Senator RUBIO will work with me to make sure they get that help.

Senator RUBIO is aware, as is the Presiding Officer, that there is great concern not only in the military—the VA and DOD—but in the civilian sector that there is too much use of opiates to treat problems. We have a very serious problem in that area. We have language in our overall provision that extends help to the VA to move forward to give our veterans alternative treatments other than opiates, and we think that is a very important piece of legislation.

We have legislation which has passed which provides 5 years of free health care in the VA for those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. We think it is important to extend that to 10 years.

Many veterans out there do not have access to decent-quality dental care. It is a problem in Vermont, and I suspect it is a problem in Florida. We want veterans to get that care as well. There is bipartisan support for advanced appropriations for VA, and we have that in our legislation.

While the VA is making good progress in cutting back the backlog and moving from paper to a digital system, I want to see them do better. We have language in there that would push them to do better.

Just this morning, Senator BURR and I were at a hearing that dealt with the educational problems facing veterans who come back from the battlefield. There are problems when they go to college. Most of us think veterans should be able to take advantage of instate tuition in the State in which they are living.

Sexual assault has been a very serious problem in the military, and we want the VA to do better. Et cetera, et cetera.

I thank Senator HELLER and Senator MORAN for voting for this bill, along with every Democrat. I am very glad my Republican colleagues are now beginning to focus on veterans issues, and we need to step to the plate to help not only our veterans but their families, and that is the legislation I have offered.

I say to Senator RUBIO through the Chair that your legislation has many important provisions with which I happen to agree. There are some that I think need work, and we are going to hold a hearing on that legislation and other legislation in early June.

I respectfully object to that legislation right now, but I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 297, S. 1950, with the Sanders amendment, which is at the desk and is the text of S. 1982, the Comprehensive Veterans Health and Benefits Military Retirement Pay Restoration Act. That is the comprehensive legislation supported by virtually every veterans organization in the country, millions of veterans, and the American people. It says ''thank you'' to the veterans who put their lives on the line to defend this country, and we are going to be there for you.

I ask unanimous consent that this legislation be passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard to the request from the Senator from Florida.

Is there objection?

The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Reserving the right to object, I wish to address a couple of points. The first is on the issue of politicizing this. I agree. In fact, that is why I have not come forward and said that the Secretary should resign. There are times in this process when that is important. There are people who were appointed by the President who are clearly not doing their jobs, and it is our job as overseers of the executive branch of the government to step forward and say that.

I have said let's give the Secretary a chance to see what happens here. I may end up asking for his resignation at some point as more information comes out, but at a minimum I think he deserves an opportunity—and his successors, whoever they may be—to hold the

people underneath him accountable. They don't have the power to do that now.

Also notice when I came to the floor today, I have said absolutely nothing of a partisan nature. I am not claiming this is a crisis created by Democrats or by another party. On the contrary, I said this is a solution that has had strong bipartisan support in the House and strong bipartisan support in the committee today. This issue may become politicized in the sense that it seems all of the reluctance to move forward is coming from one side of the equation, but that does not necessarily have to be. In fact, I will tell my colleagues right now that I believe if this came to a vote, the overwhelming majority of the Members of the majority would support this legislation I have put forward today.

Two other points that were raised, one being that there have been no hearings. I would respectfully disagree. There was a hearing on it today. This was offered. This specific language was offered in the committee, and with little debate and no dissent, it passed by voice vote. For those watching at home, here is what voice vote means: They don't even call the roll. They basically ask Members: Is anyone against this? No one said they were. This language was adopted today in a committee.

Here is my second problem. I am glad to hear there are going to be hearings with regard to this issue, and I think that is important because I am not claiming the bill I am asking us to take up today and pass would solve all of the problems. There are still serious systemic problems within that agency, and a hearing needs to address this and find responsible solutions to those problems. So a hearing is called for.

What I am asking for is very simple: Give the Secretary, appointed by a President of a party different than my own, the power to fire employees underneath him who are not doing their jobs, so they know they are being held accountable. That is all I am asking. That is all this bill does. It is that straightforward. I don't think any of us want to go home for the Memorial Day recess and when we are asked: What are you doing on this issue, our answer is: Well, in about 15 days we are going to have a hearing on this crisis.

Meanwhile, the list goes on and on of the outrages that are coming out of this agency. Every single day more cases are coming out about veterans who are not being treated fairly and appropriately, and in some cases, in my opinion, criminally, by this incompetence we see out of some in the Veterans' Administration. This is a matter of urgency, because while we are gone on our recess, the President next week is going to get a preliminary report on what is going on. It may very well be that he wants to see some people fired, and it may very well be the Secretary will want to fire some people in senior executive positions and he will not be able to do that. All I am asking for is not to give us the power to fire them but to give the administration the power to fire them and hold them accountable.

Regarding the bill the chairman has offered on the floor, this bill has already been debated, and there are problems with this bill, which is an extensive piece of legislation with many good elements in it, but it also has a cost issue at a time when our Nation owes close to $18 trillion. That was the reason so many on my side of the aisle objected to it, and that is why I object to the motion made today by the Senator from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, let me reiterate. When I quoted the Washington Post and when I talked about politicalization, I wasn't suggesting the Senator from Florida was being political on the floor today. What I was suggesting about politicizing the VA is if we have a situation, for example, where a new Secretary comes in or a new administration comes in and can fire wholesale hospital administrators, without the ability to defend themselves, I think that is not the kind of system the Senator from Florida would want or certainly I would want.

So how we address this issue is important. I would suspect that while this issue may have been taken up in committee today, I doubt very much there were any witnesses who testified about this bill.

Second of all, I found it interesting that the Senator from Florida said—and he is right that other Republicans have raised this point. The legislation I introduced, which again has the support of the American Legion, DAV, Vietnam Vets, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Iraq-Afghanistan Veterans of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America—he is right—it costs money. He is right. This country has a deficit. He would be right if he said that going to war in Iraq and Afghanistan has cost us trillions of dollars, which is one of the reasons we have the deficit we have. But I believe from the bottom of my heart that if we go to war, if we spend trillions of dollars on that war, that when our men and women come home from war, some wounded in body, some wounded in spirit—I don't want to hear people telling me it is too expensive to take care of those wounded veterans. I don't accept that. If we think it is too expensive to take care of veterans, don't send them to war.

So let me reiterate my view, as the Senator from Florida has raised an important issue. We are going to address it as quickly as we can, and we are going to address other issues facing our veterans who on this Memorial Day need to know we are there for them and their families.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, how much time remains?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 1:40 is reserved for the Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. RUBIO. Not seeing the Senator from Kentucky, I ask for 1 minute of that time to make the following point——

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, who has control of the time right now? Do I have the time?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senate is controlled by the Senator from Kentucky or his designee.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, let me suggest to the Senator from Florida that we divide the remaining time, if he wishes to take a minute or two and I will take a minute or two; how is that?

Mr. RUBIO. That is fine with me.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, a bunch of issues were raised about the cost of the war in Iraq, how much money we spent, and how good we are at spending that money for the veterans. I think that is a valid debate and it is a debate we should have and should continue to have in this country. If we need to spend more money on these agencies, there are plenty of other places in the budget to find it, and we should work to make sure cost is not an issue.

But right now the central debate on the issue of what is happening in the VA has not centered around the fact that there are costs getting in the way. The central debate—and my colleagues know the President yesterday, in his press conference he held, said the central focus is on the management, the operations of this agency. Critical to the effectiveness of any agency is accountability; the ability to hold people accountable, including by taking away their jobs.

Think about this for a moment. The argument that has been made today about a new director can come in and fire the people who work underneath him or her, that argument could be made about virtually any organization on the planet. One could make that argument for staffers in the Senate, that we want to protect them, so if a new Senator is elected from a State, they can't hire their own staff.

The point I am trying to make—this is very simple. I get there are a lot of other issues we can talk about. There is one issue I want us to focus on, and that is this: We have a chance today, before we leave for the Memorial Day recess, to pass a bill that gives the Secretary that President Obama appointed the power to fire executives underneath him if they haven't done their job—a power he doesn't have right now. We have the chance to pass it on the floor. All we have to do is agree to it and it goes to the President to sign. We can then go home and say we have taken an important step in instituting accountability on this important issue, which the whole country is talking about, and we are walking away from that opportunity.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. We are not going to walk away from anything, but we are going to do it right. Again, the argument that when you run a health care system which has 151 medical centers, has some 900 community-based outreach clinics, has 300,000 employees that a new President can start wiping out, without necessarily giving people the right to defend themselves, does not make any sense to me.

So we are going to look at the positive provisions in Senator RUBIO's bill, and I think there are some. I would say to the Senator from Florida, I think we are going to reach an agreement. I think the Senator from Florida is going to be happy. I think it will be a good bill and we will reach consensus around it and I think we have to do that.

On the other hand, I wish to reiterate the point I made about money. Senator RUBIO is right, that one of the reasons we only had two Republican votes for a comprehensive piece of legislation that addresses the issues that the veterans communities brought to us—it is not a Bernie Sanders bill, it is a bill that listened to the needs of veterans and we said we hear you.

Once again, I would just say to the Senator from Florida, I don't think—I was just literally an hour ago at a function of the Gold Star Wives organization. These are women who have lost their husbands in battle. I think that under the post-9/11 GI bill, a very good and important piece of legislation, wives should have the right to use that legislation to go to college, get an education, so they can get better jobs. If I brought that bill to the floor today, I suspect I would have unanimous support, and I think that out of our committee the bill I brought forth, many provisions had unanimous support and many provisions were Republican provisions—good provisions, bipartisan provisions.

So what I say to my friend from Florida is thank you. The Senator's bill is an important bill and it is going to be dealt with and it will be dealt with in the very near future.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I support the nomination of David Barron to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit.

There is no question that David Barron has the background and qualifications for this position.

Consider his credentials: over a decade as a Harvard law professor; 3 years at the Office of Legal Counsel, OLC, in the Clinton administration, and another 2 years at OLC under President Obama as the Acting Assistant Attorney General in charge of that office—during which time he was awarded the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service and the National Intelligence Exceptional Achievement Medal from the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; he clerked for Justice John Paul Stevens and Ninth Circuit Judge Stephen Reinhardt; he earned his bachelor's and law degrees from Harvard; and a substantial majority of the ABA Committee found him to be ''well qualified,'' their highest rating.

In sum, David Barron's record shows that he will be a jurist of the highest caliber.

He also has a strong record of standing up for what is right on many issues, whether it is campaign finance or gay rights.

Many distinguished individuals in both parties have written to the Judiciary Committee to support Professor Barron. Among them are: Jack Goldsmith, a Harvard Law professor and former head of OLC under President George W. Bush, Michael McConnell, conservative law professor and former Tenth Circuit judge, who described Barron as ''one of President Obama's two or three best nominations to the appellate courts;'' Charles Fried, law professor and former Solicitor General under President Reagan; 15 former career attorneys at OLC who served in administrations of both parties; and Ron George, former chief justice of California and someone I deeply respect.

Chief Justice George wrote:

> As a person who served for 38 years in a state court system, the last 14 years as chief justice of California, I have been particularly impressed by Mr. Barron's understanding and respect for the critical role played by the states and their courts in our federal system.

I respected the strong desire of some of my colleagues to have access to the two OLC memos related to the targeted killing of an American named Anwar al-Awlaki. Those memos were authored while Barron was Acting Assistant Attorney General at OLC.

However, I regret that even though the administration made those two opinions available to all Senators and even though the administration has recently decided to make the OLC analysis public, some still insist on delaying a vote on Professor Barron's nomination.

Let's contrast David Barron's nomination with that of another former head of the Office of Legal Counsel, Jay Bybee, who led the office from 2001 to 2003.

He was in charge of OLC when it produced an opinion saying waterboarding and nine other so-called enhanced interrogation techniques were not torture. On August 1, 2002, Mr. Bybee signed an opinion that set an unconscionably high bar for torture by saying that ''physical pain amounting to torture must be equivalent in intensity to the pain accompanying serious physical injury, such as organ failure, impairment of bodily function, or even death.'' That opinion was withdrawn during the Bush administration by Bybee's successor, Harvard Law Professor Jack Goldsmith.

Under Bybee, OLC also produced opinions about President Bush's Terrorist Surveillance Program that contain very troubling legal analysis. Because those opinions remain classified, I will not describe them here other than to note that they authorized a secret surveillance program that involved the collection of the content of communications without a court order and was in clear violation of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Those OLC opinions also were withdrawn by Bybee's successor, Professor Goldsmith.

Despite the fact that those opinions were produced when he was head of OLC, Jay Bybee was nominated by the Bush administration to a Nevada seat on the Ninth Circuit. He was confirmed 74 to 19 in March 2003. I was one of 19 voting no.

Why would we confirm the man who approved the so-called ''torture memos'' and led OLC when it approved President Bush's surveillance program but delay David Barron, who produced superior legal work as head of OLC? The only reason I have heard is that Senators may believe that the two OLC opinions on Anwar al-Awlaki should be made public. Let me address that.

First, this week the Department of Justice took steps to ensure that the OLC analysis will be made public. The Justice Department has decided not to appeal a court order from the Second Circuit Court of Appeals requiring the OLC analysis to be made public. So this will happen in the near future.

Second, Professor Barron left OLC in 2010—well before the strike killed Awlaki in Yemen in September 2011. Since 2010, Professor Barron has been in academia.

It wasn't Barron's decision to withhold the OLC memos from Congress or from the public.

Let me quote from Professors Laurence Tribe and Charles Fried, both legal experts often on opposite sides of issues. They wrote an op-ed together about Barron in the Boston Globe. It reads, in part:

> [Barron] has not advocated, much less ordered, the withholding of any documents. His job as acting head of the Office of Legal Counsel was to provide thorough, accurate, and unvarnished legal opinions to the president and other executive officials, based on the traditional legal authorities of text, history, and precedent. We have every reason to believe that is precisely what he did, and there is absolutely no evidence to the contrary.

In fact, Professor Barron implemented policies that have made OLC more rigorous, professional, and transparent.

First, when he was acting head of OLC, Barron ordered the withdrawal of several opinions related to coercive interrogation that had been issued during the Bush administration.

Second, on July 16, 2010, Professor Barron wrote a memo entitled ''Re: Best Practices for OLC Legal Advice and Written Opinions'' that updated previous OLC guidance. It said that OLC ''operates from the presumption that it should make its significant

opinions fully and promptly available to the public. This presumption furthers the interests of Executive Branch transparency, thereby contributing to accountability and effective government, and promoting public confidence in the legality of government action.'' This presumption did not exist in the Bush administration; David Barron was responsible for establishing it as OLC policy. Given Barron's impressive record and his shift of OLC toward more transparency, it simply is wrong to oppose his nomination because a classified OLC opinion on drone strikes has not been made public yet, a decision that was not even his to make.

Since the OLC opinions on Anwar al-Awlaki that Professor Barron wrote seem to have become the issue holding up this nomination, let me close with a reminder of the specific plotting Awlaki was involved in before he was killed in 2011.

True, Awlaki was a dual U.S.-Yemeni citizen, but he served as chief of external operations for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP. In that position, he planned and directed attacks against the United States, making him an imminent and continuing threat.

Awlaki played a significant operational role in AQAP. In 2010, the United States designated Awlaki a ''Specially Designated Global Terrorist'' for ''supporting acts of terrorism and for acting for or on behalf of AQAP.''

Awlaki publicly urged attacks against U.S. persons and interests worldwide. He worked with another American named Samir Khan to publish AQAP's Inspire Magazine to encourage terrorist attacks against innocent men, women, and children in the United States and elsewhere. As a reminder, Inspire Magazine provided the Tsarnaev brothers in Boston with the instructions for making the bomb they used at the Boston Marathon last year.

Let me offer just a few examples of Awlaki's direct involvement in terrorist operations:

Christmas Day Attack—In December 2009, Awlaki directed operative Umar Faruk Abdulmutallab, who attempted to detonate an explosive device aboard a Northwest Airlines flight to Detroit on Christmas Day. Awlaki instructed Abdulmutallab to detonate the device while over U.S. airspace to maximize casualties.

Fort Hood Attack—Fort Hood shooter Nidal Hasan attended al-Awlaki's sermons in Virginia and corresponded at least 18 times with him through email. After the attack, Awlaki posted on his blog praising Hasan's actions and calling him his ''student and brother.''

Times Square Bombing Attempt—Faisal Shahzad, who pleaded guilty to the 2010 Times Square car bombing attempt, told interrogators in early 2010 that he was ''inspired by'' Awlaki and communicated with him.

Package Bomb Plot—in October 2010, Awlaki had a direct role in supervising and directing AQAP's failed attempt to bring down two U.S. cargo aircraft by detonating explosives concealed inside two packages mailed to Chicago-area synagogues.

In sum, there is no doubt that Awlaki was chief of external operations for Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, AQAP, and a continuing and imminent threat to the United States.

David Barron's legal analysis of whether the United States can target Awlaki is cogent, careful legal analysis and reflects the kind of consideration of due process that we should applaud, not punish.

Barron certainly should not be disqualified because he was the head of OLC when that targeting decision—a targeting decision Barron did not advocate for—was being contemplated and analyzed by the Obama administration.

Let me conclude by saying this: David Barron is an impressive lawyer and scholar with a strong record. Nobody doubts that. Distinguished lawyers on both sides of the aisle have endorsed him wholeheartedly.

The reason for this is simple: His qualifications are first rate, and he has under his belt many years of commendable scholarship and service to this nation.

Simply put, he will be an outstanding jurist for the people of the First Circuit, and I very much hope my colleagues will support him.

WRRDA CONFERENCE REPORT

ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am joined by the chair and ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee to discuss a provision of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act conference report, which we will vote on shortly in the Senate. I thank them for their leadership on this important legislation, and rise with them today to discuss one of its provisions.

Section 4014 of the conference report, Ocean and Coastal Resiliency, creates a new Army Corps authority to address ocean and coastal ecosystem resiliency.

Subject to appropriations, this authority requires the Army Corps of Engineers to work with the heads of other Federal agencies, like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Fish and Wildlife Service, State governors and other State officials, and nonprofit organizations, to conduct a study identifying projects in coastal zones to enhance ocean and coastal ecosystem resiliency. State and local leaders often have the best information about the changing conditions of their oceans and coastal zones, and participation by them in the Army Corps' study process is intended to ensure the most effective resiliency projects are identified in the study.

In Rhode Island there are numerous entities, from our Coastal Zone Management Agency to our National Estuary Program, the University of Rhode Island, and Save the Bay that would bring important information and expertise to the process for identifying coastal resiliency projects in Rhode Island. In other States I know there will be similar interest.

Subject to appropriations, the study and project list will be updated every 5 years, to ensure that best available science and policies are informing project identification and selection.

When funding is provided for this program through the appropriations process, the Army Corps may carry out identified projects in accordance with the criteria for existing Corps Continuing Authority Program authorities.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE. As chair of the conference committee for WRRDA, a committee on which the Senator from Rhode Island and Senator VITTER also served, I agree with the Senator's understanding of section 4014. Like Rhode Island, California also has strong leadership on coastal and oceans issues and will benefit from increased collaboration with the Corps of Engineers on coastal and ocean resiliency issues.

Mr. VITTER. I share Chairman BOXER's and Senator WHITEHOUSE's understanding of section 4014, and will address subsection (d) of that provision, ''Request for Projects.'' Subsection (d) is an important provision because it requires approval by the governor or chief executive officer of a State before the Corps can carry out any project identified under this section.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. The conference committee's deliberations were informed by a legal analysis prepared by the Corps of Engineers Counsel regarding the interpretation of Section 4014.

I ask unanimous consent that the legal analysis prepared by Scott Murphy, Senior Counsel for Project Agreements and Reports in the Office of the Chief Counsel of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters, which describes how the Corps would implement this provision, be printed in the RECORD at the end of this colloquy.

The legal analysis, dated May 8, 2014, states that Section 4014 authorizes ''an independent coastal zone resiliency study and follow-on construction authority for projects to the extent they satisfy criteria for projects carried out under four named CAP authorities.'' In other words, Section 4014 relies on the terms and conditions of four preexisting authorities but it is not limited by the authorized levels in those authorities.

Mrs. BOXER. The Army Corps was clear that when a project is identified in the study associated with Section 4014, it may be carried out in accordance with the criteria for one of the four existing CAPs referenced in the section, but it will be not funded through or authorized by those CAP authorities. Section 4014 provides its

own funding authorization, and accordingly any project authorized by Section 4014 would be funded by appropriations for that authority.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I thank the chairman. I look forward to supporting this program in the future and during the appropriations process.

Resiliency is important in our estuaries, bays, and barrier islands, because we cannot just restore things the way they were and expect to reap the benefits. These systems are changing too much. Resiliency requires planning for future threats from extreme weather, from rising sea levels and warming temperatures, from development pressure, and from pollution. Coastal ecosystems act as filters, improving water quality so we can swim and fish off our docks; they act as barriers protecting property and lives from storms and storm surges; and they provide habitat for commercially valuable fish, shellfish, and other wildlife.

Coastal ecosystems support coastal economies, and I will continue looking for avenues to support restoration and research in this area.

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

LEGAL ANALYSIS—MAY 8, 2014

I've looked at the language and agree that it authorizes an independent coastal zone resiliency study and follow-on construction authority for projects to the extent they satisfy criteria for projects carried out under four named CAP authorities. Like other free standing study and construction authorities, I'd expect us to carry projects following the study to the extent they were separately funded. In other words, to the extent the language cites to CAP authorities, I would read that language as requiring merely that we apply the same rules for those projects for purposes of implementing projects (requiring agreement, cost sharing, etc.) following this study, but not as an actual direct expansion of those particular CAP program authorities themselves that might thereby subject our implementation of coastal zone resiliency projects after the study somehow subject to the Corps discretionary use of its overall CAP funding.

N. SCOTT MURPHY,
Senior Counsel for Project Agreements and Reports Office of the Chief Counsel Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

PORT AND HARBOR MAINTENANCE

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I am joined by the ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee to discuss a provision of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act conference report, which we will vote on shortly in the Senate.

Title II, subtitle B includes a number of important provisions related to port and harbor maintenance. In addition to setting annual spending goals for funds from the harbor maintenance trust fund, HMTF, and providing a set-aside for spending on emerging ports, the section now authorizes new expanded uses of the HMTF. The expanded use authority, which includes dredging of berths and disposal of contaminated dredge material, is limited to those ports that collect more HMTF taxes than they receive in HMTF spending.

I also want to note that these new uses are prioritized for the ports that collect much larger amounts of the HMTF fees than they receive in return because the many industries that pay these fees to access American ports deserve to have some of those funds used to improve the facilities they depend on for movement of goods.

These ports have unmet needs that shippers into these ports expect to be addressed. In my home State, we have two large ports—Los Angeles and Long Beach. These two ports collect over a quarter of all revenue for the HMTF, but because of the natural conditions at these ports, they require little to almost no traditional dredging to maintain the federally authorized channels. They do have needs related to berth dredging and disposal of some contaminated sediments.

These expanded use authorities are new and separate from the traditional uses of the HMTF. These new, expanded uses are not limited to the traditional HMTF focus—dredging of the Federal navigation channel. Instead, these are designed to meet additional maintenance needs beyond traditional cost-shared dredging projects.

Specifically, the conference agreement authorizes dredging of berths that are accessible to a Federal navigation channel and that benefit commercial navigation at the harbor. This permits expenditure of HMTF revenues for maintenance of non-Federal berthing areas to a depth required to access the federally authorized channel. The conference agreement does not place any other restriction on the use of these funds; therefore, these funds are eligible for maintenance dredging of berths to any depths necessary to access the federally authorized navigation channel as long as the berth is in a harbor that is accessible to a Federal navigation channel and the dredging benefits commercial navigation.

The conference report also authorizes dredging and disposal of contaminated sediments if such activities provide a benefit to commercial navigation and affect navigation of a Federal navigation project or are located in a berth that is accessible to a Federal navigation project. This provision will enable the HMTF to fund the disposal of legacy-contaminated sediment and sediment unsuitable for open water disposal that affect navigation at a Federal navigation project. This could include a range of cost-effective contaminated sediment removal and disposal activities as long as they provide a benefit to commercial navigation. No limitation beyond the benefit to commercial navigation and the linkage to a Federal navigation project is included.

Mr. VITTER. I thank Senator BOXER for the discussion of expanded uses of the HMTF. I agree with her understanding of the berth dredging and contaminated sediment disposal eligibilities, which are important to many of our Nation's major commercial ports. Expanding the uses of the HMTF is critical to those ports that are major contributors to the HMTF, yet receive minimal expenditures; therefore, the conference agreement establishes specific criteria for use of this authority. I look forward to working with the Senator more in the future on the implementation of the HMTF provisions in this conference report, including the expanded use provision we are discussing as well as increased expenditures of harbor maintenance trust fund revenues and prioritization of dredging at other key ports, such as the Port of New Orleans.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank Senator VITTER for that response. It is important that we are clear on how these new authorities should be implemented.

I also want to highlight how these authorities will benefit my home State of California. In the case of the Port of Los Angeles, the main channels and turning basins are authorized to at least 53-foot depth and have been recently dredged to such depths. Most adjacent container berths were also federally authorized at 53 feet and have been dredged to that depth. As shoaling/siltation occurs, maintenance dredging must be performed in order to keep adequate depth for the large container ships. The new expanded use for berth dredging will permit the maintenance dredging of these berth areas, down to the federally authorized depth.

This new use for disposal of contaminated sediment is also important for the Port of Los Angeles because legacy sediment contamination from the Consolidated Slip at the port will migrate during storm events down the Dominguez Channel and into the newly deepened Federal turning basin and main channel. This new expanded use will now allow the HMTF to fund the removal of this sediment.

I am glad that the conference agreement could address this important need for California ports as well as many other ports around the country. I am also very pleased with all of the other important reforms to the harbor maintenance trust fund included in the conference report. The proper and full maintenance of our nation's ports is of vital importance as we seek to compete in the global economy. The HMTF provisions and other important elements in the WRRDA 2014 help support American jobs, while maintaining America's ability to compete in the global economy.

DAM OPTIMIZATION

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I am joined by the chair and ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee to discuss section 1046 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act conference report, which we will vote on shortly in the Senate. I would like to thank the chair and ranking member for their

leadership on this important legislation and rise with them today to discuss the provision and address my concerns about the effects on Army Corps of Engineers' reservoirs in Texas.

It is important to remember that the long-term reliability of the Corps' multipurpose reservoirs remains a critical economic issue for many regions of our country. Cities, water districts, businesses, and other users depend on these reservoirs both for hydropower generation and to meet their larger water supply needs. That is especially true in arid States such as Texas.

Indeed, the reservoirs have helped our States—and many others—to mitigate the effects of serious droughts. For that matter, Texas suffered the most intense drought in recorded State history just a few years ago, and water levels at a number of reservoirs remain dangerously low. Statewide, reservoirs are only at 64 percent of their capacity, according to the Texas Water Development Board.

As one of America's fastest growing States, water supply management is becoming more and more important to individual Texans and their communities. Thankfully, local and State leaders have worked hard to devise effective strategies.

Similar to other States, Texas has very specific laws on water rights and environmental flows. Since 2007, we have had a legal process that provides for a basin-specific scientific assessment, a formal review, and then recommendations by interested stakeholders. The State government oversees this process by working with stakeholders to balance environmental flow needs with other public interests, such as water needs.

It is crucial to understand that the water stored in these reservoirs belongs to Texas and has been allocated to users in accordance with Federal and State law. It is also crucial to understand that the non-Federal sponsors of the reservoirs pay for storage, operations, and maintenance. Any changes to the operations that affect the authorized purposes of the reservoirs should never be made without their involvement.

Section 1046(a) in the conference report requires the Corps to update its operations of reservoirs report, and to include a plan for reviewing the operations of individual projects, including a detailed schedule for future reviews of project operations. In carrying out these reviews, the Corps must coordinate with the appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, along with any public and private entities that could be affected.

Going forward, during the deliberations over a project-specific review, the Secretary must carefully weigh the use of limited Federal operations and maintenance funding and may accept funds from other agencies or non-Federal entities if necessary.

Furthermore, the Secretary must ensure that all recommendations offered at the conclusion of the review, one, do not impinge on State water rights; two, are consistent with State water plans, and, three, do not affect any authority of a State to manage water resources within that State.

The language is explicit: It does not change the authorized purpose of any Corps dam or reservoir, and the Secretary may only carry out recommendations and activities pursuant to existing law. Let me repeat: There is no new authority to modify reservoir operations granted to the Corps of Engineers.

Of course, the Secretary has always had the authority to review the operations of these reservoirs and to improve their efficiency. As they undertake these reviews and carry out activities, this conference report language is clear that all authorized project purposes are maintained.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I would like to thank my friend from Texas, Senator CORNYN. As the top Senate Republican member of the conference committee for WRRDA, I agree with his understanding and interpretation of the language in section 1046(a) of the WRRDA conference report. Multipurpose dams and reservoirs in Texas are crucial to the well-being and economic viability of Texas, particularly in areas that have experienced severe droughts over the past several years. This provision is explicit in that the Secretary shall coordinate with appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as public and private entities that may be affected by those reviews and activities. This provision also prohibits any changes to the authorized purposes of any Corps dam or reservoir and only allows the Secretary to carry out recommendations or activities pursuant to existing law. As the Corps implements this provision, I will work with my colleague from Texas to monitor the Corps' activities and ensure there are no adverse effects to dams and reservoirs in his State.

Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I thank Ranking Member VITTER and Senator CORNYN for the discussion of section 1046(a) in the WRRDA conference report. I agree with their understanding and interpretation of this section and wish to address the importance of this provision. In my home State, which is currently facing a historic drought, it is critical that the Corps examine its reservoir operations to increase flexibility so that it can better meet all of the State's water needs, including agriculture, municipal uses, and the environment. Unfortunately, in California, the Corps does not look often enough at how it can better operate its reservoirs to meet multiple needs. This provision does not change the authorized purpose of any reservoir and paragraph (6), ''Effects of subsection,'' makes this clear. The provision simply creates a more transparent process under existing law so that Congress and local communities can work with the Corps to improve management of Federal reservoirs that provide important benefits to local communities.

ACF AND ACT RIVER SYSTEMS

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I am joined by the chair and ranking member of the Environment and Public Works Committee to discuss section 1051 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act—WRRDA—conference report, which we will vote on shortly in the Senate. I thank the chair and ranking member for their leadership on this bipartisan and important legislation. I rise today to discuss a provision within the legislation pertaining to a long-running regional dispute in the Southeastern United States over the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' operations within the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint, ACF and Alabama-Coosa-Tallapoosa, ACT, river systems. At the heart of the conflict are concerns from downstream stakeholders about the amount of water withdrawals—and the legal authority for those withdrawals—from Lake Allatoona and Lake Lanier.

A similar provision was included in the Senate-passed version of this bill, S. 601, which was reported favorably out of the Environment and Public Works Committee after careful consideration. Part of that consideration was a July 22, 2013, hearing focused on this dispute among the Army Corps and other stakeholders in the region. That hearing examined issues related to the withdrawal of water from Lake Allatoona and Lake Lanier; the authorized purposes of those two reservoirs; the Corps' actions in light of the 1958 Water Supply Act; the legislative history of the reservoirs; and the Corps' management of water storage contracts in the river systems.

While it highlighted a number of concerns related to Army Corps of Engineers authority under the Water Supply Act, the hearing brought to light a point of agreement that all stakeholders share. The best way to resolve the conflict is through a negotiated interstate water compact.

Section 1051 highlights Congress's concerns with the Corps' actions under the Water Supply Act related to the allocation of storage at Corps projects to local water supply without congressional approval. While it notes these concerns, it urges the agreed-upon best resolution to the conflict: an interstate water compact negotiated by the Governors of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida. The provision adds that the committees of jurisdiction should consider further legislation on the issue absent such an agreement.

Mr. VITTER. I thank my friend from Alabama, Senator SESSIONS, for his work on the WRRDA conference report and on this long-running dispute in the Southeastern United States. As the top Republican on the Committee on Environment and Public Works and the lead Republican Senate conferee on the conference committee for WRRDA, I agree with his understanding and interpretation of the language in section 1051 of

the WRRDA conference report. Senator SESSIONS' work through the development of the Senate version of this bill to investigate and document this conflict provided useful clarity throughout the conference committee's deliberations. As we await the development of a water compact that is satisfactory to Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, I will work with my friend from Alabama to continue oversight of the Corps' implementation of the Water Supply Act.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, today the Senate is considering the conference agreement for the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014, WRRDA. This bill contains roughly $12.3 billion in additional authorized spending for a variety of water projects that fall under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civil works division. This bill supports the construction and maintenance of many of our Nation's dams, levees, harbors, ports, and river ways to name a few.

For being such an important bill, the American people may wonder why the last time Congress passed a WRDA law was 7 years ago in 2007.

The reason is that it took Congress 7 straight years to finally respond to public pressure demanding Army Corps reform. As my colleagues know, the Corps has long been criticized by government auditors, taxpayer watchdogs and environmental groups for employing highly questionable economic models and environmental studies to justify its construction projects. A large number of Army Corps projects have been pegged as government boondoggles flush with waste, fraud, and abuse due to cost-overruns and cut-corner construction. Perhaps the best known example is the flooding of New Orleans during the Hurricane Katrina disaster that was traced back to substandard Corps levees, poor planning, and gutted coastal wetlands. Years later an independent study by the American Society of Engineers commissioned by the Corps concluded that, ''a large portion of the destruction from Hurricane Katrina was caused by . . . engineering and engineering-policy failures made over many years at almost all levels of responsibility.''

But as much as the Corps' bad management practices are to blame, the truth is that we in Congress are not without fault. For decades, Congress has used each WRDA bill to pile on construction project on top of construction project as a way for members to ''bring home the bacon'' in their States. Layers of these pork projects have created a $60 billion construction backlog, and the Army Corps simply can not complete them all with their $2 billion annual construction appropriation. Cutting corners and cooking their books is simply one way they bend to political priorities set by Congress.

I appreciate that the conference agreement implements some modest Corps reforms, particularly addressing the agency's $60 billion construction backlog. This bill requires the the Army Corps to ''de-authorize'' up to $18 billion in Corps projects, most of which have never received construction funding to begin with. This is a step in the right direction, but unfortunately this bill's ''savings'' are washed away by the $12 billion in new authorized spending included in this bill. Additionally, the conference agreement makes it impossible to de-authorize $28 billion in projects that were authorized in the 2007 WRDA law—a bill that was vetoed by President Bush for containing too much government waste but was subsequently overridden by Congress.

This bill also falls short by not giving the Army Corps clear parameters on what projects should be treated as national priorities. The conferees even eliminated a law that requires the Corps to send their most costly and controversial projects to undergo an ''Independent Peer Review'' process. All of this means there will be less transparency and oversight into the Corps decision making process. So I am sorry to say I must question the veracity of ''reform'' in this conference agreement.

I worry that ultimately this WRRDA conference agreement means that Army Corps projects of lower-priority will continue to supersede projects that address serious, life-threatening issues across the Nation and in my home State of Arizona. This lack of prioritization with Corps projects comes at a real cost to the American taxpayer. Take for example the Rio de Flag Flood Control Project in Flagstaff, AZ. The Army Corps knows that a single large flood event along the Rio de Flag River could easily wipe out the city's downtown area and Northern Arizona University, affecting half their population and causing $93 million in economic damage. After undergoing the appropriate feasibility studies, Congress authorized $24 million in 2000 to construct a 1.6-mile flood water channel and a detention basin to redirect the water away from the community. For 14 years, this project—again, just 1.6 miles—has languished partially because of the Corps' $60 billion construction backlog. The Corps spends less than $3 million a year on Rio de Flag while Congress plays favorites with other projects on their plate. This approach of funding Army Corps projects piecemeal over the years has inflated the total estimated cost of Rio de Flag from $24 million to $101.5 million.

Rio de Flag is a serious public safety project and yet it is behind schedule and way over budget. In fact, the only completed portion of the project is a 4,000-foot levee, which is cracked due to shoddy construction by an Army Corps contractor. I am told that the Army Corps recently ordered the contractor to repair the broken levee, of course at the added expense of the American taxpayer and the City of Flagstaff. Now the project faces more delays because the Army Corps has been slowly dragging out its ''updated economic analysis'' for Rio De Flag for the past 3 years, leaving the city unnecessarily vulnerable to disaster and causing the project's price tag to rise even higher.

I have a longstanding practice of abstaining from legislating projects to WRDA bills out of principle that each project should be prioritized based on national need, but it's hard to argue that Flagstaff isn't one of these national priorities, or that the current practice of piling on Army Corps projects isn't contributing to the mismanagement across the entire agency. Ultimately, this conference agreement does little to change the Corps' culture of bad decisions that affect Rio de Flag and similar projects. Congress will not be blameless if a flood event larger than what Flagstaff occasionally sees inundates the city, destroys property, or claims innocent lives.

I appreciate the need to pass a WRDA bill after 7 years, but I am concerned that this bill is just a new coat of paint on the same broken system. I urge my colleagues to oppose this conference agreement.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I am here to speak in support of the conference report for the Water Resources Reform and Development Act or WRRDA. I congratulate Senator BOXER and Senator VITTER for their combined leadership and their working together to send this bill to the President's desk. The last time Congress passed a WRDA bill was in 2007.

Gridlock and controversy over earmarks have delayed action on the WRRDA bill. This inaction puts our ports, beaches, and massive environmental restoration projects, like the Everglades, in jeopardy.

I support WRRDA because it moves forward with port construction, new flood protection, navigation, and environmental restoration projects, while instituting a number of reforms to the Army Corps of Engineers.

Our ports provide good jobs and are critical the economy, facilitating trade and commerce. These projects have been vetted, studied, and recommended by the Army Corps. Now, it is time for Congress to do its part and pass the WRRDA bill.

The WRRDA bill means good news for Florida's beaches, waterways, ports, and the Everglades. Not only does Florida have nine projects with a chief's report that are ready to go, but we also have several coastal communities anxiously waiting for the reauthorization of beach nourishment programs.

The WRRDA bill extends the authorization for beach renourishment projects so that the Corps can continue repairing and restoring Florida's coastlines. The WRRDA bill authorizes a 3-year extension of coastal storm damage projects which are scheduled to expire in the next 5 years. This means that the Treasure Island project in Pinellas County will now be authorized through 2022. In addition, it creates a

process by which projects can be extended by up to 15 years with the help of Federal funds. Strengthening the coastline by replenishing eroding sand will help defend against sea-level rise and storm surge.

Congress made a promise 14 years ago to restore the Everglades, and WRRDA puts us on the path to finally fulfill the promise of Everglades restoration. The Everglades are a national treasure, and together, Congress and President Harry Truman recognized it when they dedicated Everglades National Park back in 1947. But it took another major act of Congress to fund Everglades restoration to repair and restore the natural sheet flow of water into the park and into Florida Bay.

The original Everglades Restoration legislation, also known as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, or CERP, was the result of years of work and study, was authorized in 2000 and was written with the intent of frequent WRDA bills.

However, only one WRDA bill has been enacted since—in 2007. The first era of Everglades restoration is underway. We have been able to fund construction and make significant progress on three major projects, build a bridge over the Tamiami Trail, create jobs, and provide fresh water for urban and agricultural water supply.

As we restore the Everglades, we create jobs and improve the water quality for a critical habitat. In fact, a Mather Economics study found that restoring the Everglades will result in the creation of over 440,000 jobs in sectors like real estate, tourism, fishing, and agriculture—many of those permanent jobs. This study also concluded that there is a $4 return on investment for every dollar spent restoring the Everglades.

This bill contains four new project authorizations that are part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. For example, the C–43 Reservoir near La Belle, FL, will help store water during the rainy season along the Caloosahatchee River and protect our coastal areas from too much freshwater, which can drastically disrupt the delicate salinity balance in the Caloosahatchee Estuary. In addition, the C–111 Spreader Canal will redirect water into Everglades National Park that will eventually make its way down to benefit Florida Bay.

The first era of Everglades restoration projects, including the Indian River Lagoon and the Picayune Strand, increase water quality and preserve the natural areas to reverse the draining and bulldozing that happened decades ago. This is one of the last areas of the State where the Florida panther has the land it needs to roam and hunt. In addition, Picayune Strand restores habitat and ecological connections that will directly affect the Florida Panthers National Wildlife Refuge, the Belle Meade State Conservation and Recreation Lands Project Area, and the Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve.

All of this works toward the goal of moving water through the historic River of Grass. But progress has been delayed because the second era of projects has been waiting for the WRDA bill for several years. I know Florida is not alone with this type of complaint. The lack of project authorizations has caused delays and significant cost overruns for too long. For this very reason, I have introduced a bill called the Everglades for the Next Generation Act. This legislation provides a programmatic authorization for 5 years for all projects associated with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. It authorizes projects that the Army Corps has completed the planning, engineering, and design work for and allows the Corps to expedite the process on other projects that would provide greater ecosystem or water supply benefits when done sooner.

The WRRDA bill updates our ports and makes them more economically competitive. WRRDA authorizes a number of projects for ports in Florida and other States. These authorizations are a crucial step forward for the improvements our ports need to attract more ships and cargo and take full advantage of the Panama Canal expansion. For example, WRRDA authorizes $600.9 million for a project to deepen Jacksonville Harbor. This will economically transform Jacksonville into a major port that can receive big ships from Asia through an expanded Panama Canal. Projects for Port Canaveral and the Port of Palm Beach that will create new jobs were also included in WRRDA. Overall, I am very pleased that the WRRDA bill accomplishes so much for ports in Florida. Improving and updating our ports will be an economic boon for the country that will create new jobs and opportunities for people across the country.

Mr. President, it is clear that without the WRRDA bill, Florida is in trouble. It is important not just to Florida but for this entire Nation. I urge my colleagues to support the bill.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I will support this legislation to strengthen our Nation's water infrastructure. For Michigan, the Water Resources Reform and Development Act, WRRDA, means that harbors, channels, breakwaters, and locks in the Great Lakes will be better maintained; Federal assistance for wastewater system upgrades will be more flexible and affordable; and the Great Lakes fishery will be better protected from destructive invasive species. Surrounded by water on all but one side, Michigan is a water state and our waters fuel our economy, create jobs, offer a vast array of recreational opportunities, and provide drinking water to millions. I am pleased this bill will help protect our waters and improve their navigability.

The report makes progress on increasing funding for harbor maintenance, with the goal of aligning revenues collected in the harbor maintenance trust fund with those expended for this purpose. Over 5 years have passed since I led a bipartisan and multiregional group of Senators to call to the attention of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee the imbalance in collections and spending for harbor maintenance. I am pleased the committee worked with us to reduce this disparity. This conference report aims to increase spending on harbor maintenance so that it is more in line with the fees collected for maintaining our Nation's navigation infrastructure. I am also pleased the Great Lakes navigation system is prioritized for the increased funds through a specific set-aside of 10 percent. Also, Great Lakes projects are eligible for other types of prioritized funds, which will position us to compete for this additional assistance.

The conference report authorizes the Great Lakes as a single navigational system, recognizing the interconnectedness of its 140 harbor projects. During Senate consideration of the water resources bill, I entered into a colloquy with Chairman BOXER to discuss the system's interdependence. I am pleased the conference committee included this Great Lakes authorization, as it should help allow all of our harbors—both large and small—to be recognized for Federal assistance.

While the harbor maintenance provisions in the report are good, we will still need to continue to fight for appropriations and ensure that budget requests reflect the true needs of the Great Lakes Navigation System. This vital transportation network carries about 130 million tons of critical commodities to supply raw materials to our manufacturing sector, power homes and businesses, build roads and bridges, and provide food for people around the world. Surely it should be maintained so that it can carry these critical commodities effectively and efficiently.

In addition to carrying millions of tons of goods, the Great Lakes also boast a $7 billion fishery. To protect this significant resource, destructive invasive species need to be kept out of the lakes. I am pleased the conferees retained an important provision I worked with my colleagues to include in the Senate bill, an authorization for the Corps of Engineers to implement emergency measures to prevent invasive species, including the destructive Asian carp, from dispersing into the Great Lakes. This authorization makes clear that such emergency authority can be implemented at any hydrologic connection between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins which will provide important flexibility to the Corps to respond to emergencies.

Our Nation's economy, health, and well-being depend on a strong water infrastructure. WRRDA makes progress in authorizing programs to strengthen our navigation systems, flood control, drinking water and wastewater systems, and natural resources. We now

need to make sure that appropriations are provided for these improvements to be made real.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, today the Senate will act to make major improvements to our water infrastructure for commercial and recreational navigation while protecting and maintaining many environmental treasures for future generations.

The Water Resources Reform and Development Act—which the House passed 412 to 4—is one of the few bipartisan accomplishments of this Congress. I wish there were more.

Nevertheless, I would like to thank Chairman BARBARA BOXER and Senator VITTER of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and Chairman BILL SHUSTER and Congressman NICK RAHALL on the House side for their hard work in getting this bill to us today.

I would also like to thank my Illinois delegation colleagues on both sides of the Capitol and on both sides of the aisle for their assistance in advancing Illinois priorities in this bill.

I am pleased that in the final bill there are many provisions that will benefit our home State.

It was just a little over a year ago that we dealt with a major drought in the Midwest that caused record low water levels on the Mississippi River and threatened to disrupt the crucial transport of millions of dollars in goods and commodities on the river.

After the initial threat had passed, thanks to better-than-expected rainfall and quick action by the Army Corps of Engineers at the behest of Congress, Representative BILL ENYART and I introduced the Mississippi River Navigation Sustainment Act. The major provisions of this measure are included in the bill we will pass today.

These provisions will improve water level and river forecasting abilities along the Mississippi and give the Corps greater flexibility to respond to low water events that threaten navigation. The bill also authorizes the Corps to conduct, for the first time, a study of the entire Mississippi River Basin—which spans 40 percent of the continental United States—to determine how we can better manage the system during extreme weather. Finally, we create an environmental management program for the middle Mississippi—recognizing the importance of preserving and restoring fish and wildlife habitats while undertaking important navigation improvements.

River commerce in America's heartland depends on the system of locks and dams on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

I was pleased to work with my colleagues in the 2007 reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act to authorize modernization and expansion of the locks on these important Illinois waterways.

These improvements make commerce more efficient and guard against catastrophic failures of current locks and dams as most of them reach 80 or so years old. At the same time, with current project delivery schedules and the tight Federal budget, these improvements are not expected to be realized until 2090 by some estimates.

With that in mind, Senator MARK KIRK and I, along with our colleagues Representatives CHERI BUSTOS and RODNEY DAVIS in the House, introduced the Water Infrastructure Now Public Private Partnership Act or WIN–P3. A version of our proposal is included in the final conference report.

It includes a pilot program that would decentralize project planning, design, and construction from the Corps and provide an opportunity for private financing to come to the table. We are hopeful that it will speed project delivery of nationally significant water infrastructure projects like the locks and dams on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers.

Along with the economic and recreational benefits of the Mississippi River comes the annual threat of devastating floods for many Illinois communities.

In Illinois' Metro East region the community has stepped up to improve flood protection after their levees were decertified. They have taxed themselves to help pay for this improved protection and have endured a long and often frustrating partnership with the Army Corps.

My hope is that the provisions we secured in this bill will go a long way to improving their situation.

The bill would combine several separately authorized levee projects into one. That means that the money Congress appropriates for these projects will be more flexible and can be used where it is most needed.

Additionally, the bill would allow the Metro East levee projects to qualify for work-in-kind credit with the Army Corps. This will help make the work the locals are doing go farther towards the completion of the final levels of protection.

The conference report will also allow much needed restoration of the Chicago shoreline along Lake Michigan to continue. The project was facing delay as it got closer to hitting its original authorization cap. This bill increased that authorization.

I would like to thank again all those who worked on this bill. I look forward to this bipartisan accomplishment being soon signed into law by President Obama.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF DAVID JEREMIAH BARRON TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIRST CIRCUIT

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

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of David Jeremiah Barron, of Massachusetts, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of David Jeremiah Barron, of Massachusetts, to be United States Circuit Judge for the First Circuit?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS).

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

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

The result was announced—yeas 53, nays 45, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 162 Ex.]

YEAS—53

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

NAYS—45

Alexander	Cruz	Johnson (WI)
Ayotte	Enzi	Kirk
Barrasso	Fischer	Landrieu
Blunt	Flake	Lee
Burr	Graham	Manchin
Chambliss	Grassley	McCain
Coburn	Hatch	McConnell
Cochran	Heller	Moran
Collins	Hoeven	Murkowski
Corker	Inhofe	Paul
Cornyn	Isakson	Portman
Crapo	Johanns	Risch

Roberts	Sessions	Toomey
Rubio	Shelby	Vitter
Scott	Thune	Wicker

NOT VOTING—2

Boozman	Coats

The nomination was confirmed.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

WATER RESOURCES REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2014—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Chair lays before the Senate the conference report to accompany H.R. 3080, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

The committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 3080), to provide for improvements to the rivers and harbors of the United States, to provide for the conservation and development of water and related resources, and for other purposes, having met, after full and free conference, have agreed to recommend and do recommend to their respective Houses as follows: That the House recede from its disagreement to the amendment of the Senate and agree to the same with an amendment and the Senate agree to the same, signed by a majority of the conferees on the part of both Houses.

(The conference report is printed in the House proceedings in the RECORD of May 15, 2014.)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Colleagues, I am going to take 25 seconds. This is a great day for the Senate, for every single Member in this body, and our States, for jobs, for business, for ecosystem restoration, for our oceans. It is a great bill. I hope we will have a great vote on this bill.

Senator VITTER and I agree. I will yield my remaining time to him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Madam President, I urge a ''yes'' vote also. This is a strong bipartisan bill. There were only four ''no'' votes in the House and a strong positive editorial in the Wall Street Journal. Vote for infrastructure and jobs.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is on agreeing to the conference report to accompany H.R. 3080.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) would have voted ''yea.''

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

The result was announced—yeas 91, nays 7, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 163 Leg.]

YEAS—91

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

NAYS—7

Burr	Johnson (WI)	Roberts
Coburn	Lee	
Flake	McCain	

NOT VOTING—2

Boozman	Coats

The conference report was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF RICHARD G. FRANK TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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 bill clerk read the nomination of Richard G. Frank, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services.

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

The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to yield back all remaining time on both sides.

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

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Richard G. Frank, of Massachusetts, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services?

The nomination was confirmed.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATIONAL HUNTING, FISHING, AND SHOOTING—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I want to speak briefly on three topics this afternoon: human trafficking; the terrorist attack at Fort Hood, TX, in 2009; and finally, the way the Senate has become a killing ground for good ideas because of the practices of the majority leader.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Starting with human trafficking, we know that while slavery was formally abolished in the United States years ago, it continues today in the form of human trafficking. Tragically, too many children are victims of modern-day slavery—literally tens of thousands right here in America. That is why in recent years I have joined with colleagues on both sides of the aisle—obviously, this is not a political or partisan issue—to work together in a bipartisan way to introduce a series of bills aimed at accomplishing three things: No. 1, shedding light on this tragic reality. Most people in their communities around the country are not even aware of the scourge of human trafficking that is happening right under their nose. No. 2, we have tried to do everything we can to save children—minors—from the sex trade. And No. 3, we have tried hard to bring these traffickers to justice.

I was proud to be one of the cosponsors of the 2012 Child Protection Act, which gave law enforcement agencies better tools with which to protect children and apprehend criminals. More recently, I joined with the senior Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN; the senior Senator from Minnesota, Ms. KLOBUCHAR; and the junior Senator from Illinois, Mr. KIRK, to introduce something we call the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

Our bill would establish a domestic trafficking victims fund that doesn't come from tax dollars but, rather, from fees and fines paid by people who commit law enforcement offenses. It would allocate tens of millions of dollars to both fight human trafficking and, just as importantly, to help victims get the sorts of services they need in order to heal and to become productive citizens once again. It would also give law enforcement officials more tools to crack

down on human trafficking and the broader criminal networks that support them.

The bill would streamline human trafficking task force investigations by giving investigators access to better technologies and enhance cooperation between Federal and State law enforcement partnerships. It would also allow law enforcement officials to prosecute each and every member of a human trafficking organization, as opposed to merely the on-the-ground managers, and it would increase the penalties for criminals who prey on children through sex slavery.

Finally, it would improve the availability of restitution and witness assistance for trafficking victims by allowing for a larger portion of forfeited Federal criminal assets to go directly to the victims.

To be clear, as I said a moment ago, this bill would be funded by the fines imposed on the people who commit the crimes of child pornography, child prostitution, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and commercial human smuggling offenses at the Federal level, and it would not increase the Federal deficit.

Earlier this week, the House of Representatives acted by passing its own version of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, and I would urge the majority leader and the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee to bring the Senate version up for a vote in the committee and on the floor of the Senate as soon as possible. After all, during a time when politics seems to pervade everything here in Washington, DC, and we are approaching a midterm election where it seems so hard to do things that should be easy, this is one thing we ought to be able to do together.

FORT HOOD

I would also urge the majority leader to allow a vote on separate legislation that has already been approved by the House Armed Services Committee as an amendment to the national defense authorization bill, and is now being introduced as an amendment to the Senate bill by my colleague Senator CRUZ of Texas, who sits on the Armed Services Committee.

This legislation I am referring to I first introduced several years ago following the terrorist attack on American soil at Fort Hood, TX, when MAJ Nidal Hasan killed 13 people and injured dozens more. These individuals who lost their lives deserve the same sort of recognition on the field of battle as people who lost their lives in other parts of the world—perhaps overseas. The same benefits should be available to the families of those who survive terrorist attacks anywhere in the world.

There is no doubt about the fact that what happened at Fort Hood on November 5, 2009, was a terrorist attack. The shooter happened to be a lone-wolf terrorist, happened to be an American citizen, and happened to be a member of the U.S. Army, but he was also a radicalized Islamist who reportedly exchanged at least 20 emails with a senior Al-Qaeda member before committing this massacre. The Al-Qaeda leader with whom he corresponded is someone who has since become more notorious and even better known—a man named Anwar al-Awlaki. This person was also the one who maintained a relationship with a terrorist who tried to blow up Northwest Airlines flight 253 on Christmas day in 2009, less than 2 months after the Fort Hood attack.

We have just had a vote on one of the lawyers who wrote the memo by which President Obama authorized a drone attack on Anwar al-Awlaki on September 2011 overseas, so there is no question the Fort Hood shooter believed he was acting on behalf of Al-Qaeda. There is no one who can deny he shouted ''Allah akbar'' before opening fire, and no one who can deny he has since described the act as an act of jihad.

Yesterday I had the chance to question FBI Director James Comey, and I asked him whether he agreed with the assessment that this incident was ''workplace violence,'' which some have amazingly called this, or whether he thought this was an Al-Qaeda-inspired attack of terrorism here on America soil. His response—something I thought would have been painfully obvious—was yes, it was a terrorist attack in 2009.

Was the shooter a card-carrying member of Al-Qaeda? Well, I am not sure exactly what that is, but to me that is the wrong question entirely. We have to remember that Al-Qaeda leaders, such as Ayman al-Zawahiri has called upon his terrorist followers to commit dispersed, small-scale attacks exactly like the one that occurred at Fort Hood in 2009. We do know, from the rich evidence that was discovered during the prosecution of Major Hasan, that the Fort Hood shooter was most certainly a disciple of Anwar al-Awlaki.

The awarding of Purple Hearts should not be contingent on geography. In other words, if an Al-Qaeda-inspired terrorist kills a group of our brave men and women in uniform overseas, it shouldn't be treated any differently than if one of their inspired terrorists kills one of our members of the military here at home as well. The soldiers who were killed or wounded at Fort Hood were casualties of a global war on terror, period, and they deserve to be treated as such by the U.S. Government. They deserve the exact same recognition that military victims of Al-Qaeda's terrorist attack in New York on September 11, 2001, received—the same recognition they received—nothing more and nothing less.

Awarding them the Purple Heart is a matter of justice, a matter of honor, and a matter of honesty.

The House of Representatives has shown great leadership on these issues that should unite us both on the huge trafficking front and on the Purple Heart recognition I just mentioned. It is time now for the Senate to follow suit, and I hope the majority leader will help us get this legislation up, move it across the floor, pass it, and send it to the President so he can sign it into law.

SENATE OPERATION

The third point is that I cannot let the remarks of the majority leader this morning pass without comment—the remarks majority leader HARRY REID made on the floor this morning about how the Senate is being operated.

The majority leader came to the floor this morning and called the legislative process a game. He accused Republicans of stalling important pieces of legislation, such as the 55 provisions of the tax extenders bill that died last week in the Senate. But we need to be clear about exactly who is responsible and what has happened.

This is the third time in 2 weeks the majority leader has killed legislation which enjoys broad bipartisan support.

First, it was the energy efficiency bill known as the Shaheen-Portman bill. The majority leader killed that piece of legislation when he refused any opportunity—either for Democrats or Republicans—to offer any amendments and get votes on those amendments. If he had simply done that, that legislation would be on its way to President Obama today, if not already signed into law.

Then last week we saw these 55 expiring tax provisions, some of which enjoy broad bipartisan support, such as the research and development tax credit and the deduction for State sales tax, which is important to my State because income taxes paid at the State level are deducted from the Federal income tax bill of people who live in those States and pay State income tax.

As a matter of fairness and parity, I support a number of the provisions in the tax extenders bill. But when the majority leader brought it to the floor and he refused to allow any amendments whatsoever to this legislation, the minority, of which I am a member, had no choice but to stop that legislation in its tracks because that is the only leverage we had to wake up the majority leader and say it is important for the minority and the people we represent to have a voice in what happens on the Senate floor.

Our Founding Fathers decided that each State would get two Senators. But when one or maybe both of those Senators are in the minority party and if they are shut out of the legislative process entirely because all amendments and even constructive suggestions are denied, then my constituents—the 26 million people I represent in the State of Texas—have been shut out of the process and denied the constitutional representation they are guaranteed under our founding documents.

There is a theme that resulted in these bills killed by the majority leader; that is, since the 113th Congress,

the majority leader's utter refusal to allow debate and votes on amendments by Members of both parties—both parties.

While I am not happy about the fact that my constituents have been shut out of this process, I would think my Democratic friends' constituents can't be happy about the fact that they have been shut out of the process as well.

Here is an amazing statistic. Our Democratic Senators have introduced 676 amendments to bills on the floor since last July. That is 676 amendments not by the minority party but by the majority party that controls this body. Do we know how many votes they got on Democratic amendments? They got 7 votes on Democratic amendments since the beginning of the 113th Congress.

During that same period of time, Republicans have filed hundreds of amendments too. That used to be the way the Senate worked. Both parties participate, we represent our States, and we have full and open debate and an amendment process. Then we vote, the majority rules, and then bills get passed and sent to the President for signature. But no more under this majority leader. Now, during this same time frame, while Democrats only got 7 rollcall votes, the minority got 9 rollcall votes since last July.

So I find it a little ironic that, both on the energy efficiency bill and the tax extenders bill, it was Senate Republicans who stood up—not only for the right of minority party Senators to get votes on amendments they had filed, but also for the right of our Democratic colleagues in the majority party who have basically been frozen out of the process as well.

It might be true that constituents back home in those States where Democratic Senators were elected would be asking the question: Look. My Senator who I voted for, whom I support, is a Member of the majority party. But you're telling me that they can't participate in the legislative process by offering good ideas to make legislation better and to get votes? How ineffectual can you be?

I happen to know from talking to many of my Democratic colleagues that they are not happy about the process either. And it is not just about process. It is not just about the prerogatives of individual Senators. This is about the constitutional guarantees of representation by two Senators for each State, and the rights of the minority to participate in the process and the people that I represent back home in Texas being shut out of the process altogether.

So the Senate has become a virtual killing floor for good bipartisan ideas because of the way the majority leader has run the Senate.

Then there is what happened yesterday on the patent reform bill. I have been a member of the Judiciary Committee since the time I got to the Senate, and we have been working very hard to try to deal with the problem of patent trolls.

Patent trolls are big a problem in industries we wouldn't even suspect, including real estate, restaurants—not to mention high tech, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and the like. But what happens is people buy patents, not for the purpose of making something, not for the purpose of being productive, but for the purpose of having a basis upon which to file a lawsuit. Then they shake down small startups, the innovators, the people who we are depending upon to create new products that will make our lives better, make us healthier and make us all live longer, and help grow our economy to create jobs. These people are either being snuffed out altogether or are very much prejudiced in terms of their ability to grow because of all of this patent troll activity.

I have been working closely with the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Senator LEAHY, who has been working hard on this issue; Senator SCHUMER, the Senator from New York, a Democrat; Senator HATCH, who is a senior Member of the Judiciary Committee; and Senator GRASSLEY from Iowa, who is the ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee. We were in a pretty good place yesterday where we thought, as a result of hard negotiations and good bipartisan work, we were going to be in the position for the chairman of the Judiciary Committee to mark up and to vote on a patent reform bill in the Senate Judiciary Committee this morning, only to be told last night that the majority leader basically killed that bill before it could even be acted on in the Judiciary Committee.

So this is the third time in 3 weeks the majority leader has basically been responsible for killing good bipartisan legislation—the energy efficiency bill, the tax extenders bill, and now the patent reform bill.

It is the majority leader's imperial leadership, where he is not just the floor leader for his party, he is not just the traffic cop for the Senate, but he is the one who wants to pick and choose who gets to participate in the legislative process. In the process, he has shut out not just Republicans but Democrats too, and he has turned this institution which used to be known as the world's greatest deliberative body into a pale imitation of what it used to be.

I continue to hope, maybe because I am an optimist by nature, that the majority leader will see the error of his ways and realize he is not only hurting my constituents but he is hurting the constituents of every Member of the Senate by denying us an opportunity for an open legislative process where everyone's voice can be heard, where the American people can watch and listen, where they can reach their own conclusions about the merits of each argument, and where they can hold us accountable for how we vote. That is what elections are supposed to be about.

So I hope some day the majority leader will change his attitude about an open legislative process and will help restore the Senate's status as the world's greatest deliberative body. I predict if he does not do that, the voters may well do that in November by changing the hands of the majority from the Democratic party to the current minority party. Then things will change, and this body will return to its status as the world's greatest deliberative body.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WALSH. Madam President, I served 33 years in the National Guard. When I joined the Guard, I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. I have taken a similar oath as a Senator.

Former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army Gordon Sullivan famously wrote, ''Hope is not a method.''

I didn't come to Congress to hope. I approach my work here with the lessons I learned in the military: Find solutions and work together to overcome challenges.

Unfortunately, that approach is not how it works in Washington. Too many people here don't care about solutions, and many ignore the problems.

There is no greater proof than climate change. Here we are in 2014, almost 50 years after President Johnson warned that ''by burning fossil fuels humanity is unwittingly conducting a vast geophysical experiment.''

Yet irresponsible leaders in Washington pretend that climate change isn't real. They pretend that humans aren't causing it. They hope they can go along with the status quo. But Montanans know better.

Here are the facts:

Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere are now higher than at any time in human history.

The 12 hottest years on record have been in the last 15 years.

The average temperature in Montana is 2.5 degrees higher than in 1900.

And spring runoff now occurs 1 week to 4 weeks earlier.

In Montana, climate change has contributed to the worst mountain pine beetle epidemic in recorded history. The combination of mild weather and stressed trees has allowed beetles to spread further and longer. Their legacy is red trees, then dead trees, then wildfires like we have never seen before.

Fire season is now 11 weeks longer than when I was a kid. The amount of forest that burns in the West has doubled. Fires are burning longer and burning more trees each and every year.

The best guess from America's scientists is that 3 to 4 times more forest will burn each year by the middle of this century, devastating rural communities that rely on timber and tourism.

In 2000, I led the response of the Montana National Guard to the historic wildfires in Montana. We activated over 1,800 of Montana's soldiers and airmen. That year, about 1 million acres of Montana were burned. Businesses and landowners lost over $3 million a day.

Suppressing wildfires now consumes up to 40 percent of the Forest Service's budget. This is unsustainable. It reduces the agency's ability to fund other programs like hazardous fuel reduction and trail maintenance.

In Montana we have a saying that if you don't like the weather, stick around for an hour and it will change. But under climate change, it is changing across a wider range. Rains are falling more intensely, increasing erosion and runoff. The trend of more frequent and more intense rainfall is likely to continue. Heat waves and drought have also become more intense. What all of this means for Montana's agriculture is hard to predict, but without a doubt our biggest industry faces big uncertainty. The uncertainty in agriculture is especially true for water delivery, both for livestock and irrigated crops. As snow in the winter shifts to rain and extreme weather gets worse, it is becoming harder to run irrigation systems that were designed for the climate of 100 years ago.

We saw one of the worst droughts in history hit Montana ranchers and farmers in 2012. The year before Montana experienced a 500-year flood in the Missouri River Basin. Across the Great Plains the floods caused $2 billion in damage. Across the Nation we are paying out of our nose for extreme weather and natural disasters—$110 billion in damage in 2012 alone.

Climate change will also damage our tourism, which is Montana's second biggest industry. Glacier National Park itself is losing its namesake. Its ecosystem will change. Its cold water, which supports unique species and a strong trout fishery, will no longer be fed by melting ice. The communities in the Milk River Basin which receive 70 percent of their water from glaciers will also be impacted. Snowpack across the Rockies has already decreased 20 percent on average since 1980. In parts of Montana it may decrease by 50 percent in my lifetime.

Winter tourism in Montana is also big business, generating over $150 million in income and supporting over 4,500 jobs. But less snow means fewer jobs. Skiing and snowmobiling contribute $265 million to the Montana economy. During the low snowfall winters of 2002 and 2005, Montana ski resorts lost $16 million in revenue compared to heavy snow years.

Warmer temperatures also harm hunting, fishing, and our booming outdoor industry, which supports more than 64,000 jobs and attracts 11 million visitors to Montana each year. Warmer streams and fewer trout translate to direct reduction in Montana jobs. Stream closures in recent years because of warm water are the first proof of this threat. Nearly 50 percent of habitat for the bull trout and cutthroat trout could be lost in the West this century. Big game species such as moose and elk face similar threats with a warmer climate.

Rural communities across Montana are especially vulnerable to climate change. Many of them rely on single sectors tied to the land, from timber to grain to outfitting, and are less able to adapt to a changing economy.

I know what resource development looks like. My hometown of Butte was once known as ''the Richest Hill on Earth.'' The copper mined on that hill helped us win World War II, but today it is part of the largest Superfund site in America, including the Berkeley Pit. Mining continues to be an important industry in Montana, and Butte still churns out copper that is used around the world. Fortunately, Butte has also diversified. It now has good paying jobs in manufacturing and aerospace. One lesson I took from growing up there is we cannot afford another Berkeley Pit anywhere. Climate change is the equivalent of a Berkeley Pit: Ignore first; ask questions later.

Montanans understand the dilemma we are facing. We are the Treasure State. Our history is the history of resource development: from beaver trapping to the gold rush, copper mining to railroads and the open range, the homestead movement to the timber and fossil fuel booms. But along with the booms came a lot of busts.

In Montana we had to spend tons of money on fixing our past mistakes. Over $1.5 billion has been spent at our Superfund sites alone. Each year we spend another $13 million to clean up abandoned mine lands. If only our resources had been developed the right way the first time, all that money could have been spent on drinking water or better roads or lower student loans or researching cures for disease.

I know there are no easy solutions to the challenges we face today. Today 82 percent of energy used in the United States comes from fossil fuels. I am proud to represent a State with more than $1.6 billion in investment in wind energy since 2005. Renewable energy does have a bright future. A 2009 study ranked Montana's wind resources as the second best in the Nation. Montana also has potential for solar energy and is one of only 13 States with the potential to produce commercial geothermal energy. Renewables, including wind, are not always the right answer. Our current power grid has real physical limitations. I will continue supporting renewable energy and upgrades to the grid because we need to reduce our carbon emissions. But we cannot ignore today's reality.

Look at me standing here. I flew here on a plane that burns jet fuel. I am wearing cotton, and I eat wheat and corn, all of which depend on fertilizers, were irrigated using power from coal and natural gas, and were transported by diesel. I am speaking into a microphone and a camera that need electricity. In the United States in the year 2014, we either dig up or pipe up five-sixths of our entire energy. I couldn't do my job and visit Montanans without fossil fuel—and I understand that—and many of them wouldn't have jobs either.

Montana is one of about a dozen States that is a net exporter of energy. The oil and gas industry directly employs over 4,000 workers. Our unemployment rate in Montana is currently at 4.8 percent, in part because of the good jobs in the Bakken. We have 2,000 workers directly in the coal industry, from mining it to burning it to maintaining the boilers that burn it. Coal alone is responsible for over $100 million of revenue each year in the State and local economy. I don't agree with some people who want to just pull the plug on coal. The United States burns only 11 percent of the coal consumed globally each year. The less we invest in cleaning up coal, the less likely we are to make a dent in climate change. We cannot just take our ball and go home. That simply outsources our pollution problem to countries such as China.

I know firsthand of the value of domestic energy. In 2004 and 2005 I led the largest deployment of Montana men and women to war in 60 years, more than 700 of Montana's finest went with me to Iraq. Some of them didn't return home with me; some of them returned severely injured. The debate leading up to the war focused on weapons of mass destruction and the connection of Saddam Hussein to the war on terrorism, but since World War II our strategic interest in the Middle East has been oil. Our dependence on foreign oil should never again be a reason for war. I don't want countries forced to make military decisions or tempted to put soldiers on the ground because they are afraid that their economy will freeze up without energy from other countries. That means I want more oil responsibly produced here in the United States from places such as the Bakken. It means that I support a project like the Keystone XL Pipeline, which will make us more energy secure and strengthen the economy of eastern Montana, while ensuring precautions are taken to guarantee pipeline safety and reliability and protect private property rights. Private industry jump-started by government-funded research and development has already provided part of the solution. The access to tight oil and gas has made us more energy secure. The trend is in the right direction. Less than half of the oil consumed by Americans now comes from other countries.

Yet even if we continue to increase domestic production by displacing foreign oil, we are still exposed as a country to two risks. First, oil remains a necessary ingredient in our economy. Second, the oil market continues to be a global one, exposing us to price

swings that can seriously harm our own economy. Therefore, in addition to more domestic oil production, we need to diversify our transportation fuels. The growth of advanced biofuels in America is the way to do that. I support diversifying our fuel sources by developing homegrown alternatives such as biodiesel, jet fuel from camelina, and ethanol from wheat and barley to reduce demand for foreign oil.

I also support the military's continued investment in renewable energy. The impacts of climate change also have a strong national security connection. The Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review has found a direct link between climate change and national security threats like terrorism. Climate change is a threat multiplier. Higher sea levels and extreme weather increase poverty, humanitarian crises, and political instability.

I know what political instability abroad can mean. It can mean our servicemembers, our sons and daughters, will be put in harm's way in order to protect our way of life. As a veteran and someone who has sworn an oath to this country, these impacts concern me because they make us less safe.

Today despite all the evidence that climate change is harming us and will hurt our children and grandchildren even more, we seem stuck. Congress is handcuffed by folks who have their heads in the sand. Instead of taking responsibility to solve this problem, they are choosing to ignore it. The Clean Air Act has helped Americans tackle pollution for over 40 years because it was written to last. The Supreme Court has spoken and the law is clear. But using a section of the law drafted when the Beatles were still recording is not the ideal way to tackle climate change, given how much our understanding has evolved since then on pollution control. Ninety-seven percent of climate scientists agree that climate change is a human-caused problem. In the military 97 percent is about as certain as a mission can get. But that is not good enough here in Washington.

Climate change is another example of why Washington is broken. We have an agency writing regulations with enormous impact on all Montanans, using congressional directions written when I was a child. We have an agency trying to put out a fire with a trowel because that is the only tool it has. I am committed to putting the fire out because we cannot afford inaction. The benefits of acting are clear, but I would prefer to use the right tool for that job. Yet Washington is so broken that the alternative is to do nothing. Plan B is repeal. Plan B ignores reality. I cannot accept that.

I will be watching the EPA's Clean Air Act regulations closely to keep the agency accountable to Montanans and make any final rules workable for Montana. Members of Congress should be taking responsibility and upholding the oaths we all swore to. We should agree that climate change is a clear enemy and take steps to stop it.

I strongly support a bigger investment in securing a responsible future for coal: tax credits, loans, loan guarantees, and grants for carbon capture as well as sequestration. I have cosponsored bills and signed letters. I have pressed Senators to maintain existing incentives for coal. Coal does have a future, but it needs to lower its emissions. Montana is already leading the way with cutting-edge research in carbon sequestration. Beyond fossil fuels, our forests are a carbon sink, absorbing about 12 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions each year. But climate change itself threatens this important service provided by our forests. More active management, especially under the new farm bill authority to address beetle-killed forests is critical. Getting the biogenic emissions rule right, on the largest possible geographic scale, is critical for forests to continue absorbing CO_2 emissions.

I support other energy options to reduce carbon emissions, including reduced energy demand overall and retrofitting nonpowered dams. Whatever rule the EPA proposes under the Clean Air Act for existing power plants, Montana and other States must take the lead role in implementation.

The United States has always led the way with innovative technology, from the first oil wells and nuclear reactors to the first solar cells and hydraulic fracturing. In fact, access to tight natural gas formations in the last decade has already helped lower our carbon-related emissions by 10 percent. Despite the serious challenges imposed by climate change, I am confident that America can innovate solutions while creating good paying jobs and new technology. But as a first step we cannot put our heads in the sand and continue with business as usual. The reason is simple. If we continue with business as usual, the people left with the mess will be the next generation.

The people left taking responsibility for our emissions will be my granddaughter Kennedy and all of our grandchildren. If we don't act now, Kennedy will grow up in a Montana that burns every summer. She won't be able to fly-fish because the rivers are too hot for trout. Kennedy will have to explain to her kids what glaciers were. When I took office, I swore an oath to make the right choice, and I am committed to solving climate change for Kennedy and for future generations.

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. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded, and to speak as in morning business.

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

WRRDA PASSAGE

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Madam President, today the Senate passed the Water Resources Reform and Development Act. It has been too long since Congress last addressed our water infrastructure, and I want to applaud Chairwoman BOXER and Ranking Member VITTER for their diligent work and unswerving commitment to making this bill a reality.

The fact that an infrastructure bill of this magnitude can be passed without earmarks and with a balance of reforms and authorizations for critical projects is a testament to good leadership and a desire by Members of Congress on both sides of the Capitol to better our Nation.

One of the projects this bill advances is crucial to not only my State of Georgia but to the entire country. Passage of this bill, with the enhanced authorization it contains for the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project, will be the culmination of years of work for the State of Georgia and project stakeholders—and my entire time serving in the Georgia congressional delegation.

The idea to expand the Port of Savannah was in its infancy when I first came to Congress in 1994. The Port of Savannah had just been deepened, and we realized then that it was not enough; more and bigger ships were coming in. In 1996 a reconnaissance study was authorized to determine whether the port should be deepened even further. While the need to deepen the channel to accommodate larger ships has been a constant issue, the port itself has been able to operate and grow through its own innovation—Georgia ingenuity at its best. In fact, between 2000 and 2005, the Port of Savannah was recognized as the fastest growing seaport in the country. The port continues to grow and is consistently breaking its own records.

In 2006, the Panama Canal expansion was approved by a national referendum in Panama, officially kicking off the race in Savannah to get this project under construction. The people of Georgia told us this project needed to happen. All levels of the government—local, State, and Federal—from all political persuasions agreed and have given their utmost to this project. It has been my No. 1 economic priority for Georgia the entire time I have been in office.

The WRDA bill in 1999 gave the authorization to expand the port, and while there were cheers all around from those of us in the congressional delegation, little did we know of the tremendous battles yet to come. All the way until the present, every step has been a struggle. We have jumped 15 years of hurdles to bring this project to fruition.

I even recall one instance where we thought we had things taken care of from the standpoint of all the mitigation that needed to be done with the port, which is located on the Savannah River. We then found out there was an endangered species that needed to be

protected because the city of Augusta, which is 136 miles upstream, is also located on the Savannah River. We then had to go back, have another study done, and after months and months we finally came up with a fish ladder project that was to be installed in Augusta, 136 miles north of the Savannah Port, but we got that done.

We still may face more obstacles as we guide this project to completion, but the fact remains that for every $1 invested in the project, the Nation will see a nearly $6 return. For Georgia, the value of SHEP is almost immeasurable. The port already supports some 300,000 jobs across our State, and when post-Panamax vessels start rolling into Savannah, the economic benefits will increase dramatically.

Georgia has always been a great place to do business, and a big reason for that is we have had strong leadership at the State level—leaders who understand that making investments in economic development projects can give great returns.

In this case the Port of Savannah is an epicenter of worldwide commercial traffic. The imports and exports associated with this port expansion mean that jobs will be created not only in my home State but all throughout the country.

Congress has once again agreed with us that SHEP is a vital project for our country. Now that we have completed our work, it is imperative that the administration carry through with its commitments.

The Project Partnership Agreement, which is a document that details the construction plans for a Corps of Engineers project, needs to be finalized and signed immediately. I have complete faith in the ability of the Corps and the Georgia Ports Authority to get that document finished as soon as possible—based on their commitments to me and Senator ISAKSON.

We didn't close the book on this project today, but we did jump forward by several chapters. Ensuring the appropriate language was included in this bill to move SHEP forward and voting today for this bill have been the highlight of my final year in Congress and represent the culmination of years of work by me, Senator ISAKSON, as well as many others.

I want to state my thanks once more to Chairwoman BOXER and Ranking Member VITTER for working with us on this matter. Their tireless efforts have done more for this country and for Georgia than they may realize.

The work of those Senators and their staffs as well as the work of Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member RAHALL and their staffs on the House side will be felt by users of waterways on rivers and lakes, by barge operators, commercial and recreational boaters, by cities, counties, and States, and by everyone in this country who uses and consumes water.

This bill represents the fulfillment of a commitment I made to my constituents to see the harbor deepening through, and I look forward to the day when I am in Savannah and watch a big shovel go underwater to start deepening that port once again.

I suggest the absence of a quorum call.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CHINESE TRADE PRACTICES

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise this afternoon to speak about the impact of this week's announcement that members of China's People's Liberation Army hacked into the computer systems owned by Pennsylvania companies to steal trade secrets on our trade policy.

As we all know, a grand jury in Pittsburgh indicted five individuals for hacking into several companies' computers and a labor organization, United Steelworkers, in western Pennsylvania. The companies included Westinghouse Electric, Alcoa, U.S. Steel and, as I mentioned, the United Steelworkers union. According to reports, the individuals in the indictment are accused of stealing trade secrets to benefit Chinese industry, which is heavily sponsored by the Chinese Government.

This is just the latest example of the unlevel playing field to which our domestic firms are subjected. To give an example, Pennsylvania, as are many areas around the United States, is experiencing an energy renaissance—Pennsylvania natural gas—which stands to greatly benefit the Commonwealth's economy. For the steel industry, it means the opportunity to sell a lot of pipe to natural gas drilling sites. Our foreign competitors also see this opportunity and have responded by aggressively pursuing our market. This competition is expected and would be OK if—if—it was fair. Of course, in this instance it is not.

In fact, our domestic steel industry is facing a new crisis. After successfully beating back unfair competition from the Chinese, our domestic producers are facing a surge of imports from around the globe. According to a recent report by the Economic Policy Institute, domestic steel imports increased by almost 13 percent from 2011 to 2013. Without action, we stand to lose half a million jobs around the United States and some 35,000 in Pennsylvania alone. Just from this action, just from them flooding our markets in a way that is illegal and unfair, half a million jobs could be lost. We can't afford to send these good-paying jobs overseas.

We should act to level the playing field for our domestic steel industry by aggressively enforcing our trade laws and providing essential relief to this critical industry. For too long unfair trade practices and economic policies have cost jobs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and across the country.

I will return now to the recent indictment I mentioned at the outset of my remarks.

This move is further evidence of China's anticompetitive trade practices. What I just said is an understatement. These trade practices have taken a dramatic toll on Pennsylvania businesses and pose a threat to our national security.

The Obama administration has taken steps to crack down on China, but we must also pursue congressional action. We know that currency manipulation continues to take a huge toll on U.S. businesses. Last Congress, the Senate passed a tough bill to help level the playing field for our companies by holding countries that undervalue their currency accountable. The House failed to take up this important bill. We must take action.

I am an original cosponsor of the Currency Exchange Rate Oversight Reform Act of 2013. I call on all Senators to turn our attention to this bill to send a strong message to the Chinese Government that they cannot continue to cheat our companies. When China cheats, we lose jobs. It is that simple. The evidence is overwhelming. Our bipartisan bill will help American manufacturers and workers by clarifying that our trade enforcement laws can and should be used to address currency undervaluation. More broadly, the bill would improve oversight by establishing objective criteria to identify misaligned currencies. Also, it would impose tough consequences for offenders.

I believe strongly that before proceeding with our busy trade agenda, as some might want to do, and passing additional trade agreements or fast-track legislation, we should take a close look at our trade enforcement policies first, including aggressively addressing currency manipulation.

Pennsylvania companies are some of the best in the world, and I am committed to cracking down on unfair trade practices that hurt their ability to compete.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to finish this speech.

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

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about our Nation's first freedom—religious liberty.

Last week a court in Sudan sentenced a woman to death for converting from Islam to Christianity and gave her just days to recant. Sadly, this sort of tragic oppression is common across the globe.

The Pew Research Center says that three-quarters of the world's people live where restrictions on religion are high or very high and that religious hostilities have been increasing for years.

In the last 10 years the number of countries on the Commission on International Religious Freedom's watch list has grown by 150 percent. Simply put, religious freedom is increasingly in peril around the globe.

When compared to the rest of the world, some might think that religious liberty in America is alive and well. But, in truth, basic religious freedom is under attack here at home. Professor Thomas Berg writes that ''establishing freedom of religion as both constitutional principle and social reality is among America's greatest contributions to the world.'' But we have to ask ourselves whether meaningful religious liberty is still such a reality in American society and whether our Nation is still making that essential contribution to a world that needs it now more than ever.

Hundreds of books, studies, papers, articles, and court decisions have explored various aspects, nuances, and implications of religious freedom. In the coming days and weeks, I will explore some of these issues in greater detail. Today I wish to speak about the definition and importance of religious freedom in America as seen both in history and in four important documents.

For 170 years before Thomas Jefferson penned the Declaration of Independence, one religious society after another came to America so that they could live their faith. Puritans, Congregationalists, Roman Catholics, Jews, Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists had all found refuge in the British Colonies by the time the United States was born. Roger Williams founded Rhode Island as a haven for religious dissenters. William Penn established religious liberty in the colony that bears his name.

From its earliest days, religious freedom in America has been freedom not only of belief but also of behavior. In addition to our Nation's early heritage, four key documents establish the same understanding of religious freedom as encompassing both belief and behavior in both private and public spheres.

The first document is the U.S. Constitution. The First Amendment protects the free exercise of religion, a phrase that on its face plainly includes conduct as well as belief. It is a phrase that had been in use for more than a century when America's Founders placed it in the First Amendment. The plain meaning of this phrase, as well as its history, is simply incompatible with the view that our constitutional freedom of religion is limited to the profession of belief and somehow excludes religious conduct.

As Professor Michael McConnell, director of the Constitutional Law Center at Stanford and perhaps America's leading scholar of religious liberty has shown, such an artificial and cramped view is unsupportable. By its own terms our First Amendment protects both religious faith and action.

The second document is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which the United States signed in 1984. Article 18 states that every person has the fundamental ''right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion,'' and that ''this right includes . . . freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.''

Plainly stated, religious liberty by its very nature encompasses both belief and behavior. In articulating broad principles of basic human rights, the authors of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights acknowledge that it is meaningless to have one without the other.

The third document is the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. In 1990, the U.S. Supreme Court held that government needs only a rational basis for laws that burden but do not target the free exercise of religion. That decision changed decades of Supreme Court precedent that had required a compelling reason for laws that burden the exercise of religion.

This shift was not just some legalistic or semantic exercise. If government needs only a rational justification for burdening the exercise of religion, it could do so essentially at will, but if government must have a compelling reason, it must respect the fundamental liberty and may burden it only when absolutely necessary.

By shifting from one standard to the other, the Supreme Court made it dramatically easier for government to burden the free exercise of religion. Congress responded to the Supreme Court's decision with the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, or RFRA, which established the compelling standard. It passed the House unanimously by voice vote and the Senate by a vote of 97 to 3.

I was the primary Republican cosponsor of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in the Senate. In all of our discussions about RFRA, both Democrats and Republicans were united on one fundamental principle, the right of all Americans to the free exercise of religion should be equally protected.

I remember when I went to Ted Kennedy, I said: You are going to be on this bill with me.

He said: No, I am not.

I said: Yes, you are.

To his credit, he came on the bill. By the time we articulated on the floor and afterward when it was signed by President Clinton at the White House, on the White House south lawn, one of the biggest boosters was my friend Ted Kennedy.

The fact is I will make that point again. As the primary sponsor of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act in the Senate, in all of our discussions about RFRA, both Democrats and Republicans were united on one fundamental principle: the right of all Americans to the free exercise of religion should be equally protected.

Each religious claim should be judged by the same standard as every other, a standard that reflects the true importance of religious freedom. We rejected amendments that would have excluded some religious claims or favored others.

In October 1993 I spoke in favor of RFRA on the Senate floor, explaining that the bill would restore to all Americans protections of the free exercise of their religious conviction. In fact, I stated directly that exempting anyone from the basic principle of free exercise would set a dangerous precedent.

The fourth and final document is the International Religious Freedom Act enacted in 1998. The House passed it by an overwhelming bipartisan majority. The Senate followed suit by a vote of 98 to 0. This law established the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, and declared that ''the right to freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States.''

It cited the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reaffirmed yet again that religious freedom necessarily includes both belief and practice, individually or collectively, in public or in private. As the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom has explained, by its very nature religious liberty is ''a broad, inclusive right, sweeping in scope, embracing the full range of thought, belief, and behavior.''

It is central to human identity and dignity. It is essential to individual and social well-being. It is beneficial to political, economic, and civic life. Religious freedom is a fundamental constitutional liberty as well as a universal human right.

In America religious liberty has always included both the freedom to believe and the freedom to act on that belief, the protection to do so collectively as well as individually, and the right to do so publicly as well as privately. Those basic tenets form the only proper standard by which to assess the state of religious freedom in America today.

Unfortunately, there is much cause for concern. Let me share a few disturbing examples. The equal and universal application of religious liberty is now in doubt. Congress was united when enacting the Religious Freedom Restoration Act that the right to exercise religion freely belongs to everyone and should be protected by the same rigorous standard in each case.

When balanced against important government interests, some religious claims would win and others would lose, but a rigorous legal standard that

creates a high hurdle for government action that burdens religion must be applied universally, since the free exercise of religion is a fundamental right of all Americans.

That conviction, however, is unraveling. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII of that landmark law prohibits workplace discrimination based on religion and requires that employers reasonably accommodate the religious practices of employees. The Supreme Court, however, interpreted the ''reasonably'' so broadly that the exception swallowed the rule and workers have been without this legal protection ever since.

Legislation called the Workplace Religious Freedom Act was introduced to reestablish legal protection and accommodation for religious workers. Originally, it applied this protection to all religious claims, just as RFRA required. It would balance the right to religious exercise with the legitimate needs of employers, but the most recent version of this legislation introduced in the 112th Congress abandoned universal applicability and instead would protect some religious claims but not others.

Rather than allowing religious claims of all varieties to stand or fall under the same standard, some claims were covered and others were excluded from that standard altogether. This is not the only example of religious liberty under attack. Among its many other maladies, ObamaCare likewise struck a blow to the free religious exercise of religion.

Although President Obama has called religious freedom a universal human right, his administration apparently paid that fundamental liberty no regard when drafting ObamaCare. Likewise, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act plainly states that its basic religious protections apply to every future Federal statute. Yet the Obama administration gave no consideration whatsoever to such religious freedom in formulating the President's signature law, ObamaCare.

As a result, dozens of lawsuits have challenged ObamaCare's requirement that employers provided no-cost health insurance coverage for abortifacient drugs and devices as a violation of RFRA's plain protections. Two of those cases are before the Supreme Court, one from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit and one from the Third Circuit.

In the face of its clearly universal requirement, the Obama administration nevertheless argued that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act does not apply to these plaintiffs. Despite the statute's plain text, Obama officials insist that the law does not apply to all cases after all. One step at a time, they seek to exclude classes of citizens from the basic protections of religious liberty.

My final two examples involve recent Supreme Court decisions. In Hosanna-Tabor v. EEOC, the Supreme Court unanimously held that the First Amendment's protection for the free exercise of religion allows a church to choose its own ministers. The Obama administration argued instead that civil rights statutes trump the Constitution and allow judges to dictate to churches who may serve as ministers.

In fact, as the Supreme Court described it, Obama administration lawyers were so dismissive of religious freedom that they argued churches were no different in this regard than labor unions or social clubs. Can you imagine that? To the Obama administration, the First Amendment and its protection for the free exercise of religion apparently offers no real protection at all. Thankfully, the Supreme Court responded this way: ''We cannot accept the remarkable view that the Religion Clauses have nothing to say about a religious organization's freedom to select its own ministers.''

Finally, just 2 weeks ago, the Supreme Court held that allowing citizens to offer a prayer of their choice to open a town meeting is not an establishment of religion, but four Justices joined a dissenting opinion arguing that only certain prayers, using certain language, in a certain pattern, would achieve a certain level of diversity and therefore be permissible. Four Justices actually believe Federal judges may dictate the content and presentation of prayers offered by private citizens.

I can offer many more examples of how our Nation's cherished religious freedom is under attack, with forces seeking to limit, regulate, manipulate, and undermine the most basic natural and constitutional rights we possess.

I mentioned at the outset that three-quarters of the world's population lives under substantial religious restriction. Here at home, the same percentage of Americans believes that religion is losing its influence in American life. Liberal politicians, secular activists, and even some judges are seeking to reduce religion to what Justice Antonin Scalia described as ''a purely personal avocation that can be indulged entirely in secret, like pornography, in the privacy of one's room.''

It is no wonder that nearly one-quarter of Americans say religious freedom is more threatened than any other First Amendment freedom. These recent efforts mark a radical departure from the religious freedom that took root in our colonial experience, was nourished by the Declaration of Independence, earned a primary place among our constitutional liberties, and has been generously applied by generations of Americans.

The notion that religious freedom belongs only to some, even then only in private, stands in direct opposition to our traditions, our laws, and our beloved Constitution. Some peoples throughout the world may be bound by oppressive governments that strictly regulate who may express their religious faith, when they may practice the tenets of their faith, and where they may act according to their religious convictions.

But that is not America's heritage, and it must not be our future. Instead, America must once again be a beacon of religious freedom for all—protecting rights of conscience at home and promoting religious liberty throughout the world—and I expect it to be that.

I am hopeful our courts will come to their senses—the ones that aren't there—and realize this was listed as the first freedom in the Bill of Rights for a very good reason; that is, because our Founding Fathers knew how important religion is to a nation that wants to be free.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. There have been a number of inquiries and statements made today, one by the Chamber of Commerce, saying the reason that Stanley Fischer, the Vice Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, hasn't been done is because of me. Try that one on for size.

That is what happens around here. Here is a man who has been approved with a very strong vote, a strong vote, bipartisan vote, to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. He is eminently qualified, nationally and internationally. You can't become vice chair until you become a member of the board.

Janet Yellen has called, the Chairman of the Federal Reserve, and said: It would really be important. He has administrative duties that we need his help with.

So I have made inquiry with my Republican colleagues: Why don't we do him? We have already approved him. But we have a situation around here where no one gets approved. We will eat up time, this will take hours—wasted time—and then we will approve him. In the meantime, all we do is eat up the taxpayers' time.

Anyway, without further dialog from me, I would simply say that the Chamber of Commerce and others should understand every person on this side of the aisle would approve him in a second. I would do it by unanimous consent. I would have a vote as soon as we can, which, without having filed cloture, wouldn't be until we get back a week from Monday.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—CALENDAR NO. 767

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 767, the nomination of Stanley Fischer

to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System for a term of 4 years; that the nomination be confirmed, the motion 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 nomination; that any related statements be printed in the Record; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator PAUL, I will have to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. May the RECORD be spread that HARRY REID, who is being blamed for this nomination not being put forward, is not at fault. I don't mind taking the fall for some things—and I probably have deserved a few things—but not this.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I note for the record that I support Mr. Fischer for this position, but there is a legitimate objection by a Senator on our side that I had to advance. I hope we can resolve these problems, but I appreciate the distinguished majority leader's attempt to do this today.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). Without objection, it is so ordered.

THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, I want to tell my colleagues a story about Charlene Dill.

On March 21 Charlene Dill was supposed to bring her three children over to the South Orlando home of her best friend Kathleen. The two friends had cultivated a really close relationship since 2008. They shared every resource they had from debit card pins to transportation to babysitting to house keys. They helped one another out. They essentially had become each other's safety net.

As Kathleen described it, they hustled. They picked up short-term work. They went to every event they could get free tickets to for their kids. They lived the high life on the lowdown. They cleaned houses for friends just so they could afford the daily necessities of life. They were the quintessential working poor, and they existed in the shadows of this economic recovery that is yet to reach a lot of average people out there.

On March 21, when Dill never showed up with her three kids, who often came over to play with Kathleen's 9-year-old daughter, Kathleen was surprised she didn't even get a phone call from her friend Charlene. She shot her a text message—something along the lines of ''thanks for ditching me''—without knowing what had really happened.

Charlene, who was estranged from her husband, had been raising her 3 children alone—ages, 3, 7, and 9. She had picked up another odd job to try to pay the bills. She was selling vacuums on commission for Rainbow Vacuums.

On that day, in order to make enough money to survive and—as you will understand—keep herself alive, she made two last-minute appointments. At one of those appointments in Kissimmee, she collapsed and died on a stranger's floor.

Charlene had a documented heart condition for which she took medication, but she often could not afford the medication, and her friend Kathleen often had to turn to crowd-funding Web sites to help raise the money that her friend Charlene needed to pay for her heart medication. Charlene was the working poor, but she was also among the uninsured. After her death, her friend Kathleen used that same crowd-funding method that she used to occasionally pay for her friend's medication to pay for Charlene's funeral.

Florida has made the decision not to expand Medicaid coverage under the Affordable Care Act. They have made a decision—for political reasons—to keep hundreds of thousands of people such as Charlene among the ranks of the uninsured. The consequences are for many such as Charlene absolutely deadly.

Charlene died because she was on the outside of our health care system. Occasionally she would get to see a doctor and occasionally she would get the medication she needed for her condition—in part—because she had one good friend who went out of her way to try to help Charlene.

The reality is that there are 5.7 million people all across this country who have been denied the chance to get health care through Medicaid simply because their Governors or their State legislatures have decided to score a political point against a President whom they don't like by refusing Federal dollars in order to expand Medicaid, and that is what this is all about. This is not about good policy, this is not about health care, and this certainly is not about finances. This is just about a bunch of really angry Republicans that don't want to participate in a health care reform law passed by Democrats even though they are essentially giving away the money of their constituents.

The first reason you should do this is because it keeps people such as Charlene alive. A 2002 Harvard study of 3 States that expanded Medicaid—Arizona, Maine, and New York—showed that the expansion of Medicaid in those States was responsible for a 6-percent reduction in mortality as compared to other States. It found that for every 500,000 adults that gained Medicaid coverage, we prevent 3,000 deaths a year.

I am not really good with quick math, but that is 3,000 deaths prevented for 500,000 people covered by Medicaid. We are talking about 5.7 million adults that are being denied Medicaid because of these political decisions; that is a lot of people who are dying needlessly every year. That is the first reason you should do it, because it is the right and compassionate thing to do.

The second reason you should do it is because people in States such as Virginia or Texas—there are 1.2 million people in Texas alone. There are 1.2 million people who could have health care insurance but don't have health insurance in one State because the Governor and legislature don't like President Obama.

This is also about those constituents essentially giving their money away to other States. The message to people in States such as Florida, Virginia, and Texas is that you are funding people getting insurance in other States because the Federal Government is contributing almost the entire cost of this Medicaid expansion. Texas and Florida's dollars are going to Washington and being spent to subsidize the health care of somebody else. It does not make any sense from a health care standpoint and it certainly doesn't make any sense from a fiscal standpoint. It is not just the taxpayers and patients who are getting hurt, but it is all the health care providers as well.

An Urban Institute study found that hospitals across the country are being denied $294 billion because of this refusal to expand Medicaid. The Presiding Officer knows this because she has worked in and around health care policy her entire life. This idea that denying people health care insurance denies them health care is patently false. They get health care. They just don't get it until they are so sick they show up at the emergency room door and their condition is at a crisis point, and then that costs infinitely more. All of this money we are spending could be spent in a different place, such as on preventive care, instead of on crisis care.

With a new Secretary of HHS, there is an opportunity for these States to think differently. From the beginning, HHS has been incredibly willing to be flexible with Governors who are not quite sure of the politics of joining in the ACA but know it is the right thing to do. States such as Arkansas, Iowa, and Pennsylvania have come up with innovative programs in which they take the Medicaid expansion dollars and instead of using them to expand State-based Medicaid, they use those

dollars to help people buy private coverage. It seems to make a lot of sense to me.

At her confirmation hearing, Ms. Burwell said she was willing to continue to be as flexible as she possibly could with States that want to explore these innovative methods. Hopefully, with a new Secretary coming through the doors at HHS, maybe this is a new moment for these States to take another look at Medicaid expansion because this is just a matter of conscience.

Madam President, 5.7 million people are going without health care and potentially dying, as Charlene Dill did, simply because of politics.

David from Virginia wrote:

I am the coverage gap. I am a single 41-year-old male. I save Medicaid thousands of dollars per month by caring for my 99-year-old grandmother at home without pay, rather than place her in a nursing home at Medicaid's expense. I do not qualify for Medicaid even though I have a zero income. I have to cross the state line, into Kentucky to receive potentially lifesaving cancer screenings and hopefully receive treatment if I get bad news. Virginia Republicans hate the president and governor so much, they are willing to let thousands of us die. It is high time that these delegates place human lives ahead of party politics and do what is right, for a change!

Eight million people have signed up through the exchanges. Despite these decisions by Governors and Republican State legislatures, 5 to 6 million more have been added to Medicaid, and 3 million young adults have coverage for the first time.

Prices to the Federal Government are falling. We are spending trillions less than we thought we would spend on health care because of the Affordable Care Act. Quality is increasing. The number of readmissions to hospitals and hospital-acquired infections are decreasing because we are starting to pay for outcomes instead of paying for performance.

People are figuring out that the Affordable Care Act works, and that is why there are fewer Republicans coming to the floor of the Senate and the House complaining about it, and that is why the Koch brothers and others have stopped running all of these ads about the Affordable Care Act.

The Affordable Care Act works, but it only works if leaders actually try to implement it. It doesn't work if you ignore it for political spite, and that is what is happening in State legislatures and Governors' mansions all across the country.

We have a new Secretary of HHS and a new willingness of a lot of Republican Governors, including Mike Pence in Indiana, to take a look at trying to reverse this reality for 5½ million people who—if not for the political actions of their State leaders—could also figure out, as millions and millions of others are doing on a daily basis across the country, that the Affordable Care Act works.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. 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. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor after having just heard my friend and colleague from Connecticut talk about the health care law. As a doctor, I am always happy to hear about people who are getting better care. My concern is that there are so many people across this country who have been hurt as a result of this health care law that I feel compelled to speak about so many of the side effects of the President's health care law and families who are seeing the government waste massive amounts of money that is not going for care. It is not helping people actually get better. It is not giving them the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs, which is what the President promised when he said premiums would drop by $2,500.

I heard the President, as well as my colleague here today, say that this law will help keep people out of emergency rooms and they will go to primary care doctors instead. So I feel compelled to come to the floor to share with my colleagues a study that just came out on Wednesday, and perhaps some Members of the Senate who weren't aware of it will be made aware that the emergency room visits actually have been going up, not down, despite the law. This was the headline in the Wall Street Journal this past Wednesday, May 21: ''ER Visits Rise Despite Law. Health Act Isn't Cutting Volume.''

I will point out a couple of things mentioned in this article. It starts off:

Early evidence suggests that emergency rooms have become busier since the Affordable Care Act expanded insurance coverage this year, despite the law's goal of reducing unnecessary care in ERs.

My colleague said emergency rooms aren't going to be needed as much. Well, despite the law's goal of reducing unnecessary care in ERs, what we see is an expensive side effect of the President's health care law.

It goes on to say:

Democrats who designed the 2010 health law hoped it would do the opposite. They wanted to give the uninsured better access to primary-care doctors who could treat routine ailments and prevent chronic diseases, with the intent of keeping patients out of the ER. The median ER charge was more than $1,200 for the most frequent outpatient diagnoses in a study of over 8,000 ER visits in the years 2006–08, said a 2013 report funded in part by the National Institutes of Health.

This is a report by the NIH.

Instead, the ER doctor group's research and several other recent studies suggest that people who gain private insurance are more likely to seek emergency care.

Not more likely to go to a family physician, not more likely to go to their own internist or pediatrician; more likely to go to the emergency room—the most expensive place for care—despite what the President told the American people.

Among the reasons is that a shortage of primary-care providers in some regions has made it difficult for patients to get appointments.

So why is there a shortage? Well, if the President's health care law actually focused on training physicians, putting money into educating and training more providers, instead of putting all of this money into hiring IRS agents to examine Americans' tax returns to make sure they check the box that says they have insurance and can provide proof of that, perhaps we wouldn't have these problems. But now we are seeing a very expensive side effect of the President's health care law.

While we can celebrate people who are helped by the law, there are so many people being hurt by the law in every State around this great country. We heard about a family from Connecticut who has benefited from the law. There are many who have been hurt.

There is a couple in Sharon, CT, according to NBC Connecticut. They were dropped, according to the headline, from their health care plan. It says:

A Sharon couple says they are running out of options after being dropped from their ObamaCare insurance plan. John and Dawn DiMarco signed up for an Affordable Care Act plan through the state health insurance exchange during open enrollment. They received their insurance card and were covered but their bill was thousands of dollars more than advertised.

What could happen there?

It says:

They spent weeks going back and forth with various State agencies and the insurance company to try to get answers.

This is dated May 13 of this year.

Then, this month, their carrier, Anthem BlueCross BlueShield, sent them a cancellation notice. The DiMarcos have been so frustrated with trying to get answers that they posted a sign outside their home that reads—

This is in Connecticut—

''We have no insurance because Access Health has a computer glitch.''

It's stressful, says Mr. DiMarco. It's overwhelming.

So why did this happen?

Well, NBC Connecticut contacted Access Health Connecticut, and they told them that it had to do with a computer issue with a vendor, and when this gentleman went back to change information during the enrollment process, a new form was sent to the insurance company, but that form didn't include the couple's subsidy. So the form paperwork was wrong.

How could this happen? Is it just this one DiMarco couple whom this has

happened to in Connecticut? Not according to a front-page story in the Washington Post the other day. The headline is ''Federal health-care subsidies may be too high or too low for more than 1 Million Americans''—paying incorrect subsidies to more than 1 million Americans for their health plans, and the government has been unable so far to fix the errors.

The President of the United States goes on TV and says to the Democrats: Forcefully defend and be proud.

Who in America can be proud of the mess the President and his administration have made of the Web site and this health care bill? Once again, we see, as the Washington Post points out, important aspects of the Web site remain defective. They cannot fix this. Actually, I am not even sure how hard they are trying. People have been sending in paperwork. They are expecting, perhaps, by the end of the summer to be able to address the problem that there are 1 million Americans whose Federal health care subsidies may be either too high or too low.

''Forcefully defend and be proud.'' Where are they? Where are these defenders? It is sad because the idea is this is to actually help people get care. What people have gotten is headaches and heartaches and one problem after another.

It is also interesting, as a doctor who has been very involved with preventive care and working on early detection of problems and as somebody who has been the medical director of the Wyoming health fairs—I think it is important to screen people for problems. It is interesting. The New York Times even reported in an article written on April 30 on the problem with the health care law that it favors screening over diagnosis. So here is one of the issues that come into play.

My wife is a breast cancer survivor. She has been through three operations, chemotherapy twice, radiation, the whole thing. She is now cancer free. We are delighted. So I think screening tests are important. But this is the problem with this law that I believe very few Democrats read—very few of the people who voted for it read. I believe that about Members of the House and Members of the Senate. I read it cover to cover, but I believe many Members who voted for it never read it.

They say: Diagnosis is what we offer to those who have no signs or symptoms of disease. Because diagnosis isn't prevention, it is subject to deductibles and copays.

So if somebody actually has a diagnosis of something, there are deductibles and copays, but if it is just a screening test, no signs or symptoms, then it is covered.

The New York Times goes on:

> In other words: A woman over 40 can have a free screening mammogram.

She shows up and says: I want a free screening mammogram. But if she notices a breast lump and goes to her doctor to have it evaluated, well, then it is not a screening mammogram. Then it is not a free test. So she will pay for the diagnostic mammogram that costs $300.

This goes on:

> So the woman at lower risk for cancer—the one with no signs or symptoms of the disease—has an incentive to be tested, while the woman at higher risk—the one with the lump—faces a disincentive.

So she goes to the doctor. This goes on and says that the problem is they are now pressuring doctors to fraudulently change the paperwork so it complies with the screening test and not a diagnostic test. Doctors don't want to do that because they want to be honest. Yet the incentives set up in this program are to discourage the woman who finds a lump from actually going in to have the test, while encouraging somebody off the street to go in and have a similar test. It is a great concern.

So when I see a colleague come to the floor to say that the health care law, in his opinion, works—I will tell my colleagues, this is an Associated Press story that says: ''Consumers frustrated by new health plans as they find their doctors are not included.'' They can't go to their doctor.

This is a story out of California. Michelle Pool is one of those customers. Before enrolling in a new health plan on California's exchange, she checked whether her longtime primary care doctor was covered. This woman, Michelle Pool—60 years of age, a diabetic; she has had back surgery and a hip replacement—purchased the plan only to find that the insurer was mistaken; the doctor wasn't included. So her $352-a-month gold plan, she said, was cheaper than what she had paid under her husband's insurance and it seemed like a good deal because of her numerous preexisting conditions.

I understand preexisting conditions as the husband of a woman who has been through breast cancer treatment. This goes on to say:

> But after her insurance card came in the mail, the Vista, California resident learned her doctor wasn't taking her new insurance.

It goes on to say, quoting this woman:

> ''It's not fun when you've had a doctor for years and years that you can confide in and he knows you,'' Pool said. ''I'm extremely discouraged. I'm stuck.''

This is an American who is stuck and hurt by the health care law. It goes on to say:

> The dilemma undercuts President Obama's—

This is an Associated Press article—

> The dilemma undercuts President Obama's 2009 pledge that: ''If you like your doctor, you will be able to keep your doctor, period.''

The President said: ''period.'' But one of the side effects of the President's health care law is that people are continuing to lose their doctors.

It goes on to say:

> Consumer frustration over losing doctors comes as the Obama administration is still celebrating a victory with more than 8 million enrollees in its first year.

There are astronomical concerns that people across the country are expressing about this health care law. And yet—and yet—we see one Member of the other party coming to the floor and saying: Oh, it is working.

The American people do not believe it is.

People get insurance through work. The laws are interesting. This is a story from Ohio about the cost because that is what really people were concerned about when we wanted to do health care reform; it was to say let's get the cost down. The President promised families would see a $2,500 reduction in the cost of their insurance policies in a year once all of this was implemented. But one of the side effects is actually higher premiums. This article talks about a man who owns a popular brew pub in Cleveland. He has fewer than 50 full-time employees. So he is classified under the health care law as a small business, which means he does not actually have to provide health insurance to his employees. But he has been doing so. He has been doing so since he opened this pub a number of years ago, and he has done it in spite of some fairly significant jumps in the cost of the insurance.

He said: ''They just seemed to keep going up every year.''

He opened this pub in 2009. One year he got an increase of 38 percent; another it was 11 percent.

The article says: ''This year, under the Affordable Care Act, he saw another hike—this one about 20 percent.'' So he is seeing higher premiums. He said: ''It just seems odd that we get such a drastic price increase when nothing has really changed with us as far as our employees and health issues.''

> Most of the workers at [his place] are in their 20s and 30s. They are healthy, enthusiastic about their jobs. . . .

They like the fact that they get insurance, but they are getting priced out of the market. That is the concern about this: the health care law is making premiums go up.

From today, Thursday, May 22, The Hill newspaper, right here in Washington, DC: ''Premium hike drumbeat before Nov. Election Day.''

People continue to be shocked by the increases in the cost of their insurance, and they are going to go up again across the country. There are a number of reasons for that. We have seen it in North Carolina, where I expect this is going to be discussed and debated over the next months.

> Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. . . .

This comes from the Herald-Sun in North Carolina: ObamaCare enrollees older, sicker than insurer forecast—older and sicker than what the President told—actually it was not the President; it was Kathleen Sebelius, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, when she described what she

thought success would look like in terms of the number of young healthy people who would sign up. It says:

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina officials said—

This is dated May 8—

. . . that they found that the people who enrolled in the individual Affordable Care Act plans it sold on the online health exchanges were older and sicker than expected. That may mean higher rates—

Higher premiums—

for Affordable Care Act plans in the future. . . .

The insurer's vice president of health policy said: ''[It's] a concern when we think about future premiums.''

They have great concerns about the amount things are going to go up. That is not what people want. People wanted affordable care. They wanted access to care. They wanted to get the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower cost. What they see is waste—money not going to help people get care, but money being wasted.

I found it interesting coming out of Missouri, a story about how an ObamaCare contractor pays employees to spend their days doing nothing—doing nothing—paying their employees to do nothing.

''A billion dollar government contract involving hundreds of local workers at an ObamaCare processing center. . . . ''

So these are people hired by the government or a contractor to work at an ObamaCare processing center—hundreds of local workers.

''But now employees on the inside are stepping forward, asking, Is this why we're broke? Some of them claim to spend most of their day doing nothing,''. . . .

This is reported in St. Louis.

The contractor is called Serco and local reporters discovered that, despite there not being any work to be done, the government contractor is still hiring.

Why would they be hiring? Because they get a percent of the action. That is why they are hiring. They are hiring people to not do anything, to take the paycheck. The article continues:

''The company is still hiring,'' says a local reporter. ''A current employee wonders why. . . . After providing proof of employment, this . . . employee agreed to speak through the phone with their voice altered. The employee says hundreds of employees spend much of the day staring at computer screens, with little or no work to do.''

The reporter asks the employee, ''Are there some days where a data entry person may not process a single application?''

Not a single application? The person who works there said: ''There are weeks''—weeks—''when a data entry person would not process an application.''

The anonymous employee says the contract gets paid by the federal government per employee hired.

That is why they are continuing to hire—because the company gets paid by the Federal Government per employee hired, which is why it is in their interest to have a bunch of employees sitting around all day doing nothing.

So I have to feel an obligation, when I hear a statement on the floor being made that says: Well, a lot fewer people are going to go to the emergency room; it is going to save money—that has not happened. Studies from emergency room doctors, work from the NIH said it is not happening. The exact opposite has happened—a side effect of the health care law, when we see that people are not able to keep their doctors, in spite of the President promising people that if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor. I feel compelled to come to the floor and share that story with those of us who care about care for patients, who care about finding a way to make sure patients get the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower cost. That is what people want. They know what they want. They want access to care. They want affordable care. They want care, they want choices, and they want quality care.

I believe this health care law is turning out to be bad for patients, bad for providers—the doctors, the nurses, the paramedics, the nurse practitioners—who take care of those patients, and terrible for the taxpayers when we hear stories like this one out of Missouri, which says the employees are being paid to sit around and do nothing, when we hear there are a million people who are just waiting to try to get the government to correct something that should have been fixed in the beginning, when the President, 4 days before the Web site opened up in October, said: easier to use than Amazon, cheaper than your cell phone; keep your doctor if you like your doctor—there was so much misleading of the American public—and then when he says stand and forcefully defend and be proud of this health care law.

I think it is very hard to defend what the President and the Democrats have forced down the throats of the American public, and it is very hard to be proud of the kind of abuse and waste in a system that—whatever the intentions—has proven to the American public to be something they do not want, that they want to have replaced with an opportunity to have access, affordability, choice, and quality. By adopting proposals in a step-by-step fashion that Republicans have been promoting—to deal with those sorts of things of access, affordability, choice, and quality—we can try to ultimately get the American public what they need and what they asked for in the beginning: the care they need from a doctor they choose at lower costs.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF KEITH M. HARPER FOR THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR DURING HIS TENURE OF SERVICE AS UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE TO THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 633.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Keith M. Harper, of Maryland, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Representative to the U.N. Human Rights Council.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, there is a cloture motion at the desk on this matter.

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

The 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 nomination of Keith M. Harper, of Maryland, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as United States Representative to the UN Human Rights Council.

Harry Reid, Robert Menendez, Patrick J. Leahy, Elizabeth Warren, Barbara A. Mikulski, Jack Reed, Richard Blumenthal, Carl Levin, Christopher Murphy, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Sheldon Whitehouse, Patty Murray, Thomas R. Carper, John D. Rockefeller IV, Jeff Merkley, Richard J. Durbin, Benjamin L. Cardin.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF SHARON Y. BOWEN TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 755.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sharon Y. Bowen, of New York, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for a term expiring April 13, 2018.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The 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 nomination of Sharon Y. Bowen, of New York, to be a Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Harry Reid, Debbie Stabenow, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Michael F. Bennet, Benjamin L. Cardin, Ron Wyden, Joe Donnelly, Christopher A. Coons, Mark Begich, Tim Kaine, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Patrick J. Leahy, Tom Harkin, Angus S. King, Jr., Amy Klobuchar.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF MARK G. MASTROIANNI TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 691.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Mark G. Mastroianni, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

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

The 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 nomination of Mark G. Mastroianni, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Masssachusetts.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Al Franken, Barbara Boxer, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Carl Levin, Bill Nelson, Amy Klobuchar, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Elizabeth Warren, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie K. Hirono, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF BRUCE HOWE HENDRICKS TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 692.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Bruce Howe Hendricks, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. There is a cloture motion at the desk on file with the clerk.

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

The 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 nomination of Bruce Howe Hendricks, of South Carolina, to be United States District Judge for the District of South Carolina.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Al Franken, Barbara Boxer, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Carl Levin, Bill Nelson, Amy Klobuchar, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Elizabeth Warren, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie K. Hirono, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF TANYA S. CHUTKAN TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 733.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Tanya S. Chutkan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, there is a cloture motion filed at the desk. I ask that it be reported.

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

The 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 nomination of Tanya S. Chutkan, of the District of Columbia, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Al Franken, Barbara Boxer, Christopher A. Coons, Richard J. Durbin, Sherrod Brown, Richard Blumenthal, Carl Levin, Bill Nelson, Amy Klobuchar, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Elizabeth Warren, Sheldon Whitehouse, Mazie K. Hirono, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF SYLVIA MATHEWS BURWELL TO BE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 798.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sylvia Mathews Burwell, of West Virginia, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. There is a cloture motion on file at the desk and I ask that it be reported.

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

The 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 nomination of Sylvia Mathews Burwell, of West Virginia, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Harry Reid, Ron Wyden, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Barbara Boxer, Michael F. Bennet, Debbie Stabenow, Benjamin L. Cardin, Mary Landrieu, Mark Begich, Joe Donnelly, Tim Kaine, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Sherrod Brown, Patrick J. Leahy, Tom Harkin, Angus S. King, Jr.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. I now move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

RECOGNIZING REMOTE ACCESS MEDICAL

Mr. REID. Madam President, fans of the popular reality television series ''Wild Kingdom'' may recall watching Stan Brock wrestle giant anacondas in the Amazon and corral wildebeests in the Serengeti, but for the past three decades, he has been engaged in a very different kind of struggle. In 1985, he founded a nonprofit organization known as Remote Area Medical, RAM, with the stated goal of ''addressing the needless pain and suffering caused by the lack of healthcare in impoverished, underserved, and isolated areas.'' Since its inception, RAM has hosted 724 free medical events in which over 80,000 volunteers have delivered $75 million in free medical, dental and vision care. It is not uncommon for patients to travel hundreds of miles to attend one of these events or to sleep in their cars while they wait for the free clinics to open.

Last month, I had the opportunity to witness RAM in action when they held a 3-day medical event at Hug High School in Reno, NV. In the short time I was there, I saw hundreds of Nevadans filter through the clinic to receive much needed dental work, vaccinations, eye exams, free glasses, mental health screenings, and general medical work ups—all with short waits and at no cost to the patients. The patients attending the clinic were so grateful to finally receive a much needed x ray, pair of glasses, and many other services. I spoke with many of the volunteers—doctors, nurses, dentists—and they were all thrilled to be a part something so meaningful that fills a void for individuals who have no other way to access some of these critical services. A similar scene played out in Las Vegas earlier in the month, where RAM held a 2-day event at Bonanza High School. In total, the RAM team of 597 volunteers served 1,712 patients and provided almost one-half million dollars in care during their two expeditions in Nevada last month.

RAM was able to bring these events to Nevada because it is one of only a few States that allows licensed medical professionals from other States to volunteer at free medical services events. I have witnessed firsthand the value of these events—both for the patients they serve and for those volunteers who want to find a way to donate their professional expertise in a meaningful way. That is why I am convinced that we need Federal legislation that will allow medical practitioners to cross State lines to provide free volunteer care. Senator BOXER has been working to craft such legislation, and I look forward to supporting her in this effort.

Stan Brock's work has been exemplary. Through his efforts, hundreds of thousands of people in need of have received proper healthcare—some for the first time in their lives. My own appreciation for RAM was cemented as I personally witnessed this noble work. Watching Stan and his team work together to help so many unfortunate Nevadans was a moving experience for me. I thank Stan Brock, RAM, and all of the selfless volunteers for giving so much of themselves to those with so little.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I come to the floor today in recognition of the approaching Memorial Day holiday to express my deepest gratitude, respect, and appreciation for the men and women of our Armed Forces and for our veterans. In order to commemorate our vets, the first bill to be marked up and passed out of my Appropriations Committee was the Fiscal Year 2015 Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies bill. I wanted to make sure that there is no question in anyone's mind that veterans are my No. 1 priority.

As the chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I have put money in the Federal checkbook to improve the veterans health care system so that wounded and disabled warriors get the care and benefits they need. I have worked to ensure veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD, or a traumatic brain injury, TBI, receive better diagnosis and treatment through the Defense Department and the VA.

In the bill that passed out of my committee today, we established even more checks on the VA by including an additional $5 million to investigate the wait time practices at all VA medical treatment facilities nationwide. Our committee must invoke even more oversight to ensure that the tragedy that occurred at the Phoenix, AZ VA hospital is not repeated again in other hospitals. The greatest power my committee has is holding the VA accountable by closing the purse strings of their budget. One way we are doing this is by restricting performance bonuses for medical directors, assistant directors, and senior executive services staff until after the inspector general completes its audit on wait times at nationwide veterans treatment facilities. We need to continue to ensure that the VA is being held accountable. That is why I, along with a number of my colleagues, sent a letter to President Obama demanding an investigation by the VA's IG to evaluate the secret lists being kept at the Phoenix VA hospital.

I have also led the charge to reduce the backlog in processing veterans' disability claims. I brought Secretary Shinseki to Baltimore to create a sense of urgency to end the backlog by 2015. I used my power as chairwoman of the Appropriations Committee to convene a hearing with the top brass in the military, VA, and members of the committee to identify challenges and get moving on solutions. I cut across agencies to break down smokestacks and developed a 10-point Checklist for Change enacted as part of the fiscal year 2014 Omnibus appropriations bill. This plan includes better funding, better technology, better training, and better oversight of the VA.

I believe we must keep the promises we have made to our veterans. We can do this by giving them the same quality of service they gave us and by providing them with the care they deserve.

We made a sacred commitment to honor those who served by giving them the benefits they have earned. I will continue to fight for better benefits and treatment for our vets. And I am committed to holding the VA accountable through the powers provided to me through the Appropriations Committee.

MEMORIAL DAY

Mr. COCHRAN. Madam President, on Memorial Day 2014, I will join a grateful nation in paying homage to the men and women of our Armed Forces

who have given their lives to defend this Nation.

The people of Mississippi are proud and supportive of those in military service. On Memorial Day, citizens all across our State will join other Americans to remember, honor, and say a prayer of thanksgiving for those who gave their lives in service to their country. We will also remember and comfort their families, who mourn the loss of loved ones. We will enjoy the fellowship of our friends and neighbors with whom we enjoy the liberty that has been so preciously guarded by the fallen.

The national day of commemoration that we observe today evolved from a practice first started in the aftermath of the Civil War. In April 1866, citizens of Columbus, MS, started what became Decoration Day, time set aside to decorate the graves of Confederate and Union soldiers alike. That tradition of honoring all those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice continues to this day. It is the right thing to do.

While we naturally look back to battles now consigned to history, we will also honor those brave men and women who, in more recent times, have died for their country. This Memorial Day 2014, my State will remember Army SPC Terry K.D. Gordon of Shubuta, MS, who lost his life in a helicopter accident in Now Bahar, Afghanistan, on December 18, 2013. We will mourn his loss and honor him for his courage, dedication and sacrifice.

This Memorial Day should also prompt us to recommit ourselves to meeting our obligations to the men and women who take up arms to protect this great Nation. The serious problems that surround the delivery of benefits and services we owe to our veterans are unacceptable. The Department of Veterans Affairs has an important and sacred mission to uphold the full faith and trust of our government's commitment to our veterans.

As I observe Memorial Day and honor those who have given their lives to their country, I will also be mindful of our commitment to protect and support veterans and their families.

SKI AREA RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITY ENHANCEMENT ACT

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam President, I wish to highlight an important milestone in our work in Congress. I speak of my legislation to create year-round, sustainable jobs in mountain communities around the country while expanding opportunities for Americans to enjoy the great outdoors through the expansion of summer recreational opportunities at ski areas. On April 17, 2014, the U.S. Forest Service issued its final directives for implementing my Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Act, a law that allows and encourages ski areas on national forests to offer new activities for all seasons, such as expanded hiking and mountain biking, Frisbee golf, climbing walls, mountain coasters, zip lines, ropes courses, special events, and other popular activities.

I am proud to have led this bipartisan effort, from my time in the House, where I first introduced the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act, to here in the Senate, where we saw the president sign it into law in 2011. After its passage, I worked with stakeholders and the U.S. Forest Service to make sure that the law's implementation empowers site-specific decisions that are appropriate for ski areas and local communities. This allows for the greatest opportunity for success in achieving the bill's main goals: boosting rural economies and promoting outdoor recreation. I would like to thank my colleagues Senators FEINSTEIN, HELLER, and BARRASSO for working with me to ensure this would happen.

Ski areas across the country and especially in my home State of Colorado have embraced the new flexibility provided by the Ski Area Recreational Opportunity Enhancement Act. Since its passage, they have been proposing projects to create activities for all seasons. I encourage the U.S. Forest Service to quickly review these proposals and to reach the best decision for each local project and community. That includes allowing for public input as prescribed by the National Environmental Policy Act. The local U.S. Forest Service land managers have a strong record of successfully working with ski areas to manage these long-running partnerships and that record is one of the reasons I advocated for a flexible directive empowering local decisionmaking.

I want to thank the U.S. Forest Service for finalizing a directive that provides that flexibility.

The U.S. Forest Service estimates that expanded recreational opportunities at ski areas will increase summer visits to national forests by 600,000 people each year, create 600 full or part-time jobs and inject nearly $40 million into mountain communities. I think we all can agree these are substantial gains for rural economies and a testament to the importance of these ski areas to the recreation community and the American public at large.

I also would like to recognize the important support of our other cosponsors: Senators MURRAY, BENNET, RISCH, SHAHEEN, ENZI, CANTWELL, AYOTTE, SANDERS, REID, LEAHY, and STABENOW. It was a strong bipartisan effort and I know we are all eager to see projects get underway to benefit rural economies and the recreating public.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

COOKS FROM THE VALLEY

• Mrs. BOXER. Madam President, I want to commend the extraordinary work of Cooks from the Valley, a volunteer organization dedicated to supporting our Nation's servicemembers, veterans and their families.

Cooks from the Valley was established in Bakersfield, CA, by local resident Tom Anton, to bring the taste of home cooking to military members stationed all over the world.

What first began with one person in Bakersfield has grown to a diverse group of service-minded volunteers from coast to coast bound by one common goal: to say thank you to the men and women who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Our military members and their families have made tremendous sacrifices and they deserve nothing less than the full and enduring support of a grateful nation. As co-chair of the Senate Military Family Caucus, I want to express my deepest gratitude to everyone at Cooks from the Valley—Mr. Anton, the volunteers, and many community supporters for their steadfast support of our servicemembers, veterans, and their families.

These dedicated Americans generously volunteer their time and resources to travel to all corners of the globe, providing our servicemembers with a taste of home that has boosted the spirits and filled the stomachs of those who put their lives on the line each and every day in service to our Nation. Cooks from the Valley's unique way of giving back to our military men and women should be an inspiration to us all.

As Americans, we have an obligation to give back to those who give so much for us. For many years, Cooks from the Valley has worked to fulfill this responsibility and I know they will continue to make a difference in the lives of our military families for many years to come.•

MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

• Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I wish to recognize our military servicemembers, their families, and all veterans who have sacrificed in the service of this great country. After a long winter, Americans are finally enjoying the outdoors and spending precious time with their loved ones this month. But we should always remember that we enjoy these freedoms because the Guard, Reserve, and Active members of the U.S. military remain diligent, ready and willing to serve and sacrifice.

We celebrate our 15th annual National Military Appreciation Month this year, thanks to the leadership of my colleague Senator MCCAIN, who sponsored legislation in 1999 that set aside an entire month to honor, remember, and appreciate the patriotism and dedication of the military and their families. Military Appreciation Month includes specific recognition of Loyalty Day on May 1, Victory in Europe Day on May 8, Military Spouse Appreciation Day on May 9, Armed Forces Day on May 17, and, most importantly, Memorial Day on May 26.

From the American Revolution to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, military men and women have always made

enormous sacrifices in order to defend our Nation. I am inspired by their patriotism, their courage, and their dedication to freedom. Military Appreciation Month also recognizes the more than 90 million Americans who have family members serving in the military. Military families are also making tremendous sacrifices on behalf of the American people, and they are equally deserving of recognition during National Military Appreciation Month.

Recent events have provided another reminder of the constant guard our brave servicemembers provide. Earlier this year, 24-year-old PO2 Mark Mayo of Hagerstown, MD, gave his life, without hesitation, to protect his fellow shipmate. As a civilian assaulted a fellow sailor and grabbed her gun, Petty Officer Mayo stepped into harm's way, shielded his shipmate, and died so that she could live. Petty Officer Mayo was laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery on April 25, 2014, and posthumously awarded The Navy and Marine Corps Medal, the highest noncombat decoration for heroism awarded by the U.S. Department of the Navy.

Petty Officer Mayo is just one example of the heroism of our servicemembers; heroism that has been displayed countless times, both at home and abroad, throughout our Nation's history.

Young military men and women represent the best of our country. They choose to serve our communities, fight for their fellow Americans and defend our liberties with the fullest measure of devotion. Similar to generations before them, they have committed themselves to the defense of our Constitution against all enemies. Their devotion to their fellow Americans makes our Nation exceptional.

Not all those who support our national defense have worn a uniform or have been called away to distant battlefields. World War II's ''Rosie the Riveter'' saying ''We can do it'' sounds an awful lot like today's young people saying ''Yes, we can.'' I urge my colleagues to keep this spirit of our ''Rosies'' in mind today as we commit ourselves to answering the challenges that face our Nation.

We are fortunate to have so many women still living in Maryland who evoke the spirit of Rosie the Riveter. Crena Anderson riveted airplanes in Hagerstown, MD, during World War II. Ruth Staples of Brunswick, MD, worked on the railroad in support of allied efforts during the war. Even today, Crena and Ruth are both actively helping their local communities create replicable projects that teach and preserve World War II-era history and advance positive roles that women can play in our changing world.

This Memorial Day should be a time when all Americans can reconnect with our history and core values by honoring those who gave their lives for the ideals we cherish. In addition to remembering the servicemembers who fought and died in our Nation's wars, I believe that we must also take care of the servicemembers and veterans who are still with us, especially when they return home. There are serious issues that need to be addressed in the military and veteran communities. Active-Duty military and veteran suicide rates are at record high, Veterans' Administration disability claims continue to face unacceptable delays, and many programs that help discharged servicemembers make the transition to civilian life are inadequate. It is unacceptable that many of our servicemembers, veterans, and their caregivers lack the health care they need after a decade of war. Too many of these men and women are suffering from not only visible injuries but invisible ones too. We must do better. In these challenging times, let us pledge to redouble our efforts to provide for our veterans, not just on this Memorial Day but every day.

Military Appreciation Month is a time we should hold close to our hearts. In our hectic daily lives, let us not forget why our country endures. Throughout this month we will see many American flags and flowers adorning the graves of those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our Nation. We honor them and remember their families, who wear the Gold Star Pin, because they bear the greatest burden of sacrifice. I remember in particular the 114 Marylanders who have been killed in our most recent conflicts and am reminded that our freedom isn't free. The best way to honor their sacrifice is to ensure that we are unwavering in our support for those who return to us wounded, ill, and injured. Let us affirm our commitment to them today and every day.●

JASPER COUNTY, IOWA

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State. And it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills. But I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Jasper County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to secure funding in Jasper County worth over $3.2 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $22 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memory of working together has to be working to fund the Neal Smith Wildlife National Wildlife Refuge. Congressman SMITH's dedication to protecting Iowa's local wildlife, fragile ecosystems, and beautiful natural scenery was a legacy that was truly a privilege to carry on. This refuge is not just a state natural resource, but a national treasure. It is home to grazing buffalo herds, white-tailed deer, badgers and pheasants, and more than 200 types of native prairie flowers and grasses. The hundreds of thousands of Iowans who visit the refuge every year experience the beauty and fragility of our natural environment. I hope that as I worked to carry on Congressman SMITH's legacy in providing over $1.3 million since 2000 to the refuge, Iowans will help take up the mantle to continue to support this tremendous local resource.

Among the highlights: Main Street Iowa: One of the greatest challenges we face—in Iowa and all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns and rural communities. This isn't just about economics. It is also about maintaining our identity as Iowans. Main Street Iowa helps preserve Iowa's heart and soul by providing funds to revitalize downtown business districts. This program has allowed towns like Colfax to use that money to leverage other investments to jumpstart change and renewal. I am so pleased that Jasper County has earned $43,000 through this program. These grants build much more than buildings. They build up the spirit and morale of people in our small towns and local communities.

School grants: Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin grants worth more than $132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, Jasper

County has received $618,741 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Jasper County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling $132,888.

Disaster mitigation and prevention: In 1993, when historic floods ripped through Iowa, it became clear to me that the national emergency-response infrastructure was woefully inadequate to meet the needs of Iowans in flood-ravaged communities. I went to work dramatically expanding the Federal Emergency Management Agency's hazard mitigation program, which helps communities reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters and enables mitigation measures to be implemented during the immediate recovery period. Disaster relief means more than helping people and businesses get back on their feet after a disaster, it means doing our best to prevent the same predictable flood or other catastrophe from recurring in the future. The hazard mitigation program that I helped create in 1993 has provided critical support to Iowa communities impacted by the devastating floods of 2008. Jasper County has received over $72,000 to remediate and prevent widespread destruction from natural disasters.

Agricultural and rural development: Because I grew up in a small town in rural Iowa, I have always been a loyal friend and fierce advocate for family farmers and rural communities. I have been a member of the House or Senate Agriculture Committee for 40 years—including more than 10 years as chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Across the decades, I have championed farm policies for Iowans that include effective farm income protection and commodity programs; strong, progressive conservation assistance for agricultural producers; renewable energy opportunities; and robust economic development in our rural communities. Since 1991, through various programs authorized through the farm bill, Jasper County has received more than $7.8 million from a variety of farm bill programs.

Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Jasper County's fire departments have received over $1.2 million for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Jasper County has recognized this important issue by securing $264,000 for community wellness activities.

Disability Rights: Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf. But I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, and the ADA Amendments Act, I have had four guiding goals for our fellow citizens with disabilities: equal opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. Nearly a quarter century since passage of the ADA, I see remarkable changes in communities everywhere I go in Iowa not just in curb cuts or closed captioned television, but in the full participation of people with disabilities in our society and economy, folks who at long last have the opportunity to contribute their talents and to be fully included. These changes have increased economic opportunities for all citizens of Jasper County, both those with and without disabilities. And they make us proud to be a part of a community and country that respects the worth and civil rights of all of our citizens.

This is at least a partial accounting of my work on behalf of Iowa, and specifically Jasper County, during my time in Congress. In every case, this work has been about partnerships, cooperation, and empowering folks at the State and local level, including in Jasper County, to fulfill their own dreams and initiatives. And, of course, this work is never complete. Even after I retire from the Senate, I have no intention of retiring from the fight for a better, fairer, richer Iowa. I will always be profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Iowa as their Senator.●

MARSHALL COUNTY, IOWA

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State. And it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills. But I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Marshall County to build a legacy of a stronger local economy, better schools and educational opportunities, and a healthier, safer community.

Between 2001 and 2013, the creative leadership in your community has worked with me to secure funding in Marshall County worth over $19 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $55 million to the local economy.

Of course my favorite memories of working together have to include lead paint remediation, for which I have provided more than $4.1 million since 2001, providing over $2 million to increase availability of affordable housing, supporting local law enforcement efforts, and improving downtown buildings in Marshalltown and State Center through the Main Street Iowa program.

Among the highlights:

Investing in Iowa's economic development through targeted community projects: In central Iowa, we have worked together to grow the economy by making targeted investments in important economic development projects including improved roads and bridges, modernized sewer and water systems, and better housing options for residents of Marshall County. In many cases, I have secured Federal funding that has leveraged local investments and served as a catalyst for a whole ripple effect of positive, creative changes. For example, I have fought to secure over $15 million for Mechdyne, a Marshalltown company which is a world leader in 3D and virtual reality visualization technology, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

Main Street Iowa: One of the greatest challenges we face—in Iowa and all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns and rural communities. This isn't just about economics. It is also about maintaining our identity as Iowans. Main Street Iowa helps preserve Iowa's heart and soul by providing funds to revitalize downtown business districts. This program has allowed towns like State Center and Marshalltown to use that money to leverage other investments to jumpstart change and renewal. I am so pleased that Marshall County has earned $575,159 through this

program. These grants build much more than buildings. They build up the spirit and morale of people in our small towns and local communities.

School grants: Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin grants worth more than $132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, Marshall County has received more than $4.9 million in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Marshall County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling $64,660.

Keeping Iowa communities safe: I also firmly believe that our first responders need to be appropriately trained and equipped, able to respond to both local emergencies and to statewide challenges such as, for instance, the methamphetamine epidemic. Since 2001, Marshall County's fire departments have received over $1.1 million for firefighter safety and operations equipment, and $841,737 in Byrne Justice Assistance Grants, as well as $200,000 for drug free communities through the Department of Justice.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Marshall County has recognized this important issue by securing over $61,000 in wellness grants.

Disability Rights: Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf. But I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, and the ADA Amendments Act, I have had four guiding goals for our fellow citizens with disabilities: equal opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency. Nearly a quarter century since passage of the ADA, I see remarkable changes in communities everywhere I go in Iowa—not just in curb cuts or closed captioned television, but in the full participation of people with disabilities in our society and economy, folks who at long last have the opportunity to contribute their talents and to be fully included. These changes have increased economic opportunities for all citizens of Marshall County, both those with and without disabilities. And they make us proud to be a part of a community and country that respects the worth and civil rights of all of our citizens.

This is at least a partial accounting of my work on behalf of Iowa, and specifically Marshall County, during my time in Congress. In every case, this work has been about partnerships, cooperation, and empowering folks at the State and local level, including in Marshall County, to fulfill their own dreams and initiatives. And, of course, this work is never complete. Even after I retire from the Senate, I have no intention of retiring from the fight for a better, fairer, richer Iowa. I will always be profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve the people of Iowa as their Senator.●

LAS VEGAS-CLARK COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

● Mr. HELLER. Madam President, today I wish to recognize and congratulate the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District for receiving the National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the highest community service honor a museum or library can earn. Nevada is proud to have one of its institutions dedicated to the education and betterment of the community be chosen for such a prestigious award.

In its 20th-anniversary year, the National Medal is celebrating institutions that have made a significant impact on individuals, families, and communities across the Nation. Nevada is honored to have the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District selected as one of only 10 institutions to receive this award. The library has long served as a home to community members looking to further their education and entertain themselves through the joys of reading. More recently, recognizing the growing needs within the community, the library has become a haven for those who need a retreat from their homes or as a destination for Internet that they cannot afford.

As Nevada's unemployment rate remains one of highest in the Nation and as our national economy continues to struggle, I recognize the unique role the Las Vegas-Clark County Library has played in working to address the needs of its local community by carefully crafting a strategic plan to address the unemployment problems in Nevada. By adding more computers so users could fill out job applications online and creating programs about managing stress and dealing with bankruptcy, the library is able to assist Nevadans during this tough time. While our economy continues to recover, vulnerable Nevadan's rely on a variety of resources to help them find employment, especially those provided by the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District.

The importance of libraries is exemplified through their community engagement, support for afterschool programs, and ability to act as learning tools for students. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Las Vegas-Clark County District. As a father of four children who attended Nevada's public schools and the husband of a lifelong teacher, I understand the important role that libraries play in educating Nevada's students. Ensuring that America's youth are prepared to compete in the 21st century is critical for the future of our country. The State of Nevada is fortunate to be home to a library district that offers a large variety of assistance to the members of the community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District and know that they serve as an example for the rest of the Silver State.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:38 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4031. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal of Senior Executive Service employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs for performance, and for other purposes.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and

were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–235. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii expressing support for the Troop Talent Act of 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 18

Whereas, members of the United States Armed Forces are dedicated to protecting the many freedoms that we enjoy through discipline, hard work, and self-sacrifice; and

Whereas, for many veterans the transition from military to civilian life is often a difficult one, which is evident in the higher unemployment rates experienced by post September 11th veterans; a rate that is currently 9.4 percent, which is greater than the national average which is 6.7 percent; and

Whereas, even though many veterans leave the military with valuable skills and training, several obstacles such as injuries, lack of civilian work experience, and license and certification issues hamper a smooth transition from military to civilian life; and

Whereas, H.R. 1796, or the Troop Talent Act of 2013, was created to ensure that veterans and members of the Armed Forces are provided with the proper education and training to better assist them in obtaining civilian certifications and licenses, as well as for other purposes to assist veterans in adjusting to civilian life; and

Whereas, the Troop Talent Act of 2013 directs the Secretaries of the military departments, to the maximum extent practicable, to make information on civilian credentialing opportunities available to members of the Armed Forces beginning with, and at every stage of, their training for military occupational specialties in order to permit such members to:

(1) Evaluate the extent to which such training correlates with skills and training required for various civilian certifications and licenses; and

(2) Assess the suitability of such training for obtaining or pursuing such civilian certifications and licenses; and

Whereas, the Troop Talent Act of 2013 also requires the information be made available to members of the Armed Services to be consistent with the Transition Goals Plans Success Program; and

Whereas, the Troop Talent Act of 2013 also requires the inclusion of information on:

(1) The civilian occupational equivalents of military occupational specialties;

(2) Civilian license or certification requirements, including examination requirements; and

(3) The availability and opportunities for use of educational benefits available to members of the Armed Forces, as appropriate, corresponding training, or continuing education that leads to a certification exam in order to provide a pathway to credentialing opportunities; and

Whereas, the Troop Talent Act of 2013 requires the Secretaries of the military departments to make available to civilian credentialing agencies, specified information on the content of military training provided to members of the Armed Services; and

Whereas, the Troop Talent Act of 2013 allows members of the Armed Services or veterans in pursuit of a civilian certification or license to use educational assistance provided through the Department of Defense or the Department of Veterans Affairs only if the successful completion of a curriculum fully qualifies the student to take the appropriate examinations and be certified or licensed to meet any other academic conditions required for entry into that occupation or profession; and

Whereas, the Troop Talent Act of 2013 requires the military occupational specialties designated for a military skills to civilian credentialing pilot program under the National Defense. Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 to include those specialties relating to the military information technology workforce; and

Whereas, the Troop Talent Act of 2013 directs the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to reestablish the Professional Certification and Licensure Advisory Committee which was terminated on December 31, 2006, and provides the Committee with additional duties, including the development of:

(1) Guidance for audits of licensure and certification programs in order to ensure high-quality education to members of the Armed Services and veterans; and

(2) A plan to improve outreach to members of the Armed Services and veterans on the importance of licensing and certification and the availability of educational benefits: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2014, that this body supports the Troop Talent Act of 2013 along with its passage; and be it further

Resolved, That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, and Hawaii's Congressional delegation.

POM–236. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii urging the United States Congress to adopt legislation to ease a transition to a new type of identity theft-resistant credit card; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 32

Whereas, credit card data theft is one of the fastest-growing crimes in the nation, increasing 50 percent from 2005 to 2010, according to a recent report from the United States Department of Justice; and

Whereas, credit card data theft is often included in the general definition of identity theft, a crime that occurs when a thief steals an individual's personal information and uses it without the individual's permission; and

Whereas, identity theft is a serious crime that can devastate an individual's finances, credit history, and reputation, and can take time, money, and patience to resolve; and

Whereas, the number of malicious programs written to steal an individual's personal information has grown exponentially from about 1,000,000 in 2007 to an estimated 130,000,000 in 2013; and

Whereas, identity theft is expected to surpass traditional theft as the leading form of property crime, and security analysts have reported that everyone should prepare to become an identity theft victim at some point; and

Whereas, most Americans have a greater chance of having their personal identity information stolen than being actually held up at gunpoint; and

Whereas, a company has recently introduced a new type of identity theft-resistant credit card that is designed to reduce the chances of consumers being hit with fraudulent credit card debt; and

Whereas, in designing this new type of credit card, the company has developed small, digital, internal components that will allow a consumer to enter a personal unlocking code that will generate a unique credit card number for every transaction, making the card more difficult to use by thieves if it is lost or stolen; and

Whereas, at least one major bank is testing this new type of credit card in a number of small pilot programs, and more lenders may adopt the technology in the near future: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2014, the Senate concurring, that the Congress of the United States, Hawaii financial institutions, and Hawaii businesses are urged to adopt legislation, policies, and procedures to use identity theft-resistant credit cards; and be it further

Resolved, That the Congress of the United States is urged to adopt legislation that would ease a transition to a new type of identity theft-resistant credit card; and be it further

Resolved, That Hawaii financial institutions and Hawaii businesses that offer credit cards are urged to use the new identity theft-resistant credit card technology to reduce the chances of consumers being victimized by identity thieves; and be it further

Resolved, That certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of Hawaii's congressional delegation, the President of the Hawaii Bankers Association, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii, and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii.

POM–237. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania urging the Congress of the United States to pass and the President of the United States to sign the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 663

Whereas, During the Vietnam Conflict, the United States military sprayed more than 19 million gallons of Agent Orange and other herbicides over Vietnam to reduce forest cover and crops used by the enemy; these herbicides contained dioxin, which has since been identified as carcinogenic and has been linked with a number of serious and disabling illnesses now affecting thousands of veterans; and

Whereas, The Congress of the United States passed the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to address the plight of veterans exposed to herbicides while serving in Vietnam; and

Whereas, The act amended Title 38 of the United States Code to presumptively recognize as service-connected, certain diseases among military personnel who served in the Vietnam Conflict between 1962 and 1975; and

Whereas, This presumption has provided access to appropriate disability compensation and medical care for Vietnam veterans diagnosed with such illnesses as Type II diabetes, Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, chronic lymphocytic leukemia, multiple myeloma, prostate cancer, respiratory cancers and soft-tissue sarcomas; and

Whereas, Pursuant to a 2001 directive, the Department of Veterans Affairs policy has denied the presumption of a service connection for herbicide-related illnesses to Vietnam veterans who could not furnish written documentation that they had ''boots on the ground'' in-country, making it virtually impossible for countless United States Navy and Air Force veterans to pursue their claims for benefits; and

Whereas, Many who had landed on Vietnamese soil could not produce proof due to incomplete or missing military records, moreover, personnel who had served on ships in the ''Blue Water Navy'' in Vietnamese territorial waters were, in fact, exposed to dangerous airborne toxins, which not only drifted offshore but also washed into streams and

rivers draining into the South China Sea; and

Whereas, Warships positioned off the Vietnamese shore routinely distilled seawater to obtain potable water; and

Whereas, A 2002 Australian study found that the distillation process, rather than removing toxins, in fact, concentrated dioxin in water used for drinking, cooking and washing; and

Whereas, This study was conducted by the Australian Department of Veteran Affairs after it found that Vietnam veterans of the Royal Australian Navy had a higher rate of mortality from Agent Orange-associated diseases than did Vietnam veterans from other branches of the military; and

Whereas, When the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention studied specific cancers among Vietnam veterans, it found a higher risk of cancer among Navy veterans; and

Whereas, Agent Orange did not discriminate between soldiers on the ground and sailors on ships offshore, and legislation to recognize this tragic fact and restore eligibility for compensation and medical care to Navy and Air Force veterans who sacrificed their health for their country is critical; and

Whereas, When the Agent Orange Act passed in 1991 with no dissenting votes, Congressional leaders stressed the importance of responding to the health concerns of Vietnam veterans and ending the bitterness and anxiety that had surrounded the issue of herbicide exposure; and

Whereas, Congress should reaffirm the nation's commitment to the well-being of all of its veterans and direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the Agent Orange Act under the presumption that herbicide exposure in Vietnam includes the country's inland waterways, offshore waters and airspace: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives respectfully urge the Congress and President of the United States to restore the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange exposure for United States Navy and Air Force veterans who served on the inland waterways, territorial waters and in the airspace of Vietnam, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of State of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania forward official copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States, and to all the members of the Pennsylvania delegation to the 113th Congress urging the members of the delegation to support and fund the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013 and with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as a memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.

POM–238. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to support the authorization of the issuance of general obligation bonds for the construction of a long-term care facility for veterans contingent upon the receipt of federal funds; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 68

Whereas, Hawaii's acute shortage of long-term care beds has the potential to directly impact the growing number of our veterans who are reaching a point in their lives where long-term care may become necessary; and

Whereas, the shortage of long-term care facilities will be felt in communities across Hawaii; and

Whereas, veterans have stood up for America in times of need, thereby earning the highest degree of respect and support the nation is able to give; and

Whereas, the men and women who have served our country are owed a special duty; and

Whereas, veterans of the armed services deserve safety, comfort, and dignified care in their later years; and

Whereas, providing safe and reliable care falls squarely within our commitment as a state and a nation; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2014, the Senate concurring, that the President of the United States and the United States Congress are urged to support House Bill No. 2074, Regular Session of 2014, which authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds for the construction of a long-term care facility for veterans contingent upon the receipt of federal funds; and be it further

Resolved, That certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, and Speaker of the House of the United States House of Representatives.

POM–239. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to grant veterans benefits to Filipino veterans who fought in World War II; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 22

Whereas, during World War II, the Philippines was a United States commonwealth; and

Whereas, Filipino soldiers volunteered their services after being promised full veterans benefits to volunteer to fight for the United States against the potential threat of Japan; and

Whereas, thousands of Filipino men and women risked their lives against the invading Japanese forces and assisted our nation in its efforts to liberate the Philippines; and

Whereas, Filipino soldiers fought bravely beside American troops to restore liberty and democracy to their homeland; and

Whereas, exhibiting great courage at the battles of Corregidor and Bataan, Filipino soldiers contributed to the Allied victory that ended Word War II; and

Whereas, in 1941, by executive order, Filipinos who Volunteered for the Philippine Commonwealth Army and Philippine Scouts were made eligible for full United States veterans benefits for their active service during the war; and

Whereas, in 1946, by congressional act and upon the independence of the Philippines, these same Filipino veterans were denied eligibility for United States veterans benefits, such as health care, disability pensions, and burial expenses; and

Whereas, over the years, Congress has considered legislation to restore the benefits denied to Filipino veterans; and

Whereas, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 included a provision that called for the release of funding for lump sum payments to Filipino veterans in lieu of pensions; and

Whereas, restoring benefits denied to Filipino veterans and fulfilling and expediting any claims that are still pending honors those Filipino veterans who served our nation so courageously; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2014, that the President of the United States and the United States Congress are urged to grant veterans benefits to Filipino veterans who fought in World War II but were subsequently denied the benefits to which they were entitled; and be it further

Resolved, That providing these benefits does not correct the injustice and discrimination done over 60 years ago, but is a small step in making reparations; and be it further

Resolved, That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Hawaii's Congressional delegation, Secretary of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, Director of the Hawaii Office of Veterans Services, President of the Republic of the Philippines, and Philippine Consul General in Hawaii.

POM–240. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Hawaii urging the United States Congress to restore the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange exposure to the United States veterans who served in the waters defined by the Combat Zone and in the airspace over the Combat Zone in Vietnam; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 19

Whereas, during the Vietnam War, the United States military sprayed 22,000,000 gallons of Agent Orange and other herbicides over Vietnam to reduce forest cover and crops used by the enemy; and

Whereas, these herbicides contained dioxin, which has since been identified as carcinogenic and has been linked with a number of serious and disabling illnesses affecting thousands of veterans; and

Whereas, the United States Congress passed the Agent Orange Act of 1991 to address the plight of veterans exposed to herbicides while serving the Republic of Vietnam; and

Whereas, the Agent Orange Act of 1991 amended Title 38 of the United States Code to presumptively recognize as service-connected certain diseases among military personnel who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1975; and

Whereas, this presumption has provided access to appropriate disability compensation and medical care for Vietnam veterans diagnosed with illnesses, such as Type II diabetes, Hodgkin's disease, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, Parkinson's disease, multiple myeloma, peripheral neuropathy, AL Amyloidosis respiratory cancers, soft-tissue sarcomas, and other illnesses yet to be identified; and

Whereas, pursuant to a directive in 2001, it has been the policy of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to deny the presumption of a service connection for herbicide-related illnesses to Vietnam veterans who cannot furnish written documentation that they had ''boots on the ground'' in-country, making it virtually impossible for countless United States Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force veterans to pursue their claims for benefits; and

Whereas, personnel who served on ships in the ''Blue Water Navy'' in Vietnamese territorial waters were, in fact, exposed to dangerous airborne toxins, which not only drifted offshore but also washed into streams and rivers draining into the South China Sea; and

Whereas, Agent Orange has been verified, through various studies and reports, as a wide-spreading chemical that was able to reach United States Navy ships through the air and waterborne distribution routes; and

Whereas, warships positioned off the Vietnamese shore routinely distilled seawater to obtain potable water; and

Whereas, an Australian study in 2002 found that the distillation process, instead of removing toxins, actually concentrated dioxin

in water used for drinking, cooking, and washing; and

Whereas, this study was conducted by the Australian Department of Veterans Affairs after it found that Vietnam veterans of the Royal Australian Navy suffered from a higher rate of mortality from Agent Orange-associated diseases than did Vietnam veterans from other branches of the military; and

Whereas, when the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention studied specific cancers among Vietnam veterans, it found a higher risk of cancer among United States Navy veterans; and

Whereas, herbicides containing tetrachlorodibenzodioxin (TCDD), a contaminant in Agent Orange, did not discriminate between soldiers on the ground and sailors on ships offshore; and

Whereas, more than 30 veterans' service organizations support the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2013 (H.R. 543); and

Whereas, by not passing H.R. 543, a precedent could be set to selectively provide certain categories of veterans with injury-related medical care while denying such care to other categories of veterans, without any financial, scientific, or consistent reasoning; and

Whereas, when the Agent Orange Act passed in 1991 with no dissenting votes, congressional leaders stressed the importance of responding to the health concerns of Vietnam veterans and ending the bitterness and anxiety that had surrounded the issue of herbicide exposure; and

Whereas, the federal government has also demonstrated its awareness of the hazards of Agent Orange exposure through its involvement in the identification, containment, and mitigation of dioxin ''hot spots'' in Vietnam; and

Whereas, the United States Congress should reaffirm the nation's commitment to the well-being of all of its veterans and direct the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to administer the Agent Orange Act under the presumption that herbicide exposure in the Republic of Vietnam includes the country's inland waterways, offshore waters, and airspace, encompassing the entire Combat Zone: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-seventh Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2014, that the United States Congress is respectfully urged to restore the presumption of a service connection for Agent Orange exposure to United States veterans who served in the waters defined by the Combat Zone and in the airspace over the Combat Zone in Vietnam; and be it further

Resolved, That the United States Congress is respectfully urged to enter this Resolution into the Congressional Record as an official memorial to the Congress; and be it further

Resolved, That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of Hawaii's Congressional delegation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Ms. MIKULSKI, from the Committee on Appropriations:

Special Report entitled ''Allocation to Subcommittees of Budget Totals for Fiscal Year 2015'' (Rept. No. 113–163).

By Mr. PRYOR, from the Committee on Appropriations, without amendment:

S. 2389. An original bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–164).

By Ms. LANDRIEU, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 37. A bill to sustain the economic development and recreational use of National Forest System land and other public land in the State of Montana, to add certain land to the National Wilderness Preservation System, to release certain wilderness study areas, to designate new areas for recreation, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–165).

S. 258. A bill to amend the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 to improve the management of grazing leases and permits, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–166).

S. 715. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to use designated funding to pay for construction of authorized rural water projects, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–167).

By Ms. LANDRIEU, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment:

S. 782. A bill to amend Public Law 101–377 to revise the boundaries of the Gettysburg National Military Park to include the Gettysburg Train Station, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–168).

By Ms. LANDRIEU, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

S. 995. A bill to authorize the National Desert Storm Memorial Association to establish the National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial as a commemorative work in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–169).

S. 1252. A bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate segments of the Missisquoi River and the Trout River in the State of Vermont, as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System (Rept. No. 113–170).

By Ms. LANDRIEU, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment and an amendment to the title:

S. 1341. A bill to modify the Forest Service Recreation Residence Program as the program applies to units of the National Forest System derived from the public domain by implementing a simple, equitable, and predictable procedure for determining cabin user fees, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–171).

By Ms. LANDRIEU, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment:

H.R. 1033. A bill to authorize the acquisition and protection of nationally significant battlefields and associated sites of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 under the American Battlefield Protection Program (Rept. No. 113–172).

By Ms. LANDRIEU, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, without amendment:

H.R. 2337. A bill to provide for the conveyance of the Forest Service Lake Hill Administrative Site in Summit County, Colorado (Rept. No. 113–173).

By Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, from the Committee on Appropriations, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

H.R. 4486. A bill making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 113–174).

By Mr. MENENDEZ, from the Committee on Foreign Relations, with amendments:

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 (Rept. No. 113–175).

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. HELLER (for himself and Mr. TESTER):

S. 2381. A bill to clarify that any private flood insurance policy accepted by a State shall satisfy the mandatory purchase requirement under the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. MERKLEY:

S. 2382. A bill to establish the Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers for purposes of determining cost-of-living increases under the Social Security Act, and to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to apply payroll taxes to remuneration and earnings from self-employment up to the contribution and benefit base and to remuneration in excess of $250,000, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. ALEXANDER:

S. 2383. A bill to direct the Office of the Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Comptroller General of the United States to study the impact of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act on small businesses; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, and Mr. COBURN):

S. 2384. A bill to require the President to develop a watch list and a priority watch list of foreign countries that engage in economic or industrial espionage in cyberspace with respect to United States trade secrets or proprietary information, to provide for the imposition of sanctions with respect to foreign persons that knowingly benefit from such espionage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2385. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Truth in Lending Act to provide for disclosure and codes of conduct with respect to consumer financial products or services and institutions of higher education; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SCHUMER (for himself and Mr. DONNELLY):

S. 2386. A bill to establish a grant program to help State and local law enforcement agencies reduce the risk of injury and death relating to the wandering characteristics of some children with autism and other disabilities; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WALSH:

S. 2387. A bill to amend the Claims Resolution Act of 2010 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to contract with eligible Indian tribes to manage land buy-back programs, to require that certain amounts be deposited into interest bearing accounts, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. HELLER):

S. 2388. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the depreciation recovery period for energy-efficient cool roof systems, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. PRYOR:

S. 2389. An original bill making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development,

Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes; from the Committee on Appropriations; placed on the calendar.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 2390. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to create a tax credit for foster families; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MURPHY:

S. 2391. A bill to amend chapter 83 of title 41, United States Code (popularly referred to as the Buy American Act) and certain other laws with respect to certain waivers under those laws, to provide greater transparency regarding exceptions to domestic sourcing requirements, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WALSH:

S. 2392. A bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of East Rosebud Creek in Carbon County, Montana, as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. PRYOR (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2393. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the protection and enforcement of employment and reemployment rights of members of the uniformed services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. HATCH, Mr. RISCH, Mr. LEE, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 2394. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to provide certain Western States assistance in the development of statewide conservation and management plans for the protection and recovery of sage grouse species, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. KAINE, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 2395. A bill to repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. PRYOR (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. JOHANNS, and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. 2396. A bill to establish the veterans' business outreach center program, to improve the programs for veterans of the Small Business Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. SCHATZ (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 2397. A bill to increase the rates of pay under the General Schedule and other statutory pay systems and for prevailing rate employees by 3.3 percent, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. MARKEY, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 2398. A bill to amend a provision of title 49, United States Code, relating to motor vehicle safety civil penalties; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. BEGICH (for himself, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. TESTER, Mr. WALSH, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2399. A bill to safeguard the voting rights of Native American and Alaska Native voters and to provide the resources and oversight necessary to ensure equal access to the electoral process; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota):

S. 2400. A bill to provide for improvement of field emergency medical services, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself, Mr. MORAN, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WALSH, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 2401. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to establish the Office of the Medical Inspector within the Office of the Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. PRYOR, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 2402. A bill to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to address the need to increase on-the-job training and apprenticeship opportunities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself, Mr. PRYOR, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 2403. A bill to ensure that programs of training services under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 make better use of participants' prior learning so as to better assist the participants in obtaining degrees and other recognized postsecondary credentials, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 2404. A bill to make permanent the extended period of protections for members of uniformed services relating to mortgages, mortgage foreclosure, and eviction, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. KIRK, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2405. A bill to amend title XII of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize certain trauma care programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. REED:

S. 2406. A bill to amend title XII of the Public Health Service Act to expand the definition of trauma to include thermal, electrical, chemical, radioactive, and other extrinsic agents; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. MURRAY:

S. 2407. A bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 by authorizing the United States Agency for International Development to continue supporting the development of technologies for global health under the Health Technologies Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 2408. A bill to authorize the exploration, leasing, development, and production of oil and gas in and from the western portion of the Coastal Plain of the State of Alaska without surface occupancy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 2409. A bill to authorize the exploration, leasing, development, production, and economically feasible and prudent transportation of oil and gas in and from the Coastal Plain in Alaska; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

S.J. Res. 36. A joint resolution relating to the approval and implementation of the proposed agreement for nuclear cooperation between the United States and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. NELSON (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. CARDIN):

S. Res. 455. A resolution designating May 2014 as ''Older Americans Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. HAGAN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mrs. BOXER):

S. Res. 456. A resolution recognizing National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges of children in the foster care system, and encouraging Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system; considered and agreed to.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. BARRASSO):

S. Res. 457. A resolution designating the week of May 18 through May 24, 2014, as ''National Public Works Week''; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. NELSON, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. PORTMAN):

S. Res. 458. A resolution recognizing May as Jewish American Heritage Month and honoring Holocaust survivors and their contributions to the United States of America; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. CHAMBLISS):

S. Res. 459. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to childhood stroke and recognizing May 2014 as ''National Pediatric Stroke Awareness Month''; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. REID, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. KIRK, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. WARNER):

S. Res. 460. A resolution recognizing the significance of May 2014 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month as an important time to celebrate the significant contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the history of the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. Res. 461. A resolution honoring James L. Oberstar as a remarkable public servant who served in Congress with extraordinary dedication and purpose; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. Res. 462. A resolution recognizing the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters of Cambodia and Laos for supporting and defending the United States Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast Asia and for their continued support and defense of the United States; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL):

S. Res. 463. A resolution honoring the life, accomplishments, and legacy of Billy Frank, Jr, and expressing condolences on his passing; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. Con. Res. 36. A concurrent resolution permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the next of kin or personal representative of Raoul Wallenberg; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 9

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 9, a bill to strengthen our Nation's electoral system by ensuring clean and fair elections.

S. 163

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 163, a bill to prohibit any regulation regarding carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gas emissions reduction in the United States until China, India, and Russia implement similar reductions.

S. 313

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 313, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for the tax treatment of ABLE accounts established under State programs for the care of family members with disabilities, and for other purposes.

S. 323

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 323, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for extended months of Medicare coverage of immunosuppressive drugs for kidney transplant patients and other renal dialysis provisions.

S. 462

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 462, a bill to enhance the strategic partnership between the United States and Israel.

S. 482

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 482, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide protections for consumers against excessive, unjustified, or unfairly discriminatory increases in premium rates.

S. 484

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 484, a bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act relating to lead-based paint renovation and remodeling activities.

S. 526

At the request of Mr. BROWN, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 526, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the special rule for contributions of qualified conservation contributions, and for other purposes.

S. 553

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 553, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for an exclusion for assistance provided to participants in certain veterinary student loan repayment or forgiveness programs.

S. 635

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 635, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 654

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 654, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for collegiate housing and infrastructure grants.

S. 714

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 714, a bill to impose certain limitations on consent decrees and settlement agreements by agencies that require the agencies to take regulatory action in accordance with the terms thereof, and for other purposes.

S. 769

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 769, a bill to designate as wilderness certain Federal portions of the red rock canyons of the Colorado Plateau and the Great Basin Deserts in the State of Utah for the benefit of present and future generations of people in the United States.

S. 865

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 865, a bill to provide for the establishment of a Commission to Accelerate the End of Breast Cancer.

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 865, supra.

S. 961

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 961, a bill to improve access to emergency medical services, and for other purposes.

S. 1040

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1040, a bill to provide for the award of a gold medal on behalf of Congress to Jack Nicklaus, in recognition of his service to the Nation in promoting excellence, good sportsmanship, and philanthropy.

S. 1174

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the names of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1174, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers.

S. 1324

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1324, a bill to prohibit any regulations promulgated pursuant to a presidential memorandum relating to power sector carbon pollution standards from taking effect.

S. 1363

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1363, a bill to protect consumers by prohibiting the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency from promulgating as final certain energy-related rules that are estimated to cost more than $1,000,000,000 and will cause significant adverse effects to the economy.

S. 1622

At the request of Ms. HEITKAMP, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1622, a bill to establish the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children, and for other purposes.

S. 1690

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1690, a bill to reauthorize the Second Chance Act of 2007.

S. 1716

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1716, a bill to facilitate efficient investments and financing of infrastructure projects and new long-term job creation through the establishment of an Infrastructure Financing Authority, and for other purposes.

S. 1743

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1743, a bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act to recognize the authority of States to regulate oil and gas operations and promote American energy security, development, and job creation, and for other purposes.

S. 1744

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1744, a bill to strengthen the accountability of individuals involved in misconduct affecting the integrity of background investigations, to update guidelines for security clearances, and for other purposes.

S. 1820

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator

from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1820, a bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of official portraits of Members of Congress, heads of executive agencies, and heads of agencies and offices of the legislative branch.

S. 1909

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) and the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 1909, a bill to expand opportunity through greater choice in education, and for other purposes.

S. 1948

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1948, a bill to promote the academic achievement of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children with the establishment of a Native American language grant program.

S. 1960

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1960, a bill to require rulemaking by the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to address considerations in evaluating the need for public and individual disaster assistance, and for other purposes.

S. 1988

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1988, a bill to allow States to waive regulations promulgated under the Clean Air Act relating to electric generating units under certain circumstances.

S. 2013

At the request of Mr. NELSON, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2013, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal of Senior Executive Service employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs for performance, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) were added as cosponsors of S. 2013, supra.

S. 2060

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) were added as cosponsors of S. 2060, a bill to direct the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board to develop accessibility guidelines for electronic instructional materials and related information technologies in institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

S. 2132

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2132, a bill to amend the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self-Determination Act of 2005, and for other purposes.

S. 2156

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) 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. 2176

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2176, a bill to revise reporting requirements under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to preserve the privacy of individuals, and for other purposes.

S. 2182

At the request of Mr. WALSH, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2182, a bill to expand and improve care provided to veterans and members of the Armed Forces with mental health disorders or at risk of suicide, to review the terms or characterization of the discharge or separation of certain individuals from the Armed Forces, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2198

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2198, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to take actions to provide additional water supplies to the State of California due to drought, and for other purposes.

S. 2231

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 2243

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2243, a bill to expand eligibility for the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand benefits available to participants under such program, to enhance special compensation for members of the uniformed services who require assistance in everyday life, and for other purposes.

S. 2244

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2244, a bill to extend the termination date of the Terrorism Insurance Program established under the Terrorism Insurance Act of 2002, and for other purposes.

S. 2270

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2270, a bill to clarify the application of certain leverage and risk-based requirements under the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act.

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2270, supra.

S. 2276

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2276, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to improve access to mental health services under the TRICARE program.

S. 2295

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 2295, a bill to establish the National Commission on the Future of the Army, and for other purposes.

S. 2297

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2297, a bill to make demonstration grants to eligible local educational agencies or consortia of eligible local educational agencies for the purpose of reducing the student-to-school nurse ratio in public elementary schools and secondary schools.

S. 2302

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) were withdrawn as cosponsors of S. 2302, a bill to provide for a 1-year extension of the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program, and for other purposes.

S. 2307

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2307, a bill to prevent international violence against women, and for other purposes.

S. 2329

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Missouri (Mr.

BLUNT), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2329, a bill to prevent Hezbollah from gaining access to international financial and other institutions, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2329, supra.

S. 2355

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2355, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude certain compensation received by public safety officers and their dependents from gross income.

S. 2362

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2362, a bill to prohibit the payment of performance awards in fiscal year 2015 to employees in the Veterans Health Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 2363

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2363, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) were added as cosponsors of S. 2363, supra.

S. 2373

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2373, a bill to authorize the appropriation of funds to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for conducting or supporting research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention.

S. 2377

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2377, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exclude certain compensation received by public safety officers and their dependents from gross income.

S. RES. 218

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 218, a resolution honoring the legacy of A. Philip Randolph and saluting his efforts on behalf of the people of the United States to form ''a more perfect union''.

S. RES. 453

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 453, a resolution condemning the death sentence against Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag, a Sudanese Christian woman accused of apostasy.

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 453, supra.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, and Mr. COBURN):

S. 2384. A bill to require the President to develop a watch list and a priority watch list of foreign countries that engage in economic or industrial espionage in cyberspace with respect to United States trade secrets or proprietary information, to provide for the imposition of sanctions with respect to foreign persons that knowingly benefit from such espionage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I am joined today by Senators MCCAIN, ROCKEFELLER and COBURN in introducing a bill to respond to overwhelming and indisputable evidence of large scale cyber intrusions by the Government of China into the computer networks of private U.S. companies for the purpose of stealing valuable intellectual property and proprietary information. Such illegal and damaging behavior demands strong and immediate action.

American companies invest hundreds of billions of dollars every year in research and development. The innovation that results from those investments drives the growth of American companies and the U.S. economy. Unfortunately, our companies are having their intellectual property stolen right out from underneath them through cyberspace. According to a 2013 Center for Strategic and International Studies study, cyber theft costs American companies $100 billion annually—a staggering amount that threatens to undermine America's global competitiveness.

General Keith B. Alexander, former head of the National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command, has called the cyber theft of U.S. intellectual property ''the greatest transfer of wealth in history.''

Monday's Department of Justice indictment of 5 Chinese military officials for computer hacking, economic espionage and other offenses directed at 6 American companies confirms what earlier U.S. Government reports have documented: the culprits of cyber theft are frequently foreign governments and China is the worst offender. The indictment alleges that the defendants, members of China's People's Liberation Army, conspired to hack into the computers of U.S. companies to steal information useful to those American companies' Chinese competitors, including state-owned enterprises.

The indictments demonstrate the administration's willingness to take on cybercrime through the aggressive use of the criminal justice system. The legislation we are introducing today, a revised version of a bill we introduced last year, gives our Government another tool to impose costs on those who steal and profit from the cyber theft of American technology, trade secrets and proprietary information.

Our bill would authorize the President to direct the Treasury Department to freeze the assets of any foreign person or company, including a state owned enterprise, determined to have benefitted from the theft of U.S. technology or proprietary information stolen in cyberspace.

The Deter Cyber Theft Act would also require the Director of National Intelligence to compile an annual report on foreign economic and industrial espionage that includes: a list of foreign countries that engage in economic or industrial espionage in cyberspace against U.S. firms or individuals, including a priority watch list of the worst offenders; a list of U.S. technologies or proprietary information targeted by such espionage, and, to the extent possible, a list of such information that has been stolen; a list of items manufactured or produced or services or services provided using such stolen technologies or proprietary information; a list of foreign companies, including state-owned firms, that benefit from such theft; details of the espionage activities of foreign countries; and actions taken by the DNI and other Federal agencies to combat industrial or economic espionage in cyberspace.

As Dennis C. Blair, former director of national intelligence and co-chair of the IP Commission report has said, ''Jawboning alone won't work. Something has to change China's calculus.'' We need to call out those who are responsible for cyber theft and empower the President to hit the thieves where it hurts most—in their wallets.

If foreign governments, like the Chinese government, want to continue to deny their involvement in cyber theft despite the proof, that is one thing. We can't stop the denials. But we aren't without remedies. We can make sure that the companies that benefit from cyber theft, including state-owned companies, pay the price. Blocking these companies from doing business in the United States will send the message that we have had enough.

We worked closely with the administration in developing this bill. I believe it is an important complement to their recent aggressive efforts to respond to economic espionage by members of the Chinese military.

In light of the Snowden leaks, some have charged that it is inconsistent of the U.S. to criticize China's campaign to steal our intellectual property

through cyberspace. Let's be clear. Attempts to equate China's actions and our own are false. The United States economy is built on the hard work and innovation of American entrepreneurs who are free to think for themselves, develop new products and deliver them to the world. China's actions, on the other hand, reveal a country that is satisfied with theft as a means of economic growth while ironically, suppressing the freedoms that encourage new ideas and innovation. The Snowden revelations are about espionage; the United States does not steal intellectual property for economic gain.

I urge the speedy enactment of the Deter Cyber Theft Act.

By Ms. HEITKAMP (for herself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 2390. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to create a tax credit for foster families; to the Committee on Finance.

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the important issue of foster care and the need to recruit, retain and support foster families. What better time than during National Foster Care Month. Foster parents make a significant and meaningful difference in the lives of so many vulnerable children by opening their hearts and homes. But we continue to struggle to recruit and retain enough foster families to ensure each child is placed in a family-like setting. This is particularly true for Native American kids who are in foster care at rates dramatically higher than others.

Caring for a child in foster care can be more expensive than caring for one's own biological children. Children placed into foster care often have experienced significant emotional and physical trauma and have higher incidences of medical and behavioral health issues, resulting in additional costs to parents. Unfortunately, too many caring foster parents struggle financially because Federal and State programs that reimburse parents for a child's daily living costs do not provide for the real cost of caring for the child. A 2007 study of State foster care programs, conducted by the University of Maryland School of Social Work, Children's Rights, and the National Foster Parent Association, found that current foster care rates would have to increase on average 36 percent nationwide to provide for basic care.

A 2002 report by the Department of Health and Human Services' Inspector General found that foster parents' expenses often exceed foster care reimbursement rates, leading foster parents to pay out-of-pocket to meet foster children's basic needs. Some benefits already exist in the current tax code to support these families, but few are aware of their existence or utilize them.

Today I am introducing the Foster Care Tax Credit Act to provide additional tax relief for foster families to help cover the actual costs of caring for a foster child. This legislation also requests additional outreach and education by the Department of Health and Human Services to better equip State and Tribal foster agencies and foster families to take advantage of all tax benefits available. I thank my colleague, Senator KAINE, for joining me in this effort.

As we continue working towards the goals of improving child welfare, I hope more of my colleagues will join me in seeking to provide additional support for families caring for foster children.

By Mr. REED (for himself, Mr. KIRK, Mrs. MURRAY, and Mr. ISAKSON):

S. 2405. A bill to amend title XII of the Public Health Service Act to reauthorize certain trauma care programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am pleased to introduce the Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Reauthorization Act along with Senators KIRK, MURRAY, and ISAKSON, and also the Improving Trauma Care Act, which includes burn injuries in the definition of trauma.

These two bills, S. 2405 and S. 2406, build on my previous efforts to improve trauma care, which is an essential component of our care system. Timely and effective trauma care is critical to ensuring lifesaving interventions for those who have serious unintentional injuries. Such injuries are the leading cause of death for children and adults under 44, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle toward expeditious passage of these bills.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 2408. A bill to authorize the exploration, leasing, development, and production of oil and gas in and from the western portion of the Coastal Plain of the State of Alaska without surface occupancy, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce two separate bills to open a small portion of the Arctic coastal plain, in my home State of Alaska, to oil and gas development. I am introducing these bills because new production in northern Alaska is vital to my State's future and global energy security.

The 1.5 million acres of the Arctic coastal plain that lie within the nonwilderness portion of the 19 million acre Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are North America's greatest prospect for conventional onshore production. The U.S. Geological Survey continues to estimate that this part of the coastal plain has a mean likelihood of containing 10.4 billion barrels of oil and 8.6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, as well as a reasonable chance of economically producing 16 billion barrels of oil. If produced at a rate of 1 million barrels per day, that supply could last for more than 40 years—bringing us jobs, revenues, and security in every one of them.

Today, Alaska supplies about 7 percent of U.S. crude oil. This is a 4 percent decline since I last introduced similar bills in 2011. It is an even more substantial loss compared to what we have provided in past decades, and what we could be providing today. Importantly, despite the Federal Government owning almost 70 percent of the lands in Alaska, almost all of our oil production is from State lands. The only production on Federal lands is from the Northstar project, a small man-made island that straddles state and federal waters in the Beaufort Sea.

For more than 30 years, my State has successfully balanced resource development with environmental protection. Alaskans have proven, over and over again, that these endeavors are not mutually exclusive, and with advances in technology, the footprint of development projects is only getting smaller. Yet at the Federal level, there is an astonishing refusal to acknowledge that record.

As a result, production on the North Slope continues to decline by about 6 percent annually. With new exploration and development projects on Federal lands blocked or delayed at every turn, Alaska faces a tipping point. Declining production is now threatening the continued operation of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System. A closure of TAPS would shut down all northern Alaska oil production, devastating Alaska's economy, causing global oil prices to rise, and deepening our dependence on unstable petrostates throughout the world. Exploration and development in the Arctic offshore and National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska are moving forward, but these resources will not be developed without a viable way to transport them to market.

The bills I introduce today, S. 2408 and S. 2409, would disturb no more than 2,000 acres of the vast coastal plain, and one bill would not allow surface occupancy of the coastal plain, only directional drilling from outside the refuge to access the oil and gas resources. To put this in perspective, 2,000 acres is less than the size of the local Dulles Airport, or about 1/10 of 1 percent of the refuge. Since these areas are less than 60 miles from TAPS, development in the coastal plain is the quickest, most environmentally-sound way to increase oil production in Alaska and ensure the pipeline will operate well into the future, providing jobs and supporting the economies of both Alaska and the United States.

The terms of both bills include strong protections for fish and wildlife, fish and wildlife habitat, subsistence resources, and the environment. Development could not move forward if it would cause significant adverse impacts to the coastal plain. Both bills

also return 50 percent of all revenues to the Federal Government, rather than the 10 percent allowed under current law. At approximately $100 per barrel, and given the Coastal Plain's estimate of over 10 billion barrels, there is a trillion dollars' worth of oil locked up beneath this small area in northern Alaska.

As we continue to struggle with high long-term unemployment and unsustainable national debt, we need to pursue development opportunities more than ever. The shale oil and gas boom on state and private lands in the Lower 48 has been the one shining light as our economy struggles to recover from the recession. My bills offer us a chance to produce more of our own energy, for the good of the American people, in an environmentally-friendly way. With oil hovering near $100 a barrel, with so many of our fellow citizens out of work, and with the U.S. nation still about 40 percent dependent on foreign oil—it would be foolish to once again ignore our most promising prospect for new development.

For decades, Alaskans, whom polls show overwhelmingly support development of the coastal plain, have been asking permission to explore and develop the resources located there. Technology has advanced so that it is possible to develop oil and gas from the refuge with little or no impact on the area and its wildlife.

I hope this Congress will have the common sense to allow America to help itself by developing the coastal plain's substantial resources. This is critical to my State and the nation as a whole. With this in mind, I will work to educate the members of this chamber about the opportunity we have and the tremendous benefits it would provide. I will show why such development should occur—why it must occur—and how it can benefit all of us at a time when we so desperately need good economic news.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 455—DESIGNATING MAY 2014 AS ''OLDER AMERICANS MONTH''

Mr. NELSON (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. SANDERS, and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 455

Whereas President John F. Kennedy first designated May as ''Senior Citizens Month'' in 1963;

Whereas in 1963, only 17,000,000 individuals living in the United States were age 65 or older, approximately 1/3 of such individuals lived in poverty, and few programs existed to meet the needs of older individuals in the United States;

Whereas in 2014, there are more than 43,000,000 individuals age 65 or older in the United States, and such individuals account for 13.7 percent of the total population of the United States;

Whereas in 2014, more than 9,600,000 veterans of the Armed Forces are age 65 or older;

Whereas older individuals in the United States rely on Federal programs, such as Social Security, the Medicare program, the Medicaid program, for financial security and high-quality affordable health care;

Whereas the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) provides supportive services to help individuals of the United States who are age 60 or older maintain maximum independence in their homes and communities;

Whereas the Older Americans Act of 1965 provides funding for programs, including nutrition services, transportation, and care management, to assist more than 11,000,000 older individuals in the United States each year;

Whereas compared to older individuals in the United States in past generations, older individuals in the United States in 2014 are working longer, living longer, and enjoying healthier, more active, and more independent lifestyles;

Whereas more than 4,300,000 individuals in the United States age 65 or older continue to work as full-time, year-round employees;

Whereas older individuals in the United States play an important role in society by continuing to contribute their experience, knowledge, wisdom, and accomplishments;

Whereas older individuals in the United States play vital roles in their communities and remain involved in volunteer work, mentoring activities, the arts, cultural activities, and civic engagement; and

Whereas a society that recognizes the success of older individuals and continues to enhance their access to quality and affordable health care will encourage the ongoing participation and heightened independence of such individuals and will ensure the continued safety and well-being of such individuals:

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates May 2014 as ''Older Americans Month''; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to provide opportunities for older individuals to continue to flourish by—

(A) emphasizing the importance and leadership of older individuals through public recognition of their ongoing achievements;

(B) presenting opportunities for older individuals to share their wisdom, experience, and skills with younger generations; and

(C) recognizing older individuals as valuable assets in strengthening communities across the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 456—RECOGNIZING NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE CHALLENGES OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, AND ENCOURAGING CONGRESS TO IMPLEMENT POLICY TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF CHILDREN IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

Ms. LANDRIEU (for herself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. CASEY, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CRAPO, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. HAGAN, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. KAINE, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. WYDEN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mrs. BOXER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 456

Whereas National Foster Care Month was established more than 20 years ago to—

(1) bring foster care issues to the forefront;

(2) highlight the importance of permanency for every child; and

(3) recognize the essential role that foster parents, social workers, and advocates have in the lives of children in foster care throughout the United States;

Whereas all children deserve a safe, loving, and permanent home;

Whereas the primary goal of the foster care system is to ensure the safety and well-being of children while working to provide a safe, loving, and permanent home for each child;

Whereas there are approximately 400,000 children living in foster care;

Whereas there were approximately 252,000 youth that entered the foster care system in 2012, while nearly 102,000 youth were eligible and awaiting adoption at the end of 2012;

Whereas foster care is intended to be a temporary placement, but children remain in the foster care system for an average of 2 years;

Whereas ethnic minority children are more likely to stay in the foster care system for longer periods of time and are less likely to be reunited with their biological families;

Whereas foster parents are the front-line caregivers for children who cannot safely remain with their biological parents and provide physical care, emotional support, education advocacy, and are the largest single source of families providing permanent homes for children leaving foster care to adoption;

Whereas children in foster care who are placed with relatives, compared to children placed with nonrelatives, have more stability, including fewer changes in placements, have more positive perceptions of their placements, are more likely to be placed with their siblings, and demonstrate fewer behavioral problems;

Whereas some relative caregivers receive less financial assistance and support services than do foster caregivers;

Whereas recent studies show children in foster care are prescribed psychotropic medication at rates up to 11 times higher than other children on Medicaid and in amounts that exceed the Food and Drug Administration's guidelines;

Whereas youth in foster care are much more likely to face educational instability with 34 percent of foster youth ages 17 to 18 experiencing at least 5 changes while in care;

Whereas youth in foster care are often cut off from other youth and face hurdles in participating in activities common to their peers, such as sports or extracurricular activities;

Whereas youth in foster care are more susceptible to being trafficked, and more needs to be done to prevent, identify, and intervene when a child becomes a victim of the crime;

Whereas an increased emphasis on prevention and reunification services is necessary to reduce the number of children that are forced to remain in the foster care system;

Whereas more than 23,400 youth ''age out'' of foster care annually without a legal permanent connection to an adult or family;

Whereas children who age out of foster care lack the security or support of a biological or adoptive family and frequently struggle to secure affordable housing, obtain health insurance, pursue higher education, and acquire adequate employment;

Whereas nearly half of children in foster care for five or more years experience 7 or more different foster care placements, which often leads to disruption of routines and the need to change schools and move away from siblings, extended families, and familiar surroundings;

Whereas children entering foster care often confront the widespread misperception that children in foster care are disruptive, unruly, and dangerous, even though placement in

foster care is based on the actions of a parent or guardian, not the child;

Whereas States, localities, and communities should be encouraged to invest resources in preventative and reunification services and post-permanency programs to ensure that more children in foster care are provided with safe, loving, and permanent placements;

Whereas Federal legislation over the past three decades, including the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980 (Public Law 96–272), the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (Public Law 105–89), the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–351), the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Public Law 112–34), and the Uninterrupted Scholars Act (Public Law 112–278) provided new investments and services to improve the outcomes of children in the foster care system;

Whereas the Children's Bureau of the Department of Health and Human Services has designated May as National Foster Care Month under the theme ''to help build blocks toward permanent families for foster youth'';

Whereas May would be an appropriate month to designate as National Foster Care Month to provide an opportunity to acknowledge the accomplishments of the child-welfare workforce, foster parents, advocacy community, and mentors for their dedication, accomplishments, and positive impact they have on the lives of children; and

Whereas much remains to be done to ensure that all children have a safe, loving, nurturing, and permanent family, regardless of age or special needs: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes National Foster Care Month as an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges that children face in the foster-care system;

(2) encourages Congress to implement policy to improve the lives of children in the foster care system and maximize the number children exiting foster care to the protection of safe, loving, and permanent families;

(3) supports the designation of National Foster Care Month;

(4) acknowledges the unique needs of children in the foster-care system;

(5) recognizes foster youth throughout the United States for their ongoing tenacity, courage, and resilience while facing life challenges;

(6) acknowledges the exceptional alumni of the foster-care system who serve as advocates and role models for youth who remain in care;

(7) honors the commitment and dedication of the individuals who work tirelessly to provide assistance and services to children in the foster-care system; and

(8) reaffirms the need to continue working to improve the outcomes of all children in the foster-care system through parts B and E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) and other programs designed to—

(A) support vulnerable families;

(B) invest in prevention and reunification services;

(C) promote guardianship, adoption, and other permanent placement opportunities in cases where reunification is not in the best interests of the child;

(D) adequately serve those children brought into the foster-care system; and

(E) facilitate the successful transition into adulthood for children that ''age out'' of the foster-care system.

SENATE RESOLUTION 457—DESIGNATING THE WEEK OF MAY 18 THROUGH MAY 24, 2014, AS ''NATIONAL PUBLIC WORKS WEEK''

Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CARPER, and Mr. BARRASSO) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 457

Whereas public works infrastructure, facilities, and services are of vital importance to the health, safety, and well-being of the people of the United States;

Whereas the public works infrastructure, facilities, and services could not be provided without the dedicated efforts of public works professionals, including engineers and administrators, who represent State and local governments throughout the United States;

Whereas public works professionals design, build, operate, and maintain the transportation systems, water infrastructure, sewage and refuse disposal systems, public buildings, and other structures and facilities that are vital to the people and communities of the United States; and

Whereas understanding the role that public infrastructure plays in protecting the environment, improving public health and safety, contributing to economic vitality, and enhancing the quality of life of every community of the United States is in the interest of the people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates the week of May 18 through May 24, 2014, as ''National Public Works Week'';

(2) recognizes and celebrates the important contributions that public works professionals make every day to improve—

(A) the public infrastructure of the United States; and

(B) the communities that public works professionals serve; and

(3) urges individuals and communities throughout the United States to join with representatives of the Federal Government and the American Public Works Association in activities and ceremonies that are designed—

(A) to pay tribute to the public works professionals of the United States; and

(B) to recognize the substantial contributions that public works professionals make to the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 458—RECOGNIZING MAY AS JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH AND HONORING HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. KIRK, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. NELSON, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. PORTMAN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 458

Whereas in May of each year, people across the United States recognize and celebrate over 350 years of Jewish contributions to the United States through Jewish American Heritage Month;

Whereas during the Holocaust, the Nazi regime murdered approximately 6,000,000 Jews, in addition to millions of non-Jews, between 1933 and 1945;

Whereas the Nazi regime also imprisoned, persecuted, and tortured hundreds of thousands of Jewish victims who nonetheless survived;

Whereas the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Holocaust Encyclopedia estimates that more than 200,000 persecuted Jews found refuge in the United States between 1933 and 1945, and that approximately 137,000 Jewish refugees settled in the United States after World War II in the years between 1945 and 1952;

Whereas in subsequent decades, Jewish refugees continued to immigrate to the United States from Europe, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union;

Whereas many survivors of the Holocaust have dedicated their lives to educating future generations about the dangers of bigotry and anti-Semitism and the resiliency of the human spirit; and

Whereas countless survivors of the Holocaust living in the United States have made numerous and substantial contributions to society in the areas of the humanities, science, government, law, history, medicine, military service, philosophy, social justice, technology, and more, including—

(1) a Marylander who bravely led the decades-long fight for reparations from the French rail companies that transported victims to Nazi concentration camps and killing centers;

(2) a former judge on the International Court of Justice and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, who was a member of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, and who is currently a professor specializing in international justice at The George Washington University Law School;

(3) a native of France who survived a series of Nazi concentration camps and became a well-known author, lecturer, and actor who appeared as Corporal Louis LeBeau on the 1960s television series Hogan's Heroes;

(4) a native of Poland who spent his childhood in a Nazi labor camp, was educated in the United States, and became a renowned chemist, author, professor, and poet, winning the 1981 Nobel Prize in Chemistry;

(5) a former Member of the House of Representatives and Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and founder of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, who, along with his wife and fellow survivor, devoted his life to championing human rights and freedom around the world;

(6) a Polish-born author, historian, educator, member of the United States Holocaust Commission, and recipient of the 2010 Presidential Medal of Freedom;

(7) an Austrian native, literary scholar, and professor who authored a 1992 autobiography, Still Alive: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered, and numerous scholarly publications on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism;

(8) a Croatian-born survivor who helped produce the movie Schindler's List and became an advisor to the USC Shoah Foundation, an archive of testimonies of genocide survivors chaired by Steven Spielberg;

(9) an Illinoisan who created the International Monetary Market, served as chairman of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and revolutionized markets by creating financial futures after fleeing Holocaust-era Poland as a child;

(10) a Hungarian survivor who served in the United States Army in the Korean War and who was awarded the Medal of Honor in 2005 for his heroic actions while being held in a Chinese POW camp that saved the lives of at least 40 fellow soldiers;

(11) a native of Germany who escaped Nazi Germany as a teenager, served as a corporal in the United States Army, was an interpreter and analyst during the Nuremberg Trials, served in the Foreign Service of the Department of State, and authored a book about a Jewish resistor who assassinated a

Nazi official and another about Allied intelligence near the end of World War II;

(12) a world-renowned psychosexual therapist, radio and television personality, professor, and author who escaped Nazi Germany as a child and fought in the Israeli War of Independence; and

(13) the winner of the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize, an author, professor, and activist, whose memoir Night is an internationally acclaimed account of the terrors of the Holocaust:

Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes May 2014 as Jewish American Heritage Month;

(2) expresses appreciation for the substantial and varied contributions made to the United States by the survivors of the Holocaust;

(3) encourages the people of the United States to learn about the efforts and achievements of Holocaust survivors who immigrated to the United States in the years following World War II;

(4) expresses admiration for the more than 100,000 Holocaust survivors living in the United States who continue to bear witness to their personal stories and educate the world; and

(5) understands the hardships Holocaust survivors have endured, and supports their desire to age with dignity and comfort in their homes and communities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 459—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE WITH RESPECT TO CHILDHOOD STROKE AND RECOGNIZING MAY 2014 AS ''NATIONAL PEDIATRIC STROKE AWARENESS MONTH''

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. CHAMBLISS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 459

Whereas a stroke, also known as cerebrovascular disease, is an acute neurologic injury that occurs when the blood supply to a part of the brain is interrupted by a clot in the artery or a burst of the artery;

Whereas a stroke is a medical emergency that can cause permanent neurologic damage or even death if not promptly diagnosed and treated;

Whereas a stroke occurs in approximately 1 out of every 3,500 live births, and 4.6 out of 100,000 children ages 19 and under experience a stroke each year;

Whereas a stroke can occur before birth;

Whereas stroke is among the top 12 causes of death for children between the ages of 1 and 14 in the United States;

Whereas 20 to 40 percent of children who have suffered a stroke die as a result;

Whereas a stroke recurs within 5 years in 10 percent of children who have had an ischemic or hemorrhagic stroke;

Whereas the death rate for children who experience a stroke before the age of 1 is the highest out of all child age groups;

Whereas there are no approved therapies for the treatment of acute stroke in infants and children;

Whereas approximately 60 percent of infants and children who have a pediatric stroke will have serious, permanent neurological disabilities, including paralysis, seizures, speech and vision problems, and attention, learning, and behavioral difficulties;

Whereas such disabilities may require ongoing physical therapy and surgeries;

Whereas the permanent health concerns of and treatments for strokes that occur during childhood and young adulthood have considerable impacts on children, families, and society;

Whereas more information is necessary regarding the cause, treatment, and prevention of pediatric strokes;

Whereas medical research is the only means by which the people of the United States can identify and develop effective treatment and prevention strategies for pediatric strokes; and

Whereas early diagnosis and treatment of pediatric strokes greatly improves the chances that an affected child will recover and not experience a recurrence of a stroke: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes May 2014 as ''National Pediatric Stroke Awareness Month'';

(2) urges the people of the United States to support the efforts, programs, services, and organizations that enhance public awareness of pediatric stroke;

(3) supports the work of the National Institutes of Health in pursuit of medical progress on pediatric stroke; and

(4) urges continued coordination and cooperation between the Federal Government, State and local governments, researchers, families, and the public to improve treatments and prognoses for children who suffer from strokes.

SENATE RESOLUTION 460—RECOGNIZING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MAY 2014 AS ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH AS AN IMPORTANT TIME TO CELEBRATE THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OF ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS TO THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Mr. REID, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BROWN, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. HELLER, Mr. KIRK, Ms. CANTWELL, and Mr. WARNER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 460

Whereas the United States joins together each May to pay tribute to the contributions of generations of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who have enriched the history of the United States;

Whereas the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States is inextricably tied to the story of the United States;

Whereas the Asian American and Pacific Islander community is an inherently diverse population comprised of more than 45 distinct ethnicities and more than 100 language dialects;

Whereas, according to the Bureau of the Census, the Asian American population grew faster than any other racial or ethnic group in the United States during the last decade, surging nearly 46 percent between 2000 and 2010, which is a growth rate 4 times faster than that of the total population of the United States;

Whereas the 2010 decennial census estimated that there are approximately 17,300,000 residents of the United States who identify as Asian and approximately 1,200,000 residents of the United States who identify themselves as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, making up approximately 5.5 percent and 0.4 percent, respectively, of the total population of the United States;

Whereas the month of May was selected for Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month because the first immigrants from Japan arrived in the United States on May 7, 1843, and the first transcontinental railroad was completed on May 10, 1869, with substantial contributions from immigrants from China;

Whereas section 102 of title 36, United States Code, officially designates May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month and requests the President to issue an annual proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe the month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities;

Whereas Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, such as Daniel K. Inouye, a Medal of Honor and Presidential Medal of Freedom recipient who, as President Pro Tempore of the Senate, was the highest-ranking Asian American government official in United States history, Dalip Singh Saund, the first Asian American Congressman, Patsy T. Mink, the first woman of color and Asian American woman to be elected to Congress, Hiram L. Fong, the first Asian American Senator, and others have made significant contributions in both our government and our military including the first Asian American cabinet member in 2000 and the first female Asian American cabinet member in 2001;

Whereas the year 2014 marks several important milestones for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, including—

(1) the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders under Executive Order 13125 by President William J. Clinton;

(2) the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, a bicameral caucus of Members of Congress advocating on behalf of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders; and

(3) the 20th anniversary of the creation of the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies;

Whereas in 2014, the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, a bicameral caucus of Members of Congress advocating on behalf of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, is composed of 41 Members, including 13 Members of Asian or Pacific Islander descent;

Whereas in 2014, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are serving in State legislatures across the United States in record numbers, including in the States of Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington;

Whereas the number of Federal judges who are Asian Americans or Pacific Islanders doubled between 2001 and 2008 and more than tripled between 2009 and 2014, reflecting a commitment to diversity in the Federal judiciary that has resulted in the confirmations of high caliber Asian American and Pacific Islander judicial nominees;

Whereas there remains much to be done to ensure that Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have access to resources and a voice in the Government of the United States and continue to advance in the political landscape of the United States; and

Whereas celebrating Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month provides the people of the United States with an opportunity to recognize the achievements, contributions, and history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and to appreciate the challenges faced by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) recognizes the significance of May 2014 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

as an important time to celebrate the significant contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the history of the United States; and

(2) recognizes that the Asian American and Pacific Islander community enhances the rich diversity of and strengthens the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 461—HONORING JAMES L. OBERSTAR AS A REMARKABLE PUBLIC SERVANT WHO SERVED IN CONGRESS WITH EXTRAORDINARY DEDICATION AND PURPOSE

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. BEGICH) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 461

Whereas James L. Oberstar was born on September 10, 1934, in Chisholm, Minnesota;

Whereas James L. Oberstar was a distinguished legislator who served 36 years in Congress, from 1975 to 2011, as a member of the House of Representatives from northern Minnesota, making him the longest serving Congressman for the State of Minnesota;

Whereas James L. Oberstar was an expert on public works and transportation issues and devoted his public career to improving transportation and infrastructure, including through his work as a staff member for John Blatnik, member of the House of Representatives from Minnesota, from 1963 to 1974;

Whereas James L. Oberstar was a staunch supporter of the iron ore industry in Minnesota and fought tirelessly to keep the mines open, protect the rights of workers, and improve safety conditions;

Whereas, throughout his career, James L. Oberstar secured Federal funding for local communities for the development of bike lanes, sidewalks, biking trails, and hiking trails across Minnesota and the United States;

Whereas James L. Oberstar was the Chair of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives during the 110th and 111th Congress;

Whereas James L. Oberstar was a supporter of the Federal Safe Routes to School Program which improves safety on walking and bicycling routes to school and encourages children and families to travel between home and school by walking or biking;

Whereas James L. Oberstar introduced H.R. 3311 during the 110th Congress to provide emergency funding to replace the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis, Minnesota, after its tragic collapse in 2007;

Whereas James L. Oberstar was a strong advocate for improving aviation safety and served as Chair of the Subcommittee on Aviation of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives from 1989 to 1994; and

Whereas James L. Oberstar was a tireless champion of maritime issues, particularly those on the Great Lakes, and on May 24, 2011, the shipping vessel the Honorable James L. Oberstar was christened in Duluth, Minnesota: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors James L. Oberstar as a remarkable public servant who served in Congress with extraordinary dedication and purpose;

(2) remembers the work James L. Oberstar accomplished to improve transportation, infrastructure, and mine safety; and

(3) recognizes the indelible legacy James L. Oberstar has left on the State of Minnesota and the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 462—RECOGNIZING THE KHMER AND LAO/HMONG FREEDOM FIGHTERS OF CAMBODIA AND LAOS FOR SUPPORTING AND DEFENDING THE UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES DURING THE CONFLICT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. RUBIO submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 462

Whereas the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters (also known as the ''Khmer and Lao/Hmong veterans'') fought and died with United States Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast Asia;

Whereas the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters rescued United States pilots shot down in enemy-controlled territory and returned the pilots to safety;

Whereas the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters retrieved and prevented from falling into enemy hands secret and sensitive information, technology, and equipment;

Whereas the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters captured and destroyed enemy supplies and prevented enemy forces from using the supplies to kill members of the United States Armed Forces;

Whereas the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters gathered and provided to the United States Armed Forces intelligence about enemy troop positions, movement, and strength;

Whereas the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters provided food, shelter, and support to the United States Armed Forces;

Whereas the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters facilitated the evacuation of the United States Embassy in Phnom Penh on April 12, 1975, by continuing to fight Khmer Rouge forces as the forces advanced upon the capital;

Whereas, in 2014, the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters are still subject to intimidation, ridicule, discrimination, and death if identified in Cambodia or Laos;

Whereas veterans of the Khmer Mobile Guerrilla Forces, the Lao/Hmong Special Guerrilla Units, and the Khmer Republic Armed Forces defended human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of representation and association; and

Whereas the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters have not yet received official recognition from the United States Government for their heroic efforts and support: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate affirms and recognizes the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters and the people of Cambodia and Laos for their support and defense of the United States Armed Forces and freedom of democracy in Southeast Asia.

SENATE RESOLUTION 463—HONORING THE LIFE, ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND LEGACY OF BILLY FRANK, JR., AND EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON HIS PASSING

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. CANTWELL) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary:

S. RES. 463

Whereas in the 1850s, the United States Government signed a series of treaties with Washington State tribes under which the tribes granted millions of acres of land to the United States in exchange for the establishment of reservations and the recognition of traditional hunting and fishing rights;

Whereas Billy Frank, Jr. was born to Willie Frank, Sr. and Angeline Frank on March 9, 1931, at Frank's Landing on the banks of the Nisqually River in Washington State;

Whereas the tireless efforts and dedication of Billy Frank, Jr. led to a historic legal victory that ensured that the United States would honor promises made in treaties with the Washington tribes;

Whereas Billy Frank, Jr. was first arrested in December of 1945, at the age of 14, for fishing for salmon in the Nisqually River;

Whereas Billy Frank, Jr. was subsequently arrested more than 50 times for exercising his treaty-protected right to fish for salmon;

Whereas over the years, Billy Frank, Jr. and other tribal members staged ''fish-ins'' that often placed the protestors in danger of being arrested or attacked;

Whereas during these fish-ins, Billy Frank, Jr. and others demanded that they be allowed to fish in historically tribal waters, a right the Nisqually had reserved in the Treaty of Medicine Creek;

Whereas declining salmon runs in Washington waters resulted in increased arrests of tribal members exercising their fishing rights under the Treaty;

Whereas on February 12, 1974, in the case of United States v. Washington, Judge George Hugo Boldt of the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington issued a decision that affirmed the right of Washington treaty tribes to take up to half of the harvestable fish in tribal fishing waters and reaffirmed that the United States must honor treaties made with Native American tribes;

Whereas the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court of the United States upheld the Boldt decision, and the treaty tribes became co-managers of the salmon resource in the State of Washington;

Whereas after the Boldt decision, Billy Frank, Jr. continued his fight to protect natural resources, salmon, and a healthy environment;

Whereas the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, where Billy Frank, Jr. served as chairman, works to establish working relationships with State agencies and non-Indian groups to manage fisheries, restore and protect habitats, and protect tribal treaty rights;

Whereas Billy Frank, Jr. refused to be bitter in the face of jail, racism, and abuse, and his influence was felt not just in Washington State but around the world;

Whereas Billy Frank, Jr. was awarded the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism, the Common Cause Award for Human Rights Efforts, the American Indian Distinguished Service Award, the Washington State Environmental Excellence Award, and the Wallace Stegner Award for his years of service and dedication to his battle;

Whereas the legacy of Billy Frank, Jr. will live on in stories, in memories, and every time a tribal member exercises his or her right to harvest salmon in Washington State; and

Whereas the legacy of Billy Frank, Jr. transcends his 83 years and will provide inspiration to those still around today and those still to come: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the life, legacy, and many accomplishments of Billy Frank, Jr.; and

(2) extends its heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the family of Billy Frank,

Jr., the Nisqually Tribe, all Native Americans, and all people around the world who were inspired by his example.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 36—PERMITTING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE CAPITOL FOR A CEREMONY TO AWARD THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE NEXT OF KIN OR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF RAOUL WALLENBERG

Mrs. GILLIBRAND submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 36

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF ROTUNDA FOR CEREMONY TO AWARD CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL TO THE NEXT OF KIN OR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF RAOUL WALLENBERG.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The rotunda of the Capitol is authorized to be used on July 9, 2014, for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the next of kin or personal representative of Raoul Wallenberg in recognition of his achievements and heroic actions during the Holocaust.

(b) PREPARATIONS.—Physical preparations for the ceremony described in subsection (a) shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as the Architect of the Capitol may prescribe.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3227. Mr. REID (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2198, to direct the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to take actions to provide additional water supplies to the State of California due to drought, and for other purposes.

SA 3228. Mr. REID (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2198, supra.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3227. Mr. REID (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2198, to direct the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to take actions to provide additional water supplies to the State of California due to drought, and for other purposes; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Emergency Drought Relief Act of 2014''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Findings.
Sec. 3. Definitions.
Sec. 4. Emergency projects.
Sec. 5. Emergency environmental reviews.
Sec. 6. State revolving funds.
Sec. 7. Effect on State laws.
Sec. 8. Termination of authorities.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) as established in the Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by the Governor of the State on January 17, 2014, the State is experiencing record dry conditions;

(2) extremely dry conditions have persisted in the State since 2012, and the drought conditions are likely to persist into the future;

(3) the water supplies of the State are at record-low levels, as indicated by a statewide average snowpack of 12 percent of the normal average for winter as of February 1, 2014, and the fact that all major Central Valley Project reservoir levels are at or below 50 percent of the capacity of the reservoirs as of April 1, 2014;

(4) the 2013-2014 drought constitutes a serious emergency posing immediate and severe risks to human life and safety and to the environment throughout the State;

(5) the emergency requires—

(A) immediate and credible action that respects the complexity of the water system of the State and the importance of the water system to the entire State; and

(B) policies that do not pit stakeholders against one another, which history has shown only leads to costly litigation that benefits no one and prevents any real solutions;

(6) Federal law (including regulations) directly authorizes expedited decisionmaking procedures and environmental and public review procedures to enable timely and appropriate implementation of actions to respond to such a type and severity of emergency; and

(7) the serious emergency posed by the 2013-2014 drought in the State fully satisfies the conditions necessary for the exercise of emergency decisionmaking, analytical, and public review requirements under—

(A) the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

(B) the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

(C) water control management procedures of the Corps of Engineers described in section 222.5 of title 33, Code of Federal Regulations (including successor regulations); and

(D) the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991 (Public Law 102–250; 106 Stat. 53).

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT.—The term ''Central Valley Project'' has the meaning given the term in section 3403 of the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (106 Stat. 4707).

(2) KLAMATH PROJECT.—The term ''Klamath Project'' means the Bureau of Reclamation project in the States of California and Oregon, as authorized under the Act of June 17, 1902 (32 Stat. 388, chapter 1093).

(3) RECLAMATION PROJECT.—The term ''Reclamation Project'' means a project constructed pursuant to the authorities of the reclamation laws and whose facilities are wholly or partially located in the State.

(4) SECRETARIES.—The term ''Secretaries'' means—

(A) the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency;

(B) the Secretary of Agriculture;

(C) the Secretary of Commerce; and

(D) the Secretary of the Interior.

(5) STATE.—The term ''State'' means the State of California.

(6) STATE WATER PROJECT.—The term ''State Water Project'' means the water project described by California Water Code section 11550 et seq., and operated by the California Department of Water Resources.

SEC. 4. EMERGENCY PROJECTS.

(a) WATER SUPPLIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In response to the declaration of a state of drought emergency by the Governor of the State, the Secretaries shall provide the maximum quantity of water supplies possible to Central Valley Project agricultural, municipal and industrial, and refuge service and repayment contractors, State Water Project contractors, and any other locality or municipality in the State, by approving, consistent with applicable laws (including regulations), projects and operations to provide additional water supplies as quickly as possible based on available information to address the emergency conditions.

(2) APPLICATION.—Paragraph (1) applies to projects or operations involving the Klamath Project if the projects or operations would benefit Federal water contractors in the State.

(b) LIMITATION.—Nothing in this section allows agencies to approve projects—

(1) that would otherwise require congressional authorization; or

(2) without following procedures required by applicable law.

(c) ADMINISTRATION.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretaries shall, consistent with applicable laws (including regulations)—

(1) authorize and implement actions to ensure that the Delta Cross Channel Gates shall remain open to the greatest extent possible, timed to maximize the peak flood tide period and provide water supply and water quality benefits for the duration of the drought emergency declaration of the State, consistent with operational criteria and monitoring criteria developed pursuant to the California State Water Resources Control Board's Order Approving a Temporary Urgency Change in License and Permit Terms in Response to Drought Conditions, effective January 31, 2014, or a successor order;

(2)(A) collect data associated with the operation of the Delta Cross Channel Gates described in paragraph (1) and the impact of the operation on species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), water quality, and water supply; and

(B) after assessing the data described in subparagraph (A), require the Director of the National Marine Fisheries Service to recommend revisions to operations of the Central Valley Project and the California State Water Project, including, if appropriate, the reasonable and prudent alternatives contained in the biological opinion issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service on June 4, 2009, that are likely to produce fishery, water quality, and water supply benefits;

(3)(A) implement turbidity control strategies that allow for increased water deliveries while avoiding jeopardy to adult delta smelt (Hypomesus transpacificus) due to entrainment at Central Valley Project and State Water Project pumping plants; and

(B) manage reverse flow in the Old and Middle Rivers as prescribed by the biological opinions issued by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service on December 15, 2008, for Delta smelt and by the National Marine Fisheries Service on June 4, 2009, for salmonids, to minimize water supply reductions for the Central Valley Project and the State Water Project;

(4) adopt a 1:1 inflow to export ratio for the increased flow of the San Joaquin River, as measured as a 3-day running average at Vernalis during the period from April 1 through May 31, resulting from voluntary transfers and exchanges of water supplies, among other purposes;

(5) issue all necessary permit decisions under the authority of the Secretaries within 30 days of receiving a completed application by the State to place and use temporary barriers or operable gates in Delta channels to improve water quantity and quality for State Water Project and Central Valley Project South of Delta water contractors and other water users, which barriers or gates should provide benefits for species protection and in-Delta water user water quality and shall be designed such that formal consultations under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536) would not be necessary;

(6)(A) require the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation to complete all requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) necessary to make final permit decisions on water transfer requests associated with voluntarily fallowing nonpermanent crops in the State, within 30 days of receiving such a request; and

(B) require the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to allow any water transfer request associated with fallowing to maximize the quantity of water supplies available for nonhabitat uses as long as the fallowing and associated water transfer are in compliance with applicable Federal laws (including regulations);

(7) participate in, issue grants, or otherwise provide funding for, as soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, under existing authority available to the Secretary of the Interior, pilot projects to increase water in reservoirs in regional river basins experiencing extreme, exceptional, or sustained drought that have a direct impact on the water supply of the State, including the Colorado River Basin, provided that any participation, grant, or funding by the Secretary with respect to the Upper Division shall be with or to the respective State;

(8) maintain all rescheduled water supplies held in the San Luis Reservoir and Millerton Reservoir for all water users for delivery in the immediately following contract water year unless precluded by reservoir storage capacity limitations;

(9) to the maximum extent possible based on the availability of water and without causing land subsidence or violating water quality standards—

(A) meet the contract water supply needs of Central Valley Project refuges through the improvement or installation of water conservation measures, water conveyance facilities, and wells to use groundwater resources, which activities may be accomplished by using funding made available under the Water Assistance Program or the WaterSMART program of the Department of the Interior; and

(B) make a quantity of Central Valley Project surface water obtained from the measures implemented under subparagraph (A) available to Central Valley Project contractors;

(10) in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture, enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a comprehensive study, to be completed not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, on the effectiveness and environmental impacts of saltcedar biological control efforts on increasing water supplies and improving riparian habitats of the Colorado River and its principal tributaries, in the State and elsewhere;

(11) make any WaterSMART grant funding allocated to the State available on a priority and expedited basis for projects in the State that—

(A) provide emergency drinking and municipal water supplies to localities in a quantity necessary to meet minimum public health and safety needs;

(B) prevent the loss of permanent crops;

(C) minimize economic losses resulting from drought conditions; or

(D) provide innovative water conservation tools and technology for agriculture and urban water use that can have immediate water supply benefits;

(12) implement offsite upstream projects in the Delta and upstream Sacramento River and San Joaquin basins, in coordination with the California Department of Water Resources and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, that offset the effects on species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) due to actions taken under this Act; and

(13) use all available scientific tools to identify any changes to real-time operations of Bureau of Reclamation, State and local water projects that could result in the availability of additional water supplies.

(d) OTHER AGENCIES.—To the extent that a Federal agency other than agencies headed by the Secretaries has a role in approving projects described in subsections (a) and (c), this section shall apply to those Federal agencies.

(e) ACCELERATED PROJECT DECISION AND ELEVATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of the State, the heads of Federal agencies shall use the expedited procedures under this subsection to make final decisions relating to a Federal project or operation to provide additional water supplies or address emergency drought conditions pursuant to subsections (a) and (c).

(2) REQUEST FOR RESOLUTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Upon the request of the State, the head of an agency referred to in subsection (a), or the head of another Federal agency responsible for carrying out a review of a project, as applicable, the Secretary of the Interior shall convene a final project decision meeting with the heads of all relevant Federal agencies to decide whether to approve a project to provide emergency water supplies.

(B) MEETING.—The Secretary of the Interior shall convene a meeting requested under subparagraph (A) not later than 7 days after receiving the meeting request.

(3) NOTIFICATION.—Upon receipt of a request for a meeting under this subsection, the Secretary of the Interior shall notify the heads of all relevant Federal agencies of the request, including the project to be reviewed and the date for the meeting.

(4) DECISION.—Not later than 10 days after the date on which a meeting is requested under paragraph (2), the head of the relevant Federal agency shall issue a final decision on the project.

(5) MEETING CONVENED BY SECRETARY.—The Secretary of the Interior may convene a final project decision meeting under this subsection at any time, at the discretion of the Secretary, regardless of whether a meeting is requested under paragraph (2).

SEC. 5. EMERGENCY ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEWS.

To minimize the time spent carrying out environmental reviews and to deliver water quickly that is needed to address emergency drought conditions in the State, the head of each applicable Federal agency shall, in carrying out this Act, consult with the Council on Environmental Quality in accordance with section 1506.11 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (including successor regulations) to develop alternative arrangements to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) during the emergency.

SEC. 6. STATE REVOLVING FUNDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, in allocating amounts for each of the fiscal years during which the emergency drought declaration of the State is in force to State water pollution control revolving funds established under title VI of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.) and the State drinking water treatment revolving loan funds established under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12), shall, for those projects that are eligible to receive assistance under section 603 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1383) or section 1452(a)(2) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12(a)(2)), respectively, that the State determines will provide additional water supplies most expeditiously to areas that are at risk of having an inadequate supply of water for public health and safety purposes or to improve resiliency to drought—

(1) require the State to review and prioritize funding for such projects;

(2) issue a determination of waivers within 30 days of the conclusion of the informal public comment period pursuant to section 436(c) of title IV of division G of Public Law 113–76; and

(3) authorize, at the request of the State, 40-year financing for assistance under section 603(d)(2) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1383(d)(2)) or section 1452(f)(2) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12(f)(2)).

(b) EFFECT OF SECTION.—Nothing in this section authorizes the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to modify any funding allocation, funding criteria, or other requirement relating to State water pollution control revolving funds established under title VI of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1381 et seq.) and the State drinking water treatment revolving loan funds established under section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (42 U.S.C. 300j–12) for any other State.

SEC. 7. EFFECT ON STATE LAWS.

Nothing in this Act preempts any State law in effect on the date of enactment of this Act, including area of origin and other water rights protections.

SEC. 8. TERMINATION OF AUTHORITIES.

The authorities under section 4(a), paragraphs (1) through (6) of section 4(c), paragraphs (8) and (9) of section 4(c), paragraphs (11) through (13) of section 4(c), section 5, and section 6 permanently expire on the date on which the Governor of the State suspends the state of drought emergency declaration.

SA 3228. Mr. REID (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Ms. MURKOWSKI)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 2198, to direct the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to take actions to provide additional water supplies to the State of California due to drought, and for other purposes; as follows:

Amend the title to read as follows: ''To direct the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to take actions to provide additional water supplies to the State of California due to drought, and for other purposes.''.

NOTICE OF HEARING

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet on May 22, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Examining Access and Supports for Servicemembers and Veterans in Higher Education.''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Aissa Canchola of the committee staff on (202) 224–2009.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 22, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. MENENDEZ. 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 May 22, 2014, at 10 a.m. in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Examining Access and Supports for Servicemembers and Veterans in Higher Education.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Housing, Transportation, and Community Development be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 22, 2014, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Bringing Our Transit Infrastructure to a State of Good Repair.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, on behalf of Senator MENENDEZ, I ask unanimous consent that Chris Landberg, a detailee from the State Department to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, be granted floor privileges through June 12, 2014.

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. 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, and all nominations placed on the Secretary's desk in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy; that the nominations be confirmed, en bloc; 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; and 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 are as follows:

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer 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

Col. William P. Robertson

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army 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. Anthony G. Crutchfield

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army 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. James C. McConville

IN THE AIR FORCE

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

Lt. Gen. Gregory A. Biscone

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be brigadier general

Col. Kathleen A. Cook

The following named officer for appointment as the Deputy Judge Advocate General of the Air Force and appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 8037:

To be major general

Col. Jeffrey A. Rockwell

IN THE NAVY

The following named officers 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)

Captain Brian J. Brakke
Captain Richard A. Brown
Captain James S. Bynum
Captain Peter J. Clarke
Captain Scott D. Conn
Captain Brian K. Corey
Captain Richard A. Correll
Captain Marc H. Dalton
Captain Collin P. Green
Captain Dale E. Horan
Captain Mary M. Jackson
Captain James W Kilby
Captain Roy I. Kitchener
Captain James J. Malloy
Captain Ross A. Myers
Captain Jeffrey S. Ruth
Captain Lorin C. Selby
Captain John W. Tammen, Jr.
Captain Kent D. Whalen
Captain Kenneth R. Whitesell
Captain Charles F Williams
Captain Jesse A. Wilson, Jr.

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. Timothy C. Gallaudet

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. Steven L. Parode

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. Johnny R. Wolfe, Jr.

IN THE AIR FORCE

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. Samuel A. Greaves

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Warren D. Berry

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be major general

Brig. Gen. Jon A. Norman

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 8081:

To be major general

Col. Roosevelt Allen, Jr.

The following Air National Guard of the United States officer 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

Col. Richard W. Kelly

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. Carlton D. Everhart, II

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. Darryl L. Roberson

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

Lt. Gen. Ellen M. Pawlikowski

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army 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. Karen E. Dyson

IN THE AIR FORCE

The following named officer for appointment as the Judge Advocate General of the Air Force and for appointment in the United States Air Force to the grade indicated while serving as the Judge Advocate General under title 10, U.S.C., section 8037:

To be lieutenant general

Brig. Gen. Christopher F. Burne

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. Marshall B. Webb

IN THE ARMY

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Army 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

Lt. Gen. Raymond A. Thomas, III

IN THE NAVY

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

Rear Adm. Thomas S. Rowden

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Navy to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 624:

To be rear admiral

Rear Adm. (lh) John F. Kirby

IN THE MARINE CORPS

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps 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

Lt. Gen. Jon M. Davis

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps 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. Kenneth F. McKenzie, Jr.

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps 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

Lt. Gen. Robert B. Neller

The following named officer for appointment in the United States Marine Corps 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

Lt. Gen. John A. Toolan, Jr.

The following named officers for appointment in the United States Marine Corps Reserve to the grade indicated under title 10, U.S.C., section 12203:

To be brigadier general

Col. Patrick J. Hermesmann
Col. Helen G. Pratt

IN THE AIR FORCE

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

Lt. Gen. James M. Holmes

NOMINATIONS PLACED ON THE SECRETARY'S DESK

IN THE AIR FORCE

PN1593 AIR FORCE nomination of Scott A. Raber, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1594 AIR FORCE nomination of Mark D. Levin, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1595 AIR FORCE nominations (2) beginning JEREMY P. GARLICK, and ending DERICK A. SAGER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1596 AIR FORCE nomination of Tonya Y. White, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1597 AIR FORCE nomination of Daniel L. Rosera, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1598 AIR FORCE nominations (2) beginning JASON E. OBRIEN, and ending ERIK D. RUDIGER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1627 AIR FORCE nomination of Robert J. Trainer, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1667 AIR FORCE nominations (6) beginning KENNETH G. CROOKS, and ending JAMES D. TIMS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1669 AIR FORCE nominations (16) beginning KIM L. BOWEN, and ending DANIEL K. WATERMAN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1671 AIR FORCE nominations (107) beginning VICTORIA M. AGLEWILSON, and ending DEBORAH L. WILLIS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1672 AIR FORCE nominations (24) beginning HEATHER A. BODWELL, and ending CHRISTIAN L. WILLIAMS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1710 AIR FORCE nominations (8) beginning ERICH M. GAUGER, and ending TIMOTHY J. ZIELICKE, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 15, 2014.

PN1711 AIR FORCE nominations (2) beginning ANTHONY F. FONTENOS, and ending VU T. NGUYEN, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 15, 2014.

PN1712–1 AIR FORCE nominations (105) beginning PETER G BAILEY, and ending KEVIN R. WINDSOR, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 15, 2014.

IN THE ARMY

PN1530 ARMY nomination of Randolph S. Wardle, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of March 13, 2014.

PN1599 ARMY nomination of Stanley F. Zezotarski, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1600 ARMY nomination of Eric S. Comette, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1601 ARMY nomination of William D. Swenson, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1602 ARMY nomination of Gregory R. Shepard, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1603 ARMY nominations (8) beginning DAVID F. CAPORICCI, and ending ERIC G. WISHART, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1628 ARMY nomination of Philander Pinckney, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1629 ARMY nomination of Elizabeth Joyce, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1630 ARMY nomination of Jasmine T. Daniels, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1631 ARMY nominations (3) beginning JAN S. SUNDE, and ending HIMANSHU PATHAK, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1632 ARMY nomination of Joseph L. Craver, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1673 ARMY nominations (286) beginning MARIBETH A. AFFELDT, and ending R10045, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1674–1 ARMY nominations (244) beginning MIGUEL AGUILAR, and ending MARK A. ZINSER, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1675 ARMY nominations (50) beginning JEFFREY M. ABEL, and ending DEBORAH A. WILSON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1676 ARMY nominations (4) beginning BOBBY L. CHRISTINE, and ending JAMES K. MASSENGILL, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1713 ARMY nominations (9) beginning RONALD W. BURKETT, II, and ending BRIAN J. MELTON, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 15, 2014.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

PN1341 MARINE CORPS nominations (261) beginning WILLIAM B. ALLEN, IV, and ending JAMES L. ZEPKO, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of January 9, 2014.

PN1437 MARINE CORPS nomination of Richard P. Owens, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1440 MARINE CORPS nomination of Robert M. Manning, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of February 10, 2014.

PN1607 MARINE CORPS nominations (8) beginning JAMES P. EDMUNDS, III, and ending PAUL B. WEBB, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1608 MARINE CORPS nominations (39) beginning LEONARD F. ANDERSON, IV, and ending KONSTANTIN E. ZOGANAS, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

IN THE NAVY

PN1609 NAVY nomination of William A. Garren, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1610 NAVY nomination of Leander J. Sackey, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1611 NAVY nomination of Christopher M. Davis, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of April 10, 2014.

PN1633 NAVY nomination of Charles E. Varsogea, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1634 NAVY nomination of Louis J. Lazzara, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1635 NAVY nomination of Tara M. McArthur-Milton, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1636 NAVY nomination of Todd W. Boehm, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 1, 2014.

PN1651 NAVY nominations (33) beginning JOHN I. ACTKINSON, and ending JUSTIN R. WOLFE, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 5, 2014.

PN1652 NAVY nomination of Robert J. Polvino, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 5, 2014.

PN1677 NAVY nomination of Victor Sorrentino, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1678 NAVY nomination of Jeffrey P. Martin, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1679 NAVY nomination of Richard D. McCormick, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1680 NAVY nominations (12) beginning DAVID W. ATWOOD, and ending ANNA H. WOODARD, which nominations were received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1681 NAVY nomination of William S. Switzer, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 7, 2014.

PN1714 NAVY nomination of Joshua L. Keever, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 15, 2014.

PN1715 NAVY nomination of Rustin J. Dozeman, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 15, 2014.

PN1716 NAVY nomination of Lori L. Cody, which was received by the Senate and appeared in the Congressional Record of May 15, 2014.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

AMENDING THE CLEAN AIR ACT

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 342.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 724) to amend the Clean Air Act to remove the requirement for dealer certification of new light-duty motor vehicles.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, I am pleased the Senate is considering H.R. 724, a bill to remove a redundant paperwork requirement whenever a customer buys a new car.

Every new vehicle must comply with the Clean Air Act when it is manufactured and H.R. 724 will not change this. H.R. 724 simply eliminates an out-of-date requirement that auto dealers provide a piece of paper to each customer to certify that a new car or truck complies with the Clean Air Act's emissions requirements. Information confirming that the vehicle complies with all applicable emission requirements is already available under the hood of the vehicle and on the EPA's website, so providing the certification on a piece of paper is redundant. In addition to removing an unnecessary requirement, H.R. 724 eliminates 15 million pieces of paper that would otherwise be handed out each year with every new vehicle sold.

The bill was authored by Representative GARY PETERS and Representative BOB LATTA and was passed by the House of Representatives on January 8 by a vote of 405–0. I was glad to lead the effort to pass this bill in the Senate. I thank Senator BOXER, who helped ensure timely consideration and unanimous passage of the bill by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. I urge my fellow Senators to pass H.R. 724 so we can send this commonsense bill to the President to become law.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask that H.R. 724 be read a third time and passed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 724) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

COLLINSVILLE RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION ACT

COCONINO NATIONAL FOREST LAND CONVEYANCE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the following items en bloc: Calendar No. 360, H.R. 862; and Calendar No. 123, H.R. 316.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I thank my colleagues for their prompt consideration and passage of H.R. 862, a bill that would authorize the conveyance of 2.67 acres within the Coconino National Forest to landowners who built on those parcels in reliance on an erroneous survey.

On Tuesday, a relatively small 4-acre wildfire started just north of Sedona, AZ, near the Slide Rock State Park. It took less than 24 hours for the Slide Fire, as it is being called, to explode through the overgrown and dry vegetation and make its way up Oak Creek Canyon. In less than 2 days, estimates put the fire at 4,800 acres. Unfortunately, it appears poised to grow larger.

Some areas have already been evacuated and an estimated 3,200 people in the Kachina Village and Forest Highland communities were put on pre-evacuation notice last night. Nearby, the Mountainaire community sits approximately five miles from the fire line. As they watch smoke fill the sky near their homes, residents are preparing for the possibility of having to evacuate. For some of those residents, the imminent fire threat brings added uncertainly due to a longstanding boundary dispute.

The problem stems from an incorrect survey that was completed in 1960. Unbeknownst to the landowners, homes and other improvements were built based on that errant work. In 2007, a subsequent survey revealed the error and a number of landowners were alerted to the fact that portions of their property are within the Coconino National Forest boundary. As a result, these parcels have a cloud on their title that needs to be resolved through a land conveyance.

The Slide Fire has brought the impact of this survey error into further focus. Some of those homeowners have apparently been told by their insurance companies that if the Slide Fire destroys their homes, they will be compensated. However, it is unlikely they will be able to rebuild on the property because of the boundary dispute.

In my view, the least we can do during this difficult time is remove the boundary issue from the litany of concerns these families in the Mountainaire community are dealing with right now. That is why Senator MCCAIN and I sought expedited consideration of H.R. 862 today through the unanimous consent process. This bill, which was introduced by Representatives KIRKPATRICK and GOSAR in the House, would enable the conveyance of the 2.67 acres that are tied up in this longstanding boundary issue to the private landowners.

The House passed this measure in June of last year by a vote of 395–1, and it was favorably reported out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee by voice vote late last year. The Forest Service has also issued a statement signaling its support for this measure.

I am grateful to my colleagues in the Senate, in particular Senators MCCAIN, LANDRIEU, and MURKOWSKI, for their

support in moving this bill through the Senate today. It provides a much needed sliver of good news for families that are dealing with a significant threat. Likewise, I look forward to working my colleagues to find a path forward to proactively address the catastrophic wildfire situation that continues to plague the West.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment to H.R. 316 be agreed to; that the bills, as amended, where amended, be read a third time and passed en bloc; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 316 was agreed to, as follows:

H.R. 316

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Collinsville Renewable Energy Production Act''.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COMMISSION.—The term ''Commission'' means the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

(2) LICENSE.—The term ''license'' means—

(A) the license for Commission project number 10822;

(B) the license for Commission project number 10823; or

(C) both.

(3) TOWN.—The term ''Town'' means the town of Canton, Connecticut.

SEC. 3. REINSTATEMENT, EXTENSION, AND TRANSFER OF EXPIRED LICENSES.

Notwithstanding the termination of the license, the Commission may, at the request of the Town, in accordance with section 4(a), and after reasonable notice—

(1) reinstate the licence;

(2) extend for 2 years after the date on which the license is reinstated the time period during which the licensee is required to commence the construction of the project subject to the license; and

(3) subject to section 4, transfer the license to the Town.

SEC. 4. CONDITIONS OF TRANSFER.

(a) APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER.—The Town may request the reinstatement, extension, and transfer of the license by filing an application for approval of the transfer.

(b) CONTENTS OF APPLICATION.—The application for approval of the transfer shall set forth in appropriate detail the qualifications of the Town to hold the license and to operate the property under license, which qualifications shall be the same as those required of applicants for the license.

(c) COMMISSION APPROVAL.—The Commission may approve the transfer on a showing that the transfer is in the public interest.

(d) TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF LICENSES.—The Town shall be subject to—

(1) all the conditions of the license and all the provisions and conditions of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 791a et seq.), as though the Town were the original licensee; and

(2) any additional terms and conditions the Commission determines to be necessary, including conditions for the protection, mitigation, and enhancement of fish and wildlife and related habitat under sections 10(j) and 18 of the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. 803(j), 811).

SEC. 5. ADMINISTRATION.

The Commission shall supplement the environmental impact statement or similar analysis required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) prepared in connection with the issuance of the original license to examine all new circumstances and information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the reinstatement of the license or the impact of the license.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill (H.R. 316), as amended, was read the third time and passed.

The bill (H.R. 862) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

EMERGENCY DROUGHT RELIEF ACT OF 2014

NORTH TEXAS INVASIVE SPECIES BARRIER ACT OF 2014

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Environment and Public Works Committee be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4032 and the Senate proceed to its consideration and to the consideration of Calendar No. 344, S. 2198 en bloc.

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

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is my understanding that my request was at this point granted; is that right?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That is correct.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Feinstein-Murkowski substitute amendment to S. 2198, which is at the desk, be agreed to, the bills, as amended where applicable, be read a third time and passed en bloc; that a Feinstein-Murkowski amendment to the title of S. 2198, which is at the desk, be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 3227) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The bill (S. 2198), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

The amendment (No. 3228) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the title)

Amend the title to read as follows: ''To direct the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to take actions to provide additional water supplies to the State of California due to drought, and for other purposes.''.

The bill (H.R. 4032) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

AWARDING OF A CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 1726.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1726) to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 1726) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

GOLD MEDAL TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2014

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 4488.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 4488) to make technical corrections to two bills enabling the presentation of congressional gold medals, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the bill be read three times and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The bill (H.R. 4488) was ordered to a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration en bloc of the following resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 455, S. Res. 456, S. Res. 457, S. Res. 458, S. Res. 459, S. Res. 460, and S. Res. 461.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

S. RES. 455

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, May is Older Americans Month, and I am pleased to submit a resolution recognizing the importance of our seniors with my colleagues, Senators COLLINS and SANDERS. As of 2012, there were more than 43 million Americans aged 65 and older. By 2060, Americans in this age group are projected to be as many as 92 million, or over 1 in 5 U.S. residents.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy recognized the first Older Americans Month. By continuing to observe the month of May as Older Americans Month, we remind ourselves not only of our duty to provide for the needs of this population, but also of their ongoing contributions to our communities and to our country.

As chairman of the Senate Aging Committee and the senior Senator from Florida, the State with the largest 65-and-older population in the Nation, I have heard many stories of the enduring contributions made by the aging population. For example, during an Aging Committee hearing earlier this year, we learned that the fastest growth of new entrepreneurs is among Americans ages 55 to 64. For example, Conchy Bretos, from my home State of Florida, leveraged a lifetime of work experience to begin a second career by starting a new business. Not only does her business contribute to the economy and provide a valuable service to seniors in public housing, but it also provides a cost-savings to taxpayers.

As one witness during this hearing noted, we should think about the baby boom generation not as a ''silver tsunami'' but our society's ''silver lining that will be yielding golden dividends.'' Our obligation to them is to ensure their ability to live independently and continue to make these significant impressions on and contributions to our Nation. Our aging Americans can teach younger generations valuable lessons.

In honor of Ms. Bretos and all older Americans, I am pleased to recognize May as Older Americans Month and celebrate the influences and achievements of seniors nationwide.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to; the preambles, where applicable, be agreed to; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, with no intervening action or debate.

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

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

PERMITTING USE OF THE ROTUNDA

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 36 submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 36) permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the next of kin or personal representative of Raoul Wallenberg.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. REID. Madam President, 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 is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

SIGNING AUTHORITY

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that during the adjournment or recess of the Senate from Friday, May 23, through Tuesday, June 3, Senators ROCKEFELLER and REED of Rhode Island be authorized to sign duly enrolled bills or joint resolutions.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

APPOINTMENT AUTHORITY

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the upcoming recess or adjournment of the Senate, the President of the Senate, the President pro tempore, and the majority and minority leaders be authorized to make appointments to commissions, committees, boards, conferences or interparliamentary conferences authorized by law, by concurrent action of the two Houses or by order of the Senate.

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

ORDERS FOR FRIDAY, MAY 23 THROUGH MONDAY, JUNE 2, 2014

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn and convene for pro forma sessions only, with no business conducted on the following dates and times, and that following each pro forma session the Senate adjourn until the next pro forma session: Friday, May 25 at 10 a.m., Tuesday, May 27 at 12 noon, and Friday, May 30 at 2 p.m.; and that the Senate adjourn Friday, May 30 until 2 p.m. on Monday, June 2, 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; and that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 5:30 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; and that at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 633 and there be 2 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled in the usual form prior to the cloture vote on the Harper nomination.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. So the next rollcall vote will be at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, June 2.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:54 p.m., adjourned until Friday, May 23, 2014, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

BRUCE H. ANDREWS, OF NEW YORK, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, VICE REBECCA M. BLANK, RESIGNED.

MARCUS DWAYNE JADOTTE, OF FLORIDA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE, VICE NICOLE YVETTE LAMB–HALE, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MARCIA STEPHENS BLOOM BERNICAT, OF NEW JERSEY, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH.

JAMES D. PETTIT, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA.

FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY

LAURA S. WERTHEIMER, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY, VICE STEVE A. LINICK, RESIGNED.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate May 22, 2014:

THE JUDICIARY

DAVID JEREMIAH BARRON, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE UNITED STATES CIRCUIT JUDGE FOR THE FIRST CIRCUIT.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

RICHARD G. FRANK, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER 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

COL. WILLIAM P. ROBERTSON

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY 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. ANTHONY G. CRUTCHFIELD

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY 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. JAMES C. MCCONVILLE

IN THE AIR FORCE

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

LT. GEN. GREGORY A. BISCONE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be brigadier general

COL. KATHLEEN A. COOK

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS THE DEPUTY JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL OF THE AIR

FORCE AND APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 8037:

To be major general

COL. JEFFREY A. ROCKWELL

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS 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)

CAPTAIN BRIAN J. BRAKKE
CAPTAIN RICHARD A. BROWN
CAPTAIN JAMES S. BYNUM
CAPTAIN PETER J. CLARKE
CAPTAIN SCOTT D. CONN
CAPTAIN BRIAN K. COREY
CAPTAIN RICHARD A. CORRELL
CAPTAIN MARC H. DALTON
CAPTAIN COLLIN P. GREEN
CAPTAIN DALE E. HORAN
CAPTAIN MARY M. JACKSON
CAPTAIN JAMES W. KILBY
CAPTAIN ROY I. KITCHENER
CAPTAIN JAMES J. MALLOY
CAPTAIN ROSS A. MYERS
CAPTAIN JEFFREY S. RUTH
CAPTAIN LORIN C. SELBY
CAPTAIN JOHN W. TAMMEN, JR.
CAPTAIN KENT D. WHALEN
CAPTAIN KENNETH R. WHITESELL
CAPTAIN CHARLES F. WILLIAMS
CAPTAIN JESSE A. WILSON, JR.

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. TIMOTHY C. GALLAUDET

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. STEVEN L. PARODE

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. JOHNNY R. WOLFE, JR.

IN THE AIR FORCE

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. SAMUEL A. GREAVES

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. WARREN D. BERRY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major general

BRIG. GEN. JON A. NORMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 8081:

To be major general

COL. ROOSEVELT ALLEN, JR.

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER 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

COL. RICHARD W. KELLY

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. CARLTON D. EVERHART II

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. DARRYL L. ROBERSON

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

LT. GEN. ELLEN M. PAWLIKOWSKI

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY 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. KAREN E. DYSON

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT AS THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL OF THE AIR FORCE AND FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED WHILE SERVING AS THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 8037:

To be lieutenant general

BRIG. GEN. CHRISTOPHER F. BURNE

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. MARSHALL B. WEBB

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY 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

LT. GEN. RAYMOND A. THOMAS III

IN THE NAVY

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

REAR ADM. THOMAS S. ROWDEN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) JOHN F. KIRBY

IN THE MARINE CORPS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS 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

LT. GEN. JON M. DAVIS

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS 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. KENNETH F. MCKENZIE, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS 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

LT. GEN. ROBERT B. NELLER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS 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

LT. GEN. JOHN A. TOOLAN, JR.

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. PATRICK J. HERMESMANN
COL. HELEN G. PRATT

IN THE AIR FORCE

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

LT. GEN. JAMES M. HOLMES

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF SCOTT A. RABER, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF MARK D. LEVIN, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JEREMY P. GARLICK AND ENDING WITH DERICK A. SAGER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON APRIL 10, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF TONYA Y. WHITE, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF DANIEL L. ROSERA, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JASON E. OBRIEN AND ENDING WITH ERIK D. RUDIGER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON APRIL 10, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATION OF ROBERT J. TRAINER, TO BE MAJOR.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KENNETH G. CROOKS AND ENDING WITH JAMES D. TIMS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH KIM L. BOWEN AND ENDING WITH DANIEL K. WATERMAN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH VICTORIA M. AGLEWILSON AND ENDING WITH DEBORAH L. WILLIS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH HEATHER A. BODWELL AND ENDING WITH CHRISTIAN L. WILLIAMS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ERICH M. GAUGER AND ENDING WITH TIMOTHY J. ZIELICKE, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 15, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH ANTHONY F. FONTENOS AND ENDING WITH VU T. NGUYEN, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 15, 2014.

AIR FORCE NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH PETER G. BAILEY AND ENDING WITH KEVIN R. WINDSOR, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 15, 2014.

IN THE ARMY

ARMY NOMINATION OF RANDOLPH S. WARDLE, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF STANLEY F. ZEZOTARSKI, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATION OF ERIC S. COMETTE, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF WILLIAM D. SWENSON, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF GREGORY R. SHEPARD, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAVID F. CAPORICCI AND ENDING WITH ERIC G. WISHART, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON APRIL 10, 2014.

ARMY NOMINATION OF PHILANDER PINCKNEY, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF ELIZABETH JOYCE, TO BE MAJOR.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JASMINE T. DANIELS, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JAN S. SUNDE AND ENDING WITH HIMANSHU PATHAK, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 1, 2014.

ARMY NOMINATION OF JOSEPH L. CRAVER, TO BE COLONEL.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MARIBETH A. AFFELDT AND ENDING WITH R10045, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2014.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH MIGUEL AGUILAR AND ENDING WITH MARK A. ZINSER, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2014.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JEFFREY M. ABEL AND ENDING WITH DEBORAH A. WILSON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2014.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH BOBBY L. CHRISTINE AND ENDING WITH JAMES K. MASSENGILL, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2014.

ARMY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH RONALD W. BURKETT II AND ENDING WITH BRIAN J. MELTON, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 15, 2014.

IN THE MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH WILLIAM B. ALLEN IV AND ENDING WITH JAMES L. ZEPKO, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON JANUARY 9, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF RICHARD P. OWENS, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATION OF ROBERT M. MANNING, TO BE LIEUTENANT COLONEL.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JAMES P. EDMUNDS III AND ENDING WITH PAUL B. WEBB, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON APRIL 10, 2014.

MARINE CORPS NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH LEONARD F. ANDERSON IV AND ENDING WITH KONSTANTIN E. ZOGANAS, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON APRIL 10, 2014.

IN THE NAVY

NAVY NOMINATION OF WILLIAM A. GARREN, TO BE CAPTAIN.

NAVY NOMINATION OF LEANDER J. SACKEY, TO BE COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF CHRISTOPHER M. DAVIS, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF CHARLES E. VARSOGEA, TO BE COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF LOUIS J. LAZZARA, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF TARA M. MCARTHUR–MILTON, TO BE CAPTAIN.

NAVY NOMINATION OF TODD W. BOEHM, TO BE CAPTAIN.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH JOHN I. ACTKINSON AND ENDING WITH JUSTIN R. WOLFE, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 5, 2014.

NAVY NOMINATION OF ROBERT J. POLVINO, TO BE CAPTAIN.

NAVY NOMINATION OF VICTOR SORRENTINO, TO BE COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF JEFFREY P. MARTIN, TO BE COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF RICHARD D. MCCORMICK, TO BE COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATIONS BEGINNING WITH DAVID W. ATWOOD AND ENDING WITH ANNA H. WOODARD, WHICH NOMINATIONS WERE RECEIVED BY THE SENATE AND APPEARED IN THE CONGRESSIONAL RECORD ON MAY 7, 2014.

NAVY NOMINATION OF WILLIAM S. SWITZER, TO BE CAPTAIN.

NAVY NOMINATION OF JOSHUA L. KEEVER, TO BE COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF RUSTIN J. DOZEMAN, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.

NAVY NOMINATION OF LORI L. CODY, TO BE LIEUTENANT COMMANDER.