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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. SMITH of Missouri).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 11, 2014.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JASON T. SMITH to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 7, 2014, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

NO SUBSIDIES WITHOUT VERIFICATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, more than 1 million Americans who signed up for health care on the Federal ObamaCare exchange may be receiving an incorrect taxpayer subsidy for their plan due to the fact that the Obama administration pushed this law through before the systems were in place to accurately confirm eligibility.

This isn't mere incompetence on the part of the White House; no, this is a direct result of the administration's insistence on moving forward with their arbitrary October 1, 2013, open enrollment date, regardless of the consequences.

Consider the problem this presents as there is currently no realtime system in place to ensure only those who qualify for subsidies receive them. This means that hardworking American taxpayers may be left on the hook for potentially billions of dollars in fraudulent subsidy payments. Furthermore, it means that someone who simply fills out their ObamaCare enrollment application incorrectly could be hounded for years by the Internal Revenue Service for back taxes owed on improper payments.

This problem was entirely preventable. That is why, in the wake of the clandestine holiday rules change that delayed income verification provisions in ObamaCare last summer, I introduced legislation that would have prevented any ObamaCare subsidies from being doled out until a system was in place to make sure that only those who were determined eligible would receive them. The House acted on this legislation, passing it in a bipartisan vote last September to help protect the American taxpayers from rampant fraud and abuse.

Unfortunately, instead of giving my bill the consideration that it deserved, the Senate stripped the verification provision contained in the bill and replaced it with language requiring a mere report to Congress by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius at the end of last year, certifying that there is a system in place to verify incomes before subsidies are paid out.

Predictably, this weakened income verification language has failed, and we have now learned from news reports that over 1 million Americans are potentially receiving an amount in error. That is why I have now introduced H.R. 4805, the No Subsidies Without Verification Act of 2014.

The tax credits and cost-sharing assistance for ObamaCare premiums administered by HHS is estimated to amount to a staggering $10 billion per month, making this one of the largest entitlement programs in the Nation. My bill would simply require an income verification system to be put into place before any additional taxpayer subsidies are given out.

Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare has become such a boondoggle that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office can't even score it anymore. My commonsense legislation would slow the bleeding this law is having on American taxpayers, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to move it forward.

COMPREHENSIVE IMMIGRATION REFORM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, some things do not change after a primary, even a primary result that no one, including the winning candidate, had predicted. The thing that does not change with the political winds in Washington is the calendar. There are only 10 legislative days before the July Fourth recess.

Another thing has not changed. The Republican Party and the Republican leadership have a difficult choice. They can choose to address the immigration issue head-on and get it resolved, and give the Republican nominee in 2016 a fighting chance in his or her run for the White House, or they can go back to the bunker, sharpen their anti-Obama knives, and never get to the White House in the next generation, possibly two.

As I have said on the floor before, if there is no serious immigration reform action headed toward a floor vote in

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the House by July Fourth, we will not see action at all, and it will be left up to the President to rescue the country from the worst aspects of our dysfunctional immigration system.

On the Democratic side, we all prefer a legislative solution where the House, like our counterparts in the Senate, pass bills signed by the President. But in the absence of anything resembling leadership from the legislature, the President will not just sit back and watch a bad situation get worse. He will act in accordance with existing law to protect all immigrants he can. I believe he can protect literally millions of them through executive action.

Immigration reform is not dead. It will just move to the White House for action if none comes from this House. So with 10 days left before July Fourth, where do we stand? The majority leader released his legislative schedule for the month of June, and reforming our immigration system is nowhere to be found. Immigration is the single most important issue to address for the Republican Party's ability to be competitive at the national level after this fall, and it is nowhere on the schedule before this fall.

So what lessons have we learned? Half-measures to legalize some immigrants here and allow legal immigration for some industries there doesn't seem to have much political traction with conservative voters in the South. Blocking sensible immigration reform and sending out mailers decrying ''amnesty'' at the last minute doesn't seem to have much traction with southern voters in conservative districts.

Articulating, however, a firm argument for why deporting 11 or 12 million people is not a realistic proposition, defending your position that legal immigration is preferable to illegal immigration, and making clear that the only way to actual border security is a combination of enforcement, legal immigration, and addressing the legal status for immigrants already living and working here seems to work pretty well with southern conservative voters.

That is what the gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. GRAHAM, would tell us, or the gentlelady from North Carolina, or every poll that has been taken in recent memory. And we know that in every part of the country outside the most conservative districts, mainly in the South, supporting the end of illegal immigration and a broad and rigorous legalization combined with serious workplace and border enforcement is not only the policy that works, it is the only policy that is viable politically.

So every pundit on TV last night said it was time to man the barricades. They said immigration reform with a Republican stamp in a Republican Congress is dead because the American people want to be protected from the threatening world outside, and Republican Congressmen want to be protected from their threatening voters.

But it is still up to the Republican leadership how they plan to proceed. Not a single Republican who opposes immigration reform needs to vote for it—not one. And we will still have a majority of the House voting to do what a majority of Americans want them to do; that is, address our broken immigration system.

Next week in Judiciary we will have a hearing on the crisis of unaccompanied minors fleeing Central America, and we will be pointing fingers at everyone but ourselves, and not, I would note, using the few remaining legislative days available to craft a sensible border and immigration strategy as our colleagues did in the Senate almost a full year ago.

Let us not accept the latest excuse for inaction on immigration, especially from those who want to take no action under any conditions. This Nation—built by and sustained by 400 years of immigration—needs a coherent system, and we need politicians brave enough to craft one.

CELEBRATING FLAG DAY AND THE ARMY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate Flag Day, which will be celebrated on Saturday, June 14. This date is important to all Americans, as June 14, 1777, is the date the Continental Congress adopted a resolution officially designating a flag of the United States. That same date in 1775 is also recognized as the birthday of our Army.

On our flag, those 13 broad stripes and 50 bright stars are an important symbol of America that is recognized across the globe and, quite frankly, even on the Moon.

Our flag has many meanings. Our flag is raised by our athletes during the Olympics. Our flag is flown with pride and honor during ceremonies. Our flag is worn on the right arm of every soldier. And our flag is draped over the coffins of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the country that it represents and that they served.

This Saturday, June 14, I encourage all to remember why we fly our flag and to also use the opportunity to remember the Army's birthday and the many soldiers who have defended the flag and what it has represented for the past 239 years.

GUN CONTROL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, yesterday was the 74th school shooting incident since the horrific day at Sandy Hook in December 2012 where 26 people, including 20 children, were slaughtered. Only this time, it was my district.

Reynolds High School, the second-largest in the State of Oregon, was the scene of the tragic murder of 14-year-old Emilio Hoffman, a junior high school varsity soccer player and volunteer soccer coach. He was gunned down; a teacher was wounded, and the shooter, apparently an ex-student, dead.

I was struck by, just a few days earlier, when The Onion, the satirical newspaper, had their response to this recent spate of shootings that has shaken us all.

The Onion headline read:

''No Way To Prevent This,'' Says Only Nation Where This Regularly Happens.

The article read:

In the days following a violent rampage in southern California in which a lone attacker killed seven individuals, including himself, and seriously injured over a dozen others, citizens living in the only country where this kind of mass killing routinely occurs reportedly concluded that there was no way to prevent the massacre from taking place. ''This was a terrible tragedy, but sometimes these things just happen and there is nothing anyone can do to stop them,'' said North Carolina resident Samuel Wipper, echoing sentiments expressed by tens of millions of individuals who reside in a nation where over half the world's deadliest mass shootings have occurred in the past 50 years and whose citizens are 20 times more likely to die of gun violence than those of other developed countries. ''It is a shame, but what can we do? There really isn't anything that was going to keep this guy from snapping and killing a lot of people if that is what he really wanted.'' At press time, residents of the only economically advanced nation in the world where roughly two mass shootings have occurred every month for the past 5 years were referring themselves and their situation as ''hopeless.''

Well, the fact is we can do something about gun violence. It is a public health crisis, and with any other disease or health product that produced such widespread death and destruction, we would mobilize. First, we need to take some simple, commonsense steps like universal background gun checks. We have them in my State of Oregon. Obviously, it doesn't keep every senseless act of gun violence from happening, but it is often proven effective to keep weapons out of the hands of the mentally unstable and criminal elements.

Universal background checks are supported by an overwhelming number of Americans—over 90 percent by some estimates—and a strong majority, over two-thirds, of gun owners want to make sure there are no loopholes in the background check laws.

Recent events have also demonstrated what you will find out by visiting any jail, emergency room, or simply walking the streets of our communities: too many Americans are facing a mental health crisis. I am looking forward to working with Representative TIM MURPHY on his H.R. 3717, Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act.

□ 1015

We have been discussing ways to advance some of the provisions in this

Congress. Recently, my friend and colleague from Tucson, Congressman RON BARBER, himself a victim of gun violence which occurred during the tragic murders in Tucson—which included the serious wounding of our former colleague, Gabby Giffords—has also introduced legislation.

I am looking forward to being able to work with both Congressman MURPHY and Congressman BARBER, so that this Congress produces legislation to strengthen the opportunities to help people who are mentally ill.

We ought not to pretend that there is nothing we can do about these situations. Look at what happened with automobile safety. It has dramatically improved within a generation, once we stopped accepting the carnage on our roadways.

Auto deaths have been cut in half, serious injuries reduced, not with any single magic solution, but by patient, hard work involving step-by-step efforts to improve design and construction of automobiles, the education of drivers, and the enforcement of our laws.

Education, engineering, and enforcement can likewise make a big difference in reducing the epidemic of gun violence in America, and we certainly can do a better job of helping individuals and families in mental health crisis.

Let's not make a parody in The Onion be the reality of this Congress. Let's act. Tens of thousands of victims, past and future, including young Emilio Hoffman, demand our best efforts.

HONORING LINDA TOWSE FOR 35 YEARS OF SERVICE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PETRI. Mr. Speaker, Members of Congress rely a great deal on our staff for policy advice, research, interacting with constituents, and all of the other tasks that allow us to serve our districts.

Today, I would like to take a moment to recognize one member of my staff who has been the backbone of my office for over 35 years. Linda Towse started in my office on June 7, 1979, less than 2 months after I was elected.

Last week marked her 35th anniversary in our office. Before that, Linda worked with Senator Edward Brooke from Massachusetts. All told, Linda has been a congressional staffer for 42 years.

Always patient, always thoughtful, always thorough, Linda is what every Member wants in a staffer. She has helped countless Sixth District residents resolve issues with Federal agencies.

Hundreds of young people will remember Linda for her work coordinating their internship in my office or working with them while overseeing my service academy commission.

Birthdays are always remembered and celebrated thanks to her, and fellow staff rely on her years of wisdom and experience for learning the ropes and succeeding in their jobs.

She is our office historian and somehow locates any specific piece of paper when needed from the stack of papers on her desk.

We see staffers come and go, but it is rare to have one as dedicated as Linda and one who has served the Congress for over 40 years. Thank you, Linda, for your service to the Sixth District of Wisconsin over these many years.

CONGRATULATING AUDRA McDONALD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I recognize Audra McDonald, an award-winning actress and singer from my hometown of Fresno, California.

Audra, who I have the pleasure of knowing personally, made history on Sunday, if you were watching the Tony Awards, when she received her sixth Tony Award. This win makes her the most statue-laden Tony Award winner in our Nation's history. Audra's most recent Tony Award was for her incredible portrayal of Billie Holiday in ''Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill.''

Audra, who grew up in Fresno, began her career with my friend Dan Pessano and the Good Company Players while attending Roosevelt High School. She then went on to graduate from the Juilliard School of New York in 1993. Audra has seen great success on Broadway, television, and in the opera.

In addition to having won three Tony Awards at the age of 28, Audra has also received numerous Grammy Awards, Drama Desk Awards, and Outer Critics Circle Awards. There is almost nothing that she hasn't performed in her field. She also has been able to display her talents at the White House and on the greatest stages in the world.

Audra is not only an exceptional actress, but also a wonderful, giving person. She actively gives back to her community and seeks to improve the lives of those around her, including her family.

Earlier this year, she held a benefit concert for Hands in the Community and is a supporter of marriage equality. She also sits on the advisory committee for Broadway Impact. Most importantly, she has always given credit to where credit is due, beginning with her parents who are respected educators in Fresno, who motivated and taught students as they taught Audra.

Audra McDonald is a source of pride and inspiration in the San Joaquin Valley and her hometown of Fresno, as well as around the world. I think it is important that we take special note of the talented people throughout our country who provide joy and the experience of the arts as this very, very fine individual has done, a star in her own right, Audra McDonald—hometown, Fresno, California.

FEDERAL RESERVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. WOODALL) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOODALL. Mr. Speaker, I have the Federal Reserve on my mind this morning.

You can't really get through the Federal Reserve in 5 minutes, Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to start down the road today because I saw a headline Bloomberg reported to say that what had been intended to be the beginning of an unwinding of a Federal Reserve balance sheet wasn't going to occur in the timely fashion that had been intended. This was news to me, based on what we have seen in the Budget Committee.

I have with me this morning the Federal Reserve Act authorization. Folks often wonder where the Federal Reserve comes from. The truth is it comes from the Federal Reserve Act.

I point to section 2A, ''Monetary policy objectives.'' Its says that:

> The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve and the Open Market Committee shall maintain long-run growth of the monetary and credit aggregates commensurate with the economy's long-run potential to increase production, so as to promote effectively the goals of maximum employment, stable prices, and moderate long-term interest rates.

Now, I know there are some high school economic students out there who are thinking: Hey, wait a minute. Can you really promote stable prices, maximum employment, and moderate long-term interest rates with the same set of policies?

I share that high school economics concern about whether or not those three goals can be pursued collectively, but this is the mandate the Federal Reserve has, and this is why the Federal Reserve is involved in what they are involved in.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what I have here is the Federal Reserve balance sheet. It goes back to 2007, back when the Federal Reserve balance sheet was relatively stable. By stable, I mean it was at about $800 billion—$800 billion, the balance sheet of the Federal Reserve.

I want you to watch on the chart as we go out through these stable times, right up until the balance sheet triples in 2008. Now, when we are trying to promote economic stability, the tripling of any government balance sheet should be of concern. The Federal Reserve balance sheet triples in 2008.

Mr. Speaker, I hold in my hand a hearing transcript from my very first month on the Budget Committee. That occurred 3 years ago. It was 2011, and Chairman PAUL RYAN was questioning Ben Bernanke, then the Federal Reserve chairman.

Chairman RYAN said, ''I want to talk to you about QE2''—quantitative easing 2—and what it is doing to the American economy.

Chairman Bernanke's response was this, Mr. Speaker. He said:

> What we are doing here is a temporary measure which will be reversed, so that at the end of this process, the money supply will be normalized, the amount of the Fed's balance sheet will be normalized, and there will be no permanent increase, either in money outstanding, in the Fed's balance sheet, or in inflation.

That was February 2011. I point to February 2011 on my chart here, Mr. Speaker, where the Federal Reserve chairman said that the balance sheet would begin to normalize.

What I want you to observe in the intervening months between February 2011, when normalization was discussed and projected, we have actually seen the balance sheet increase almost 100 percent. Today, we are met with the news that a return to a normalized balance sheet may be delayed even further.

Mr. Speaker, these are decisions on which no Member of this Chamber votes. These are decisions on which no member of America's board of directors—being the American voters—have a voice, and this is a decision that will either rescue or destroy the economic future of this country.

It needs to be discussed more often, Mr. Speaker. I intend to bring these issues to the floor on a regular basis. No harm will come from shining the bright light of transparency on these Federal Reserve decisions. No harm will come from incorporating 330 million Americans into this debate about America's economic security.

ALL-OF-THE-ABOVE ENERGY POLICY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. WALBERG) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALBERG. Mr. Speaker, we live in a country that is truly blessed with an abundant array of energy resources, yet despite major advances in technology in recent years that are allowing us to access even more of these energy resources, our country is sadly failing to take advantage of these opportunities and is imposing higher costs on all Americans.

My constituents and people across the country continue to struggle to keep up with high energy prices. With an average price of nearly $4 for a gallon of gas in Michigan, middle class families in my district can't understand why the Federal Government can't get serious about developing an all-of-the-above energy policy.

For the past few years, House Republicans have been pursuing an all-of-the-above energy strategy. We understand that developing our resources at home won't only lower energy costs, but it will grow good paying American jobs and ease the squeeze on the middle class.

The House has taken action to immediately ease that pain. In February, we passed H.R. 3826, the Electricity Security and Affordability Act, to put a check on the President's and the EPA's misuse of the Clean Air Act in pursuit of cap-and-trade.

In March, we passed H.R. 2824, the Preventing Government Waste and Protecting Coal Mining Jobs in America Act, which would protect coal mining from unnecessary, harmful, and useless Federal regulation. We need the resources, and our people need these jobs.

The House will continue standing up for the American people and against the President's plans to increase utility costs. This week, I proudly cosponsored H.R. 3301, the North American Energy Infrastructure Act, a bill introduced by Chairman UPTON of the Energy and Commerce Committee, that will remove redtape that interferes with our ability to build the necessary infrastructure to move North American energy where it is needed most.

I expect the House will soon consider H.R. 3301 and a number of other bills that will lessen the squeeze of high energy prices, while protecting and creating new energy jobs that will grow a healthy economy and form a framework for all of our middle class and a real all-of-the-above energy plan.

HELPING FAMILIES IN MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, last week, a gunman with a history of mental illness killed one and wounded two others at a Seattle university.

Just before Memorial Day, a young man known by his family and therapists to be mentally ill killed six people and himself in another awful episode of mass violence.

Before there was Elliot Rodger, there was Adam Lanza in Newtown; Jared Loughner in Tucson; James Holmes in Aurora, Colorado; and Aaron Alexis at the Washington Navy Yard.

There was Gus Deeds, another young man who was in a mental health crisis, but was denied extended inpatient care at a hospital before he killed himself and stabbed his father, a Virginia State senator.

All had untreated or undertreated serious mental illness. All spiraled out of control within a system that lacked the basic mechanisms to help. Many had parents who were pleading for more help.

How many more must die before we finally deal with our broken mental health system?

Violence amongst persons with mental illness is extraordinarily rare and is far more likely to be self-directed. Last year, there was 40,000 suicide deaths and almost 1 million attempts.

□ 1030

The mentally ill are more likely to be the victims of violence, robberies, beatings, rape, and other crimes. The mentally ill are also 10 times more likely to be in jail than a hospital. That is because the seriously mentally ill often encounter law enforcement after refusing medical care.

What makes these painful episodes so confounding is the reality that so many tragedies involving a person with mental illness is entirely preventable. For example, in 34 States, Elliot Rodger's family would have been able to ask a court to order an emergency psychiatric evaluation, but in California the law says they cannot.

The families know when their loved one is in a mental health crisis and their condition is gravely deteriorating; but as our yearlong investigation performed at the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations revealed, families are shut out from being part of the care delivery system.

As revealed in our subcommittee review, for far too long, policymakers have been in denial about brain disease and serious mental illness as well as the need to address these medical issues in the policy arena. We pretend like it doesn't exist and, therefore, don't have policies in place to help families and patients in mental health crisis.

Congress has been more comfortable in the behavioral wellness realm than in confronting the difficult and painful reality that persons with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and major clinical depression are more likely to end up homeless, in prison, or dead by suicide than in a meaningful health care treatment setting because of our failure to make courageous, substantive legislative changes.

We pretend that all the seriously mentally ill are fully aware of their symptoms and welcome treatment. The fact is many don't. Forty percent of persons with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder do not even recognize their delusions and hallucinations aren't real. They refuse treatment and don't get better.

They have a right to get better, and don't they have a right to get treatment?

Our investigation paved the way for the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. With nearly 90 cosponsors, my bipartisan measure fixes the shortage of psychiatric hospital beds, clarifies HIPAA privacy laws so families are part of the frontline care, and helps patients get treatment well before their illness spirals into crisis. The bill has been endorsed by nearly a dozen publications, including The Washington Post, Seattle Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Wall Street Journal, and Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.

Each day, I hear from families in crisis from across the country who are counting on our efforts to bring positive changes to the mental health system. We cannot let these families

down. Lives are depending on it. We cannot wish this away, and denial is not a treatment.

I urge my colleagues to join me in this effort by cosponsoring H.R. 3717, the Helping Families in Mental Health Crisis Act. Please help, because where there is no help, there is no hope.

TAKE ACTION AND VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Connecticut (Mr. LARSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSON of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, yesterday the House of Representatives stood in solidarity and silence as we once again rose to acknowledge another death, another shooting, another loss of life again at one of our schools. We rose out of respect for the victims and their families, as we have done repeatedly.

On average, there has been a shooting in a school a week. The American people are outraged. They no longer want Congress' silence. They want to hear Congress' voice.

In America, the most important thing that we can do is vote; the most patriotic thing that we can do is vote. But in this Chamber, we have yet to take up simple legislation on background checks.

Now, let me be very specific about that.

PAT TOOMEY, JOE MANCHIN, two of the most conservative Senators in the United States Congress, put together a very narrowly constructed compromise that called for universal background checks to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill.

This is not complicated. It is supported by 92 percent of the American people and 76 percent of the NRA. JOHN BOEHNER, ERIC CANTOR, KEVIN MCCARTHY, CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS are honorable people. They know what the right thing to do is. And the right thing here, whatever side you come down on this issue, is to give the people in the people's House a vote.

How many more times are we going to hear the pleas from parents who are crying out for Congress to take action? In a body where many people pride themselves on the right to life, why will we not rise to do everything to protect our schoolchildren?

When I was growing up, we used to have drills because we were fearful of nuclear annihilation by Russia. Today our schools go through routine lockdown drills for fear of our own citizens.

Congress has got to act or Congress, as I have said before on this floor, is duplicitous in every single tragedy that takes place, duplicitous because of its inaction. It is the morally right thing to do to cast a vote.

However you feel on this issue, and there are strong feelings about it, but the American people, and clearly the families of these victims, need to know that minimally their democracy was willing not to stand in silence and in remorse, as important as that was and is, but to take action and vote.

U.S.-SERBIA ALLIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, since our founding, Americans have always had to fight for the liberty and freedom that we have. Throughout our history, we have had allies from other parts of the world on our side ready to help us, and we have been ready to help them stand together for freedom over tyranny.

Today, I want to commemorate one of our most important allies: the people of Serbia. For more than 130 years, we have had a close relationship with the Serbian people.

I have on my staff here in Washington a Serbian American, Blair Bjellos, who is my victim's advocate. When I was in Texas as a judge, my chief of staff, Elaine Dudich Stolte, who now runs the best children's assessment center in the world, worked for me. Both are of Serbian descent.

Our friendship with the Serbians is based on our shared belief in democracy and standing up for liberty. During both World War I and World War II, our two countries fought on the same battlefield and our people shared and shed blood together. Because of that brotherhood, we have a special relationship.

During World War I, Austria-Hungary tried to pick a fight with Serbia, through the July Ultimatum. Of course, the Ultimatum wasn't a deal at all, and it was purposely unacceptable and meant to provoke a war with the two nations. Despite being 10 times smaller than Austria-Hungary, Serbia, an independent, freedom-loving nation, refused to back down to the aggressor. Like a true David versus Goliath, the Serbian people fought valiantly with us against the central powers in World War I. In the end, 25 percent of the Serbian population was killed during that war.

Despite the toll World War I took on Serbia, when World War II started, they were allies again. There are numerous accounts of bravery that the Serbs conducted during World War II, and a lot of that was not known to the world until recently. I just want to talk about one of those.

Perhaps the most inspiring report of bravery and brotherhood was shown during the Halyard Mission, when Serbian General Draza Mihailovich and Serbian American George Vujnovich led a mission to save American pilots that had been shot down by Nazi planes behind the lines in Serbia.

In 1944, hundreds of B–17 and B–24 fighter pilots and their crews were shot down by the Nazi Luftwaffe over what we now know as Serbia. General Mihailovich immediately began finding those pilots and members of the crew and hid them in barns and farmhouses throughout Serbia, wherever he could find them shelter. He and his men and local Serbian civilians hid our troops. They risked their lives in doing so, and many of them later paid the consequences when the Nazis found out about it.

When Mihailovich radioed Washington to alert them of his actions, here in the United States, Vujnovich, an OSS agent of Serbian descent, found out and planned a daring rescue mission. Vujnovich would train Allied Forces on how to act like Serbs and sneak them into Nazi territory to save the downed pilots and their crews. Once in, they would help guide U.S. planes into the country to pick up the downed pilots.

With the help of local Serbs, the undercover U.S. soldiers and General Mihailovich built a makeshift runway in just 9 days. They had no sophisticated tools or machinery. They just used oxen, wagons, brute strength, and the tools that they could find. Over the next 6 months, Allied planes flew right under Nazi noses to land on that crude airstrip.

I was most fortunate to have known one of those brave men. Serbian George Dudich was among those who risked his life to save those American downed pilots. When Mr. Dudich and his family later came to the United States after Communist Tito took over, he took time to find many of those downed pilots and crew members to meet with them once again. In total, the Halyard Mission saved 512 U.S. airmen. Not one American was lost, although many Serbs died in those rescues. Unfortunately, the United States took the wrong side after the war and we supported Tito, a communist, rather than Mihailovich, to lead Serbia.

We did not recognize Mihailovich's deeds until recently, and now he has been awarded the Legion of Merit; and Vujnovich, at 95 years old, received a Bronze Star from the United States.

Many Americans and many American Serbs served together then, and I want to congratulate the relationship and commemorate the relationship between the United States and Serbia during the wars and the relationship the two countries have today.

And that's just the way it is.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 43 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

Rabbi Eytan Hammerman, Temple Beth Shalom, Mahopac, New York, offered the following prayer:

Our God and God of our ancestors, we rise in prayer in one of the world's most sacred spaces. This hallowed Hall combines enormous power with awesome responsibility. We pray that You, O God, inspire those who stand before You today—mere mortals—women and men, young and old, the many races, colors, and ancestries that make up our blessed country.

In the Jewish calendar, we have just concluded the Feast of Weeks, marking, we are taught, the receipt of the Bible at Mount Sinai. This was the culmination of a march from bondage and slavery toward freedom and responsibility. We ask that You bless the Members of this august body as they work to guarantee freedom in our day so that we may all live long lives; peaceful lives of goodness and blessing; lives free from shame; lives filled with abundance and honor; and lives in which our hearts' desire for goodness—for one and all—will be fulfilled.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. MEEHAN 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.

WELCOMING RABBI EYTAN HAMMERMAN

The SPEAKER. Without objection, the gentleman from New York (Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY) is recognized for 1 minute.

There was no objection.

Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I welcome Rabbi Eytan Hammerman of Temple Beth Shalom to the House of Representatives and thank him for serving as today's guest chaplain.

Rabbi Hammerman leads the congregation at Temple Beth Shalom and is passionate about serving his neighbors in Mahopac, New York.

A distinguished scholar, Rabbi Hammerman holds a B.A. and a master's degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City and a degree in political science from Columbia University. Before he joined Temple Beth Shalom in 2010, he served small and large congregations in Baltimore, Maryland; White Plains, New York; and northern New Jersey, in addition to serving as director of the Jewish Youth Philanthropy Institute here in Washington, D.C.

Rabbi Hammerman has served the Mahopac community since he was ordained in 2010, and his leadership has united people all throughout the community—no matter what their beliefs or what their background.

Not only a religious leader, he has long been a political advocate for justice and equality, and especially for a reduction in the horrible plague of gun violence we see in our country.

He is joined here today by his wife, Rebecca, and his three beautiful daughters, Ary, Rena, and Ilana, as well as his mother- and father-in-law, Marjorie and Dr. Steven Hoffman.

Not only a religious leader, he is also my friend, and I am proud to call him my friend. I hope you will join me in welcoming Rabbi Hammerman.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE of Texas). The Chair will entertain up to 15 further requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

HONORING THE LEGACY OF JAMES F. KILCUR OF WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA

(Mr. MEEHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, last week, I attended the Transportation Management Association of Chester County for its annual legislative breakfast. At the breakfast, the association posthumously honored James F. Kilcur as its executive director emeritus. It is a very special recognition by his colleagues within the transportation industry. I can't think of anybody more deserving of this distinction than Jim, and I join the association in honoring Jim's service to southeastern Pennsylvania.

Jim Kilcur, of West Chester, Pennsylvania, died on Wednesday, February 19, 2014. Born in northeast Philadelphia, Jim was a proud Philadelphia native and a pillar of his community. He was a labor lawyer admired for his trusted counsel and respected by all for his ability to get to a fair resolution of any matter. Jim stood out at Saul Ewing as a partner and at Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority as general counsel for nearly a decade. Then, just as now, everybody respected Jim.

I had the pleasure to work with Jim during his time at SEPTA. He was a confident, intelligent man, and while tolerant of other positions, was steadfast in his own. He was decisive, and there was no waffling or ambiguity in his thinking.

Jim was the chairman of the board of trustees of his alma mater, DeSales University in Center Valley, and a proud alumni of Cardinal Dougherty High School.

I would like to commend Jim on his devoted service to his community, to his church, and his impressive career history, and his life of love and devotion to his family, especially his wife. Let me remember Jim with this legacy.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANTS

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that yesterday the House adopted my amendment to prevent communities that have experienced recent population loss from being excluded from the Community Development Block Grant program.

Since the creation of the Community Development Block Grant program in 1974, HUD has designated ''entitlement communities,'' which included cities with a population of at least 50,000. For 40 years, HUD has allowed cities that have had their populations fall below 50,000 to continue to participate in the program.

Unfortunately, HUD signaled a desire to change course and to remove these cities from the program. This would have devastated 127 cities in 31 States, including the city of Niagara Falls in my congressional district.

The Community Development Block Grant program has become a foundation for community and economic development across the Nation and in western New York.

I am pleased that communities who rely on this funding will continue to have access to this critical resource.

WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH RESOLUTION

(Mrs. CAPITO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, today, I, along with my colleague, Congresswoman DONNA EDWARDS, who is here with me today, am introducing an important bipartisan resolution targeting heart disease in women.

Dubbed ''the silent killer,'' this disease is the number one killer of women in the United States. Since 1984, more women have died of heart disease than men. It is the leading cause of death in West Virginia, claiming more than 4,800 lives in the year 2010.

Preventative screenings can make a huge difference in helping women learn the risk of heart disease and how to reduce that risk. Women often rely on their OB/GYNs and community health centers for primary care, and our resolution seeks to educate women of all ages on the need to make heart health an important part of their screening

wherever they receive care and from whoever they are seeing.

Women spend so much time taking care of others—spouses, children, aging parents, and the responsibilities of work. It is time to encourage all women to take better care of themselves.

Learn your risk factors. Learn how to be healthier. Learn how to live longer and healthier for yourself and for those that you love.

SEVENTY-FOUR SCHOOL SHOOTINGS

(Mr. DEUTCH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, there have been 74 school shootings since the Sandy Hook tragedy:

Apostolic Revival Center Christian School; Taft Union High School; Stevens Institute of Business; Hazard Community College; Chicago State University; Lone Star College; Price Middle School; Morehouse College; Indian River State College; Hillside Elementary School; Henry Grady High School; the University of Central Florida; Davidson Middle School; New River Community College; Elizabeth City State University; Grambling State University; Stillman College; La Salle High School; Santa Monica College; Alexander Dreyfoos School of the Arts; Northwest High School; Ronald McNair Learning Academy; Westside Elementary School; North Panola High School; Carver High School; Savannah State University; New Gloucester High School; Agape Christian Academy; Lanier High School; Sparks Middle School; Algona High School and Middle School; North Carolina A&T; Stephenson High School; South Dakota School of Technology; West Orange High School; Arapahoe High School; Edison High School; Liberty Technology High School; Berrendo Middle School; Martin Luther King Elementary School; Delaware Valley Charter High School; Widener University; Purdue University; South Carolina Staten University; Tennessee State University; Eastern Florida State College; Cesar Chavez High School; North High School; Bend High School; Salisbury High School; Brush High School; Union University; Raytown Success Academy; McDaniel College; Madison High School; University of Wisconsin; University of Delaware; Savannah State University; Kent State University; Eastern New Mexico University; East English Prep Academy; St. Mary Catholic School; Provo High School; Iowa Western Community College; Marquette University; Horizon Elementary School; Paine College; Georgetown College; Georgia Gwinnett College; Clark Street School; Seattle Pacific University; and Reynolds High School.

CELEBRATING THE NEWLY LAUNCHED DFW-HONG KONG AND SHANGHAI FLIGHTS

(Mr. MARCHANT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MARCHANT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the launch of two new flagship routes at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, which I represent. Today, American Airlines opens direct service from DFW to both Hong Kong and Shanghai.

These new flights are the latest additions to the growing international hub at Dallas/Fort Worth Airport. Hong Kong and Shanghai join an impressive list of other newly launched international flights from DFW, including Bogota, Dubai, Lima, Seoul, and Sydney.

Many businesses have operations in my district because of the easy access to direct flights from DFW. These new flights will promote further business development and make it easier for my constituents to travel to Asia and across the world. More good news will come next month as DFW will soon add a direct flight to Doha.

My sincere congratulations to everyone at the Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport.

THE IMPORTANCE OF 6-DAY MAIL DELIVERY

(Mr. SIRES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SIRES. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the United States Postal Service 6-day mail delivery.

The most recent proposal offered by the Republican leadership to pay for the highway trust fund by reducing mail service is unprecedented and irresponsible. The elimination of 6-day mail delivery would have a negative effect on the Postal Service and could result in the loss of up to 80,000 jobs.

For decades, the Postal Service has sustained and created American jobs in every corner of the country. Eliminating 6-day delivery service would not only slow the delivery of mail and harm small businesses across America, but it will impose a hardship on the elderly and rural citizens who rely most on mail delivery for medical prescriptions and critical correspondence.

The Republican leadership's proposal to eliminate 6-day mail service will take 10 years to generate enough money to fund the highway spending for just 1 year.

Proposals like these are illogical, short-term fixes for serious problems facing our Nation's transportation infrastructure. Come on, guys. Put on your thinking caps, and come up with a better proposal for America.

□ 1215

PROTECTING OUR VETERANS

(Mr. MCNERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to call on my Republican colleagues to focus on the things that the American people sent us here to do. Today, I want to talk about protecting our veterans.

We owe it to our veterans to do everything we can to restore their confidence in the VA health care system. The plan announced Monday by the VA is a step in the right direction, but we must do much more.

I stand on behalf of the veterans in my district. They are still waiting too long and driving too far to see a doctor and waiting far too long for their claims and appeals to be processed. We need to see Congress spend its time getting to the bottom of the VA's dysfunction and giving the VA leadership the tools they need to fix these problems.

This is something we should do right now, instead of spending time on yet another series of politically motivated hearings on Benghazi. I call on the Republican leadership to use our House resources to investigate the real causes of the delays and work to find real solutions that will serve our veterans. That is a plan the whole House could get behind.

OCEANS AND FISHERIES

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of smart and sustainable use of our precious ocean resources. We depend on a healthy ocean for so much—for food, livelihoods, recreation, and more. That is why scientists, managers, and entrepreneurs from across the country are currently in Washington, D.C., to discuss critical marine policy issues as part of Capitol Hill Ocean Week.

A key issue on the agenda is the responsible management of our Nation's fisheries. America's fisheries are rich, both economically and culturally, because we have smart laws that prioritize sustainable resource use.

Under these laws, our fishing industry alone contributed $199 billion in sales and 1.7 million jobs in 2012 alone. These laws, however, are being threatened by partisan legislation recently passed by the Natural Resources Committee.

This bill—which I call the ''Empty Oceans Act''—would override key environmental laws, erode fisheries, and hurt our coastal economies. It is no way to manage our ocean resources.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose the ''Empty Oceans Act'' and find a better path forward.

MANAGING OUR FEDERAL FISHERIES

(Mr. LOWENTHAL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, the House Natural Resources Committee marked up amendments to the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act, the law that manages our Nation's Federal fisheries.

Unfortunately, the bill that passed out of committee was not a bipartisan effort. Among its many concerning provisions, the bill supersedes long-standing protections for endangered species and our national marine landmarks.

That is why I offered an amendment in committee that would have kept the Marine Sanctuaries Act, the Antiquities Act, and the Endangered Species Act from being overridden by Magnuson-Stevens.

That act, Magnuson-Stevens, is really designed to manage fisheries, not to safeguard our national marine treasures. Thankfully, the Senate is taking a bipartisan approach to Magnuson-Stevens. I urge our committee leaders to follow their example and work across party lines to build a bipartisan fisheries bill.

WOMEN'S HEART HEALTH

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today as an original cosponsor of a resolution that recognizes the importance of providing basic, preventative heart screenings for women wherever they seek primary care. I want to thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), for joining with me to introduce this resolution.

Heart disease remains the leading cause of death for women in the United States, causing one in four deaths among women each year. For the past three decades, the number of deaths from heart disease for women has exceeded those of men.

I am concerned that heart disease claims the lives of more than 400,000 women each year. Nearly half of all African-American women have some form of cardiovascular disease. Among Latinas, awareness that heart disease is the leading cause of death is the lowest, at 34 percent.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for us to bring awareness to the burden of heart disease, so we can reduce heart disease among women in the United States by ensuring that, wherever women seek care, they get basic, preventive heart health screening for heart disease.

I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to cosponsor this important and timely resolution.

MOMENT OF ACTION, NOT MOMENT OF SILENCE

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's deadly shooting at Reynolds High School in Oregon was the 74th school shooting in America since the gunman murdered 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School on December 14, 2012.

That is nearly one school shooting per week. More than half have occurred at K–12 schools. These shootings are becoming so frequent that one company saw a business opportunity and is marketing bulletproof blankets to elementary schools.

The congressional response to the senseless loss of our children, educators, friends, and neighbors to gun violence has been silence—moments of silence on this floor, amplified only by the cowardice from those in this body who refuse to stand up for basic public safety.

Mr. Speaker, 86 Americans lose their lives to guns every day, and Americans are 20 times more likely to be murdered by a gun than people in the rest of the developed world.

The American people want us to act. Ninety-two percent support expanded background checks to close loopholes in the law and help ensure dangerous people can't get guns.

Mr. Speaker, enough with the moments of silence. It is time for a moment of action from Congress to prevent gun violence.

SIX-DAY MAIL SERVICE

(Mrs. BUSTOS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BUSTOS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in opposition of the misguided proposal to fund the highway trust fund by eliminating Saturday mail delivery.

Time and again, I have heard from people across my region that Saturday mail service is crucially important to them and to their communities.

I had the opportunity earlier this year to partner with a letter carrier in the city of Galesburg, Illinois. As I have met folks along the delivery routes of the vast 7,000-square mile district that I serve, it is clear how important 6-day delivery is to them.

I have met seniors who depend on mail on Saturday for their prescription drugs. I have met small business owners who depend on Saturday delivery to manage their inventories. I have met folks who talk about eliminating Saturday mail as a blow to the communities across the State of Illinois and across our country.

Our transportation and infrastructure projects are critically important to our Nation, and we seek bipartisan support to make sure that happens, but not in a way that threatens the livelihood of so many people.

I stand ready to roll up my sleeves and to work across the aisle on practical solutions for our country.

REAUTHORIZING TRIA

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of the reauthorization of TRIA, the antiterrorism risk insurance program, which will soon expire. This is a vitally needed program that helps the economy of our country. It was put in place after the 9/11 attacks, and it helped our country rebuild.

After 9/11, you could not get an insurance policy for even a hot dog stand in New York. You had to go to Lloyd's of London. It was tremendously expensive to get any type of insurance, but this program did exactly what it was expected to do. It allowed us to rebuild. It had a government backstop, and it did not cost the taxpayer one penny; yet it helped us build jobs and rebuild our economy.

We have so many government programs that don't work. This is one that did exactly what it was supposed to do and at no additional cost. We need to have a plan in place, so, God forbid, if we are attacked again, we have a plan of how to respond and how to rebuild. This is a program that has worked, and we need to reauthorize it.

CONGRATULATING FORT WORTH NORTH SIDE HIGH SCHOOL MARIACHI BAND

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate and honor the mariachi students at Fort Worth's North Side High School who, under the direction of Ramon Nino, were chosen to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City on June 22. The appearance by the Fort Worth group will be the first Carnegie Hall concert by any mariachi band in 7 years.

With an outpouring of support from the school district and local community, the 23-member group has successfully raised partial funds for the trip. These hardworking students continue to rally the community for support and have played for donations at a host of metroplex-area restaurants to raise the remaining difference.

This is a great opportunity for these young people to step onto the national stage and proudly represent not only their school, but the Fort Worth community and the great State of Texas.

I am proud to represent this caring community, school, and such talented constituents. I wish them a safe journey to the Big Apple. Congratulations on this outstanding achievement.

Go Steers.

GUN VIOLENCE AT AMERICAN SCHOOLS

(Mr. HASTINGS of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, Tuesday morning's fatal shooting at Reynolds High School is

the 74th shooting at a school on American soil since a lone gunman's attack on Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, in December, 2012.

The list of shootings, which includes 13 school shootings in the first 6 weeks of this year, was compiled and is on the Web site of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. Earlier, my colleague, TED DEUTCH, recited all 74 of them.

Yesterday and two other times in the last 2 weeks, the House rightly held moments of silence. I and two of my colleagues did not stand, not because of disrespect for those who lost their lives; we abhor the loss of life, and we abhor the House of Representatives taking moments of silence and then returning to business as usual and doing absolutely nothing about gun violence.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Clerk of the House of Representatives:

OFFICE OF THE CLERK,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, June 11, 2014.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, House of Representatives Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: Pursuant to the permission granted in Clause 2(h) of Rule II of the Rules of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Clerk received the following message from the Secretary of the Senate on June 11, 2014 at 9:28 a.m.:

That the Senate agreed to without amendment. H. Con. Res. 100.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,

KAREN L. HAAS.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4800, AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4457, AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2014; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4453, S CORPORATION PERMANENT TAX RELIEF ACT OF 2014

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 616 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 616

Resolved, That (a) at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4800) 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. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. Points of order against provisions in the bill for failure to comply with clause 2 of rule XXI are waived.

(b) During consideration of the bill for amendment—

(1) each amendment, other than amendments provided for in paragraph (2), shall be debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent and shall not be subject to amendment except as provided in paragraph (2);

(2) no pro forma amendment shall be in order except that the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations or their respective designees may offer up to 10 pro forma amendments each at any point for the purpose of debate; and

(3) the chair of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the Congressional Record designated for that purpose in clause 8 of rule XVIII. Amendments so printed shall be considered as read.

(c) When the committee rises and reports the bill back to the House with a recommendation that the bill do pass, the previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4457) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend increased expensing limitations, and for other purposes. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any amendment thereto to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 3. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 4453) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the reduced recognition period for built-in gains of S corporations. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill, an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 113-46 shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

□ 1230

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, H. Res. 616 provides for consideration of three important bills. The first, H.R. 4800, the Agriculture Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015, will ensure continued operations for those Federal agencies responsible for monitoring the health and safety of our food and drug supplies. H.R. 4457, America's Small Business Tax Relief Act of 2014, and H.R. 4453, the Permanent S Corporation Built-in Gains Recognition Period Act of 2014, are two critical pieces of tax legislation that will give certainty to the small business community, making permanent two pieces of our Tax Code which Congress has had to continually renew annually for decades. Making these tax credits permanent will allow businesses to look out for more than a year ahead and to actually evaluate their economic situations, allowing for those businesses to make staffing and investment decisions for the long term rather than just the short term.

The rule before us today provides for a modified open rule for H.R. 4800. This allows all Members to offer any amendments to the bill that they may choose. The Speaker is committed to completing as many appropriations bills under regular order as possible.

The rule before us formalizes the same unanimous consent agreement that was entered into during the consideration of the CJS appropriations bill, which streamlines the debate, providing for 10 minutes of debate on every amendment offered on the bill. However, in no way does this rule restrict Members from offering any and all amendments to the underlying bill.

The rule further provides for the consideration of both H.R. 4457, America's Small Business Tax Relief Act of 2014, and H.R. 4453, the Permanent S Corporation Built-in Gains Recognition Period Act of 2014, both under a closed rule. By bringing these two bills here today, Members will be allowed to debate the policy of each of these tax provisions individually rather than as a single omnibus tax extender legislation hurriedly passed at the end of the year that would not allow Members to weigh in on each separate extender as this process does.

H.R. 4800, the Agriculture and Related Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015, provides almost $21 billion for the department agencies funded in the bill. This is funded at the same level as fiscal year 2014 and $457 million above the President's request. The bill provides critical funding for agricultural research; animal and plant health; conservation programs; the Farm Service Agency; rural development, including infrastructure and food safety inspection; the Food and Drug Administration; the Commodity Futures Trading Commission; and the food and nutrition programs, including child nutrition, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and WIC, the program for women, infants, and children.

Of particular importance to the work I have been involved with on the Energy and Commerce Committee, the agriculture appropriations bill provides over $2.5 billion in funding to the Food and Drug Administration. In addition, the bill allows for the collection of user fees cumulatively, amounting to overall discretionary funding of $4.5 billion in the FDA.

These dollars serve an important mission. From drug and device approval to food safety, the Food and Drug Administration is at the regulatory forefront of protecting the Nation's health, but it also acts as the doorway for new treatments and cures. From basic research to cutting-edge treatments, America has led the way in opening new fields of discovery and taking medicine to boundaries that I could not have imagined during my medical training or career, yet we have barely scratched the surface of medical breakthroughs that are over the horizon. And believe it or not, there are only hundreds of treatments for diseases that afflict us and thousands still without any treatment at all, let alone a cure.

Will the United States continue to be the home for the latest inventions? If the answer to that is yes, the Food and Drug Administration will be a key part of the future.

Patients and innovators are on the front lines in the fight against diseases like Alzheimer's and cancer, yet their voices are not always heard. Bureaucratic rules have stood in the way of innovation. Some estimates show that medical devices may be approved almost 4 years earlier in Europe than in the U.S.

In 2012, the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology recommended ''encouraging innovation'' as part of the FDA's mission statement in order to ensure that the FDA understood its role in helping new innovative treatments reach patients.

However, the true impact of the medical device, pharmaceutical, biologic, and generic drug industries in the United States is that they are partners in providing our physicians and practitioners with the tools that they need to prevent disease and alleviate human suffering.

The Food and Drug Administration must have the infrastructure and programs in place to ensure all innovations are dealt with in a fashion that ensures safety for the patient, as well as a straightforward and predictable and streamlined approval process. The Food and Drug Administration can continue to streamline the approval process of single-molecule drugs with which they have the most regulatory experience, but if we can't handle the fundamentals, then we have got a big problem.

Congress has taken several bipartisan actions in the last few years to break down the barriers to health innovation, and the Food and Drug Administration will and has seen changes as a result. The funding provided will continue to move these reforms along, but as report language notes, there is a great deal of work that remains to be done.

For the good of patients and to retain our global leadership and the economic benefits that come with it, it is time to breathe new life into the life sciences sector. As a physician, I understand the importance of ensuring that the government has the resources to lead to the next generation of treatments in the 21st century while also ensuring that those treatments are safe and effective. The bill will ensure that the Food and Drug Administration has the scientific and medical expertise that they need when reviewing products utilizing emerging science by providing adequate resources in a challenging fiscal environment.

After the successful passage of the farm bill this year, the next step in that process is to fund those programs. H.R. 4800 achieves that goal.

And I will add, I was disappointed to see that the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, to bring grocery stores and fresh food to underserved communities, was not funded in this appropriations bill even after the House resoundingly defeated an amendment to strip the program from the farm bill, showing that this body overwhelmingly supports this initiative. I understand that an amendment to fix this oversight will be offered during consideration of the bill, and I hope that something can be worked out.

The two tax bills before us today are, again, critical to give small businesses stability and the ability to look beyond the end of each calendar year in making decisions for their companies. Extending these provisions today will be a boost to our economy.

H.R. 4457, America's Small Business Tax Relief Act of 2014, would make permanent a provision within the Tax Code that allows annual investments of depreciable business property up to $500,000 to be expensed. Further, computer software and rules for the expensing of qualified real property—leasehold improvement, restaurant and retail improvement property—can also be written off as well.

The present tax system harms investment in many ways. One of the most important is that, unlike other expenses, businesses must deduct capital expenses—such as for business equipment—over many years rather than the year the expense is incurred. This raises the cost of capital and reduces investment. H.R. 4457 would go a long way to reverse this trend.

Likewise, the other two tax extenders that we are voting on today deal with S corporations or pass-through corporations. These corporations elect not to pay any Federal corporate taxes and, instead, pass corporate income, losses, and deductions and credits through to their shareholders.

H.R. 4453, the Permanent S Corporation Built-in Gains Recognition Period Act of 2014, makes permanent an expired tax break that would enable businesses set up S corporations to shrink the window that they have to hold built-in gains from 10 years to 5.

H.R. 4454, the Permanent S Corporation Charitable Contributions Act of 2014, would make permanent the tax rule requiring an adjustment to the basis of a shareholder's stock in an S corporation if the corporation makes tax-deductible charitable donations.

Recently, the House passed a permanent tax credit for corporate research and development. Sixty-two Democrats voted against the measure. Their reasoning, as far as I can tell, was not against the policy, but it was the fact that the measure was not offset. However, offsets are something in Congress that we need when we are creating new programs or allocating money not previously appropriated, essentially making the American people pay more in taxes. Offsets are unnecessary and not needed when, in fact, we are shielding the American people from being taxed.

Moreover, we heard last night in the Rules Committee, and I suspect we will hear it again today on the floor, about the fact that the two tax-related bills before us today in this rule are not offset. Congress only needs to pay for tax credits if one subscribes to the belief that all money in the country—all money in the country—belongs first to the government rather than the people. I reject this mind-set. Congress does not need to justify or offset not taking more money from the American people; Congress needs to justify and pay for policies that take money from the American people.

Indeed, every member of the Rules Committee on the minority side has voted at least three times to extend these very provisions without having any sort of offset. President Obama, himself, signed those three extensions of these provisions into law, all done without offsets. Senator WYDEN, who has been working on a larger tax extender bill in the Senate has included the same PAYGO language that is included in these bills before us in this legislation. To make hay about this issue, which is truly much ado about nothing, is to play politics with taxpayers and our economy, and the Republican majority in this House will not play along.

In the absence of a larger, comprehensive tax reform package, permanent extenders like these are common sense. They bring back stability and certainty to businesses that are constantly waiting at the end of every calendar year to see if Congress will retroactively act to provide that tax relief.

I encourage my colleagues to vote ''yes'' on the rule and ''yes'' on the underlying bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1245

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, the House will adopt yet another closed rule for these two tax extender measures, which will cross a new Rubicon, a new threshold. We are going to break the record for the most closed rules considered by a Congress ever, and we still have 7 months to go.

The graphic that I am holding illustrates that—that we have the most closed Congress ever, which allows, among other things, that we don't deal with immigration reform, we don't deal with the minimum wage, we don't deal with unemployment insurance, we don't deal with universal gun background checks, we don't deal with dealing with banning assault weapons. This is a closed Congress.

This may sound like inside baseball, but it is much more than just a procedural agreement. I have seen a lot of rules serving nearly 10 years now on the Rules Committee, but this is a new one. This rule limits debate during the appropriations process. It deems passage of a provision to ignore the deficit that this legislation will create, and it sets an all-time record, as I have shown, for closed rules. We managed to do this yesterday and now have it on the floor all in one rule.

Congress has, as I have said, many important issues it needs to take up, including the things I have shown and reiterate now: immigration reform, raising the minimum wage, and extending unemployment insurance.

2.5 million people in this country are without unemployment insurance. If we were to pass it, it would create 200,000 jobs, and we stand around here and talk about creating jobs all the time.

Closed rules prevent the House from working its will on these measures. That is the way it appears that leadership, what is left of it, wants it to be.

My friends do make some Democratic amendments in order at times. Both parties have used closed rules when they have been in control, and that is true. That is the prerogative of the party controlling the House.

But you can read these closed rules like a roadmap of my friends' priorities. In general, the only amendments made in order are those that are expected either to pass or fail along party lines. Over 30 House Republicans and 64 percent of Republican voters polled support immigration reform, but we can't get a vote. Where is the immigration reform bill? Where is the measure that will allow for us to answer many of the problems that this country is confronted with in reference to immigration reform?

This week, as I have indicated, nearly 3 million Americans have lost emergency unemployment insurance since it expired in December, but we can't get a vote here on the House of Representatives' floor.

The Voting Rights Act needs to be reformed in order to protect American voters, but we can't get a vote in the people's House. Leadership uses closed rules to prevent the House from working its will because they are worried about undermining their message, more worried about it than actually legislating.

Today's tax extenders are a perfect example of how these heavy-handed tactics help the chosen few, but leave everyone else without recourse. There are at least 50 other tax extenders that we could have taken into consideration, but no, we choose these six because that is your agenda. Dozens of other provisions that expire at the end of 2017 and several others scheduled to expire at the end of this year have been skipped over in favor of these six extenders favored by businesses that are pretty substantial, and not necessarily the big corporations but many of the large S corporations.

My friends across the aisle have passed up the chance—would you believe this?—to renew the work opportunity tax credit, which helps veterans get back to work, as well as the new markets tax credit, which helps revitalize communities.

How do you do that? They have chosen to ignore renewable energy tax credits and tax credits to help working parents pay for child care. How about that? They have decided there is no reason to extend deductions for teachers' out-of-pocket expenses, qualified tuition, mortgage insurance premiums, or State and local taxes, a deduction that is critical for Floridians and the people that I represent.

These six extenders will be the only extenders that the House votes on because these are the priorities of my friends across the aisle, priorities that may solidify your message, my friends, particularly your message with your base—and evidently you are confused about that particular matter—but you are more interested in them and assuring that you do nothing to help hardworking Americans.

You are going to use the power of the closed rule to ensure that no other provisions get a vote, and you are going to become the most closed Congress ever, disallowing immigration reform, disallowing a minimum wage increase. There are States that are giving a realistic minimum wage increase to people. You tell me, how it is that people live on $7.35 an hour? Many of us have been to food shelters and seen people that are working, many of us have seen people that are living in shelters, working families living in shelters, and we won't even bring a measure here. Are you afraid to just say ''yes'' or ''no'' whether or not Americans ought to have an increase in their minimum wage at the Federal level?

You let 2½ million people don't have unemployment insurance, can't meet their obligations, and we are not willing to help them, and you tell me that you will increase—you talk all the time about the deficit, so you are going to increase the deficit with some mumbo jumbo about money if it is not in the hands of, and disallow people that we know, if they were to receive unemployment insurance compensation, that they would spend all of that money and that it would, in fact, create jobs, and it would sustain small businesses if we were to do that.

One presenter in the House yesterday, outstanding in his presentation, a friend from the other side, pointed out that he had come from a hardscrabble life and that his father one time had been on unemployment insurance. I said to him, and I believe it to be true, that you just proved my point. And I asked him did his daddy get a job after he was on unemployment insurance. And his answer was, yes, and I knew that is what it would be. Many people who are on unemployment insurance today, if we were to give them a chance, they would get a job. Get a life, Republicans, give people a chance.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute for the purpose of a response.

In the 111th Congress, the final 2 years of Representative PELOSI's time as Speaker, 2009 to 2010, this House never considered a single bill under an open rule. Let me state that again: 2009 to 2010, the 111th Congress, Speaker PELOSI was Speaker, the House never considered a single bill under an open rule.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit, that is the definition of a closed process.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My friend on the other side of the aisle may try to change the subject. Do that if you like. But I ask the gentleman: Is this a new record for closed rules or not? And I answer rhetorically because it is. And I don't deny that Democrats have used closed rules. I said it in my opening remarks.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Texas, Judge LLOYD DOGGETT, my good friend.

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, across America, for 30 million schoolchildren implementation of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act is working. Schools are literally stepping up to the plate with a plate of healthier food. Indeed, for school lunches in Texas, 99 percent

of Texas school districts are successfully serving meals that meet strong nutritional standards. In most of the schools I visit, 99 percent is an A-plus.

First Lady Michelle Obama has provided impressive leadership in getting students, families, all of us, to pay a little more attention to food quality, to encourage kids to be more physically active, to get moving, and to grow up healthy. Active, healthy kids do better in school, and they grow up to be more productive citizens who can help in moving our country forward.

Today's bill presents the question of whether we are to wave good-bye with a waiver to healthy school lunch standards. This bill that we are about to consider is not the only place where unhealthy congressional action lurks. At the very same moment that the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee was weakening school nutrition standards with a waiver, the House Ways and Means Committee, on which I serve, approved a bill to expand a tax subsidy for ''apparently wholesome food.'' That sounds good. The only problem is that the statutory definition of ''apparently wholesome food'' does not actually limit itself to the wholesome. It includes Halloween candy, Twinkies, Pop Rocks, stale potato chips, and other expired junk food, all of which receive a taxpayer subsidy. I think that is a little hard to stomach.

In a Nation where one-third of our children are overweight or obese, we should neither be subsidizing junk food nor repackaging healthy school meal standards into less healthy meals.

We are already spending in America an estimated $245 billion every year on diabetes. Rates of dietary-related Type 2 diabetes are skyrocketing among children and young adults. Since many of our children consume up to half of their daily calories at school through the school lunch and school breakfast programs, their health depends upon the nutritional quality of the food they are served.

Today, we should not take a giant step backwards. Let's join against this push to lower standards for our Nation's children. They deserve the healthiest future possible.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Returning briefly—before I yield to my good friend—to the subject of open and/or closed rules, this is what Speaker BOEHNER promised right here in this Chamber in his own words:

I offer a commitment: Openness, once a tradition of this institution, but increasingly scarce in recent decades, will be the new standard. You will always have the right to a robust debate in an open process that allows you to represent your constituents, to make your case, offer alternatives and be heard.

It is unfortunate that my friends on the other side of the aisle campaigned telling the country how open and transparent they were going to be, and then when they do the opposite and are called out on it, it is just more excuses.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question I am going to offer an amendment to the rule to bring up H.R. 4582, the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. Mr. TIERNEY, my good friend, authored that bill to help millions of people lower their student loan debt. The bill would allow borrowers to refinance Federal and private student loans to the lowest rates that are currently available to new borrowers.

To discuss this proposal, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. TIERNEY), a distinguished gentleman, my friend and colleague.

□ 1300

Mr. TIERNEY. I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to urge the House to act on responsible legislation that I have introduced that would help tens of millions of college students, graduates, parents, and middle class families all across the country refinance their existing loans to the same low rate offered to new borrowers in the student loan program.

As the President said earlier this week when he voiced support for this bill, this should be a no-brainer. Homeowners and small businesses are so often able to refinance their debts, there is no reason at all that students and parents shouldn't be able to do the same.

Refinancing would be a significant financial help to these students and their parents. In fact, a recent analysis by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service showed that a middle class undergraduate student with an average loan debt would save more than $4,000 over the life of that loan. A typical graduate student would save more than $2,500, and a typical parent who borrowed to pay for their child's education would save $3,500 or more.

As my colleagues know, these savings would be invested right back into the economy. Last year, the Center for American Progress estimated that refinancing of just some of these Federal loans would pump $21 billion into the economy.

That is because these people are going to be able to save $40 to $100 a month—thousands over the course of their loan—and they have expenses and necessities for which they have to pay.

Our bill is a good deal for taxpayers. Last week, the Congressional Budget Office scored our bill as generating $72.5 billion in savings over 10 years.

Mr. Speaker, more and more constituents are writing my office, emailing, posting on my Facebook page, and even stopping me on the street to talk about stories about how their children are buried in student loan debt. Two days ago, I received an email from a concerned mother in my district.

This is what she had to say: she and her husband followed the rules and have been able to own their own home and support two children up to adulthood, but she feels that her daughter would not be able to do the same, as she currently owes $60,000 in college loans.

Her interest rates vary from 6.5 percent to 8.5 percent. She is drowning in her own debt, and she is only 24 years of age.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. TIERNEY. I appreciate that from my colleague.

The reason this mother supports the bill is that she knows it is going to help her daughter pay her loans in a reasonable way, while pursuing other goals this life.

This is really, Mr. Speaker, about whose side are you on. Are we on the side of special interests and allowing them to continue tax favors, while middle class Americans end up lugging around this heavy burden of debt?

I am on the side of that concerned mother and her daughter and others in this country who are concerned about their children's future.

Let's bring this bill to the floor for a vote.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I would indicate to my friend from Texas that I am prepared to close. I have no further speakers at this time, and so I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, it is not all doom and gloom over here. There are provisions in the agriculture appropriation measure that I support.

I appreciate the report language in support of the United States Department of Agriculture's pollinator programs. I, along with others, have been leaders in bringing the subject to the attention of Congress, something of vital interest to all of this Nation.

I have been teased an awful lot about being the ''bee man'' because I bring up the pollinator issue all the time, but the fact of the matter is, if we don't have bees, we are not going to have food.

I also appreciate the provisions related to citrus greening, which has been devastating to Florida citrus growers, as well as those provisions in this measure that address rural housing.

I represent Belle Glade; South Bay; Canal Point; and Pahokee, Florida; and places where rural housing is really important, but I, along with all of my colleagues—particularly JOE GARCIA, DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, and MARIO DIAZ-BALART—have raised the issues with reference to citrus greening. The whole south Florida delegation has been involved in that particular area.

I grew up in the citrus area. I saw the early-on stages of greening. If we don't do something about this particular problem—and this farm appropriations does deal with some of it—then we may have no citrus coming from the State of Florida.

There are a limited number of days left on our legislative calendar, and we have many miles to go before we, as a Congress, have delivered on our obligation to help all Americans.

We absolutely have an obligation to businesspeople, but we also have an obligation to help veterans get work; an obligation to ease the burden on teachers who use their own money to support their students—our students; and an obligation to address forthrightly important issues, including immigration reform and raising the minimum wage and extending unemployment insurance.

We should stop standing around here and thinking that we are doing something when we offer a moment of silence, which is right for victims who have died of gun violence and the grief that is coming through all of those families. You hear them begging for us to do something.

We know that we can't solve all of those problems, but at least we could give them some assurance that we are trying to have universal background checks and that we are willing to ban assault weapons. Why would anybody want an assault weapon, other than a police officer or military person, and why should we permit them to be in their hands?

We won't bring those measures down here to the floor, and we do so at our peril.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of my amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and defeat the previous question, vote ''no'' on the underlying bills, and certainly vote ''no'' on this record-setting rule for closed rules, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, first off, I just want to reference something on Speaker JOHN BOEHNER's Web site.

John Boehner took the Speaker's gavel in January of 2011, promising to run a more open U.S. House of Representatives than his predecessor. In the 3½ years since then, Speaker Boehner has made good on that pledge by allowing more amendments and a steady stream of ''open rules,'' while the Democratic-controlled United States Senate, under Majority Leader Harry Reid, has gone in the other direction.

One congressional expert calls open rules, which allow Members to freely offer amendments of essentially any nature during the consideration of a given bill, ''essential for fair consideration of legislation on the House floor.

Under Boehner's leadership, Members on both sides of the aisle have been allowed to offer significantly more amendments, and the House has operated under far more open rules than were allowed under the previous Democratic-controlled House.

The final years of the Pelosi-run House were a tour de force in closed government. During the final 2 years of Representative Pelosi's time as Speaker, the House never considered a single bill under an open rule. Some Members of Congress served their entire House careers under Speaker Pelosi without ever operating under an open rule.

Mr. Speaker, on the issue of so-called immigration reform, the administration has done more to distance and set back any policy in that direction.

Why do I say that? The reason is the unintended effects of their policies to send a message worldwide to those that come here by any method possible, and we will not prosecute, we will not send you back.

As a consequence, we have got an issue on the border of our State in Texas that is, at the same time, both heartbreaking and frightening, with underage children literally being shoved across the border.

Mr. Speaker, what does it say when an 8-year-old child can cross our border illegally? Who else is getting in, if 8-year-olds are able to come across this porous border that the administration has opened up?

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BURGESS. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. I share your concerns as you expressed them with reference to the unaccompanied young people coming to our country, and I don't make any quarrel with you, but I would highlight the fact that it is believed by some that many of the places they are coming from—El Salvador, Guatemala, and Central America—the kids are running because of fright.

I remind you that they already have TSP, and we did that quite some time ago for those Central American countries. We did it, rightly, then.

I just offer that for information, and I thank my colleague for yielding.

Mr. BURGESS. Reclaiming my time, I would just point out that those conditions the gentleman referenced that might cause a child to be frightened existed 4 years ago, existed 3 years ago, but there has been a dramatic change in the past 2 years.

I believe that change is directly attributable to the policies of the administration when they went around the United States Congress to unilaterally alter the United States immigration laws, which specifically, in the Constitution, is a legislative branch requirement.

Mr. Speaker, today's rule provides for the consideration of three important bills: H.R. 4800, the Agriculture Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015; H.R. 4457, America's Small Business Tax Relief Act of 2014; and H.R. 4453, the Permanent S Corporation Built-In Gains Recognition Period Act for 2014.

The rule is fair and important for us to move forward on the debate on these pieces of legislation.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS of Florida is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 616 OFFERED BY MR. HASTINGS OF FLORIDA

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 4. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4582) to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 5. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 4582.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R–Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused,

the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 9 of rule XX, the Chair will reduce to 5 minutes the minimum time for any electronic vote on the question of adoption of the resolution.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 224, nays 194, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 298]

YEAS—224

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NAYS—194

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—13

Bishop (UT)
Cantor
Collins (GA)
LaMalfa
Lankford
Matheson
McGovern
McHenry
Miller, Gary
Nunnelee
Pelosi
Rangel
Ryan (OH)

□ 1341

Mr. HINOJOSA changed his vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Mrs. HARTZLER changed her vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 227, noes 189, not voting 15, as follows:

[Roll No. 299]

AYES—227

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs

Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Lamborn
Lance
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOES—189

Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Labrador
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—15

Cantor
Collins (GA)
Denham
Grijalva
LaMalfa
Lankford
Matheson
McGovern
McHenry
Miller, Gary
Nunnelee
Pelosi
Rangel
Ryan (OH)
Scott (VA)

□ 1348

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 37. Concurrent Resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the United States Capitol in commemoration of the Shimon Peres Congressional Gold Medal ceremony.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 4800, and that I may include tabular material on the same.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 616 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 4800.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HASTINGS) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1351

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 4800) 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, with Mr. HASTINGS of Washington in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

The gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT) and the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I am pleased to begin consideration of H.R. 4800, making appropriations for FY 2015 for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. The bill before us is unique in that the programs supported in this bill will impact every American every day of the year.

We support America's farmers and ranchers, who are very vital to our Nation's economy and our health and well-being. We support those at home in need with food and housing and provide rural businesses with low-interest loans and grants to help them sustain local economies. We help others around the world that face starvation and malnutrition. We support research and development in agriculture to improve productivity and stability. We support the oversight of commodity markets, providing confidence for businesses, traders, investors, and the public. We support a safe food supply and safe and effective drugs and devices. We are fortunate this Nation can and does support these vital programs.

The bill before us this afternoon reflects a delicate balance of needs and requirements. We have drafted what I consider a responsible bill for FY 2015 spending levels for the departments and agencies that are under the jurisdiction of the subcommittee. We have had to carefully prioritize the funding in this bill. We have had to make some hard choices about how to limit spending.

I want to thank the gentleman from Kentucky, Chairman ROGERS, for supporting us with a very fair allocation for this bill and for helping us move this bill forward.

I also want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. FARR), the subcommittee ranking member. He has been a valuable partner and colleague as we have moved forward with this legislation. I appreciate his commitment. I appreciate his understanding as we have moved forward on a wide variety of programs in this bill, and I sincerely thank him for his help. While I and the other subcommittee members have a wide array of agriculture in our districts, Mr. FARR represents an area sometimes referred to as the ''salad bowl of the world.''

I want to thank all of the members of the subcommittee for their help, and I also thank the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), who is the ranking member for the full committee.

I also thank the majority staff for their hard work: Tom O'Brien, Betsy Bina, Pam Miller, Andrew Cooper, and Karen Ratzow.

I also appreciate the professionalism and the cooperation of the minority staff. In particular, I want to thank Martha Foley and Hogan Medlin for their help during all of the long hours spent putting this bill and report together, as well as Rochelle Dornatt, Troy Phillips, and Caitie Whelan of Mr. FARR's staff.

When the subcommittee began the FY15 appropriations process, I asked my colleagues to keep in mind three guiding principles. They were: to ensure the proper use of funds through robust oversight, ensuring the appropriate level of regulation to protect producers and the public, and to ensure funding is targeted to vital programs.

These three principles guided us from the time the President's budget request was first submitted to the subcommittee until this bill was put before the House today. This basic framework helped us set principles and priorities during the 10 budget hearings and oversight hearings that we had throughout the spring, which covered all of USDA's mission area, as well as the Food and Drug Administration, and also included the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

They also formed a framework for us to consider the many requests we received from our colleagues on this bill. In particular, we received more than 3,900 requests from 326 Members to support, reduce, or amend funding levels in the numerous accounts of this bill. Of course we could not meet every request, but we tried to address these requests in a bipartisan manner and in a way that was under the House rules. As such, there are no earmarks included in this bill.

The total funding for this bill is $142.5 billion. This is $1.5 billion below the President's request and $3 billion below the FY14-enacted level. The bill includes $20.88 billion in discretionary budget authority, which is the same as the FY14-enacted level. Mandatory spending totals $122 billion, or $3 billion below the FY14 level. These mandatory funds support USDA's farm, conservation, crop insurance, and nutrition programs.

I would like to briefly mention a few highlights that are in this bill.

We provide $2.8 billion for agricultural research. We have received many, many letters requesting support for the land-grant colleges and universities. We were able to provide level funding for them. We also provided $325 million, as requested, for the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, which is USDA's premier competitive research grants program.

We provide $870 million for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. This agency works to eradicate plant and animal diseases and keeps the bad bugs out of the country. I am pleased to say that we were able to increase funding to combat citrus greening disease and the viral epidemic affecting the hog producers. This funding will supplement the emergency funding that the administration announced last week for research and surveillance purposes.

The bill also includes more than $1 billion for the Food Safety and Inspection Service. This is approximately the same as the FY14 level, but $3.8 million above the request. It will maintain more than 8,000 inspectors at more than 6,400 meat, poultry, and egg product facilities across the Nation.

The bill provides $1.5 billion for the Farm Service Agency, and it does not allow the closure of any county offices. This proposal made no sense when the 2014 farm bill is still being implemented in county offices across the Nation. We also fully fund the various farm loan programs in this bill.

□ 1400

For the Natural Resources Conservation Service, we provide $869 million to help farmers, ranchers, and private forest land owners conserve and protect their land and increase funding to help rehabilitate small dams.

This bill is the only one of the 12 appropriations bills that truly focuses on rural America. It provides $2.6 billion for the rural development programs. That includes funding to support $881 million in business and industry loans, $1.3 billion in loans for rural water and waste programs, and $6.2 billion for rural electric and telephone infrastructure. We also provide more than $1 billion for the single-family direct loan program, $1.1 billion for rental assistance, and $30 million for the Mutual and Self-Help program.

This bill includes both discretionary and mandatory funding for USDA's food and nutrition programs.

In particular, it provides $6.6 billion for the Women, Infants, and Children program. This is $93 million below the FY14 enacted level, and it is actually $200 million below the budget request. But I want to be clear about the decreased funding because a declining caseload and large carryover balances from the previous year is why we are doing this. And let me stress that every person who is eligible for the program will be able to receive funding under this funding level in this bill.

The bill includes $20.5 billion in required mandatory funding for child nutrition programs and $82.3 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, sometimes referred to as SNAP. This funding level helps support more than 47 million Americans each month.

To support those in time of need in places like Syria, South Sudan, and the Central African Republic, the bill provides $1.7 billion for overseas food aid. We were able to provide a $66 million increase for Food for Peace grants, and $13 million for the McGovern-Dole Education and Child Nutrition Program offset from savings that we found elsewhere in the bill.

The Food and Drug Administration receives $2.6 billion in discretionary funding in this bill. This is an increase of $23 million over the FY14 level. When the user fees are included, FDA will receive $4.5 billion in FY15.

Within the total, the committee provides a $25 million increase of the full amount requested for food safety activities in the President's budget, and drug safety activities are increased by $12 million.

Furthermore, the bill includes $218 million for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. This is an increase of $3 million above last year's level and is intended to address information technology needs.

Before I close, I do want to address one issue that has opened up a necessary dialogue in local cafeterias and schools across the Nation. It is the provision that would allow schools to seek a temporary—and let me stress that it is a temporary—waiver from the current school lunch standards if a school district has lost money over the last 6-month period as a result of trying to implement the new regulations.

I have had a constant stream of letters, I have talked to people, received emails, and I have had meetings over the past year with school nutritionists, with the teachers, and the school administrators. I have talked to parents, and I have talked to students, all concerned about the rising cost, the increased waste, and the declining participation in the school lunch program.

To tell the truth, the students have been concerned about the taste, they have been concerned about the variety and the quality of the meals. But, again, we have gone to the school nutritionists, to the teachers, and the administrators who have identified where the real problem is.

This is a real problem in many school districts across the country. Some school districts may not be experiencing this problem, but many, many are across the country. This bill acknowledges the concerns of schools and responds to their requests for a certain amount of flexibility. It only allows schools more time if they need it. In fact, it provides something very similar to the flexibility that USDA recently announced for the whole grain requirements.

The benefits to farmers, ranchers, consumers, businesses, and patients provided in this bill far outweigh any one or two objections a Member may have about this bill. The bill represents our best take on matching needs with limited resources. We have tried to work hard to produce the best bill we possibly can within the resources that we have had to work with in this appropriations process.

I thank the Members for their attention, and I would urge all the Members

to support this bipartisan legislation. I look forward to passing this bill on the floor as we move forward, and I reserve the balance of my time.

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
TITLE I - AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS					
Production, Processing, and Marketing					
Office of the Secretary					
Office of the Secretary	5,051	5,086	5,051	---	-35
Office of Tribal Relations	498	502	498	---	-4
Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination	1,496	1,507	1,507	+11	---
Office of Advocacy and Outreach	1,209	1,217	1,209	---	-8
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration	804	809	804	---	-5
Departmental Administration	22,786	25,661	22,811	+25	-2,850
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations	3,869	3,897	3,869	---	-28
Office of Communications	8,065	8,137	5,535	-2,530	-2,602
Total, Office of the Secretary	43,778	46,816	41,284	-2,494	-5,532
Executive Operations:					
Office of the Chief Economist	16,777	16,854	16,777	---	-77
National Appeals Division	12,841	13,430	13,317	+476	-113
Office of Budget and Program Analysis	9,064	10,292	9,392	+328	-900
Subtotal, Executive Operations	38,682	40,576	39,486	+804	-1,090
Office of the Chief Information Officer	44,031	45,199	45,025	+994	-174
Office of the Chief Financial Officer	6,213	6,080	6,028	-185	-52
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights	893	898	898	+5	---
Office of Civil Rights	21,400	24,236	24,070	+2,670	-166
Agriculture buildings and facilities and rental payments	(233,000)	(64,825)	(54,825)	(-178,175)	(-10,000)
Payments to GSA	164,470	---	---	-164,470	---
Department of Homeland Security	13,800	---	---	-13,800	---
Building operations and maintenance	54,730	64,825	54,825	+95	-10,000
Hazardous materials management	3,592	3,600	3,600	+8	---
Office of Inspector General	89,902	97,240	97,020	+7,118	-220
Office of the General Counsel	41,202	47,567	44,383	+3,181	-3,184
Office of Ethics	3,440	3,867	3,440	---	-427
Total, Departmental Administration	526,133	380,904	360,059	-166,074	-20,845
Office of the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics	893	898	898	+5	---
Economic Research Service	78,058	83,446	85,784	+7,726	+2,338
National Agricultural Statistics Service	161,206	178,999	169,371	+8,165	-9,628
Census of Agriculture	(44,545)	(48,044)	(47,842)	(+3,297)	(-202)
Agricultural Research Service:					
Salaries and expenses	1,122,482	1,104,403	1,120,253	-2,229	+15,850
Buildings and facilities	---	---	155,000	+155,000	+155,000
Total, Agricultural Research Service	1,122,482	1,104,403	1,275,253	+152,771	+170,850

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
National Institute of Food and Agriculture:					
Research and education activities	772,559	837,747	774,465	+1,906	-63,282
Native American Institutions Endowment Fund	(11,880)	(11,880)	(11,880)	---	---
Hispanic-Serving Agricultural Colleges and Universities Endowment Fund	---	(10,000)	---	---	(-10,000)
Extension activities	469,191	468,968	467,339	-1,852	-1,629
Integrated activities	35,317	28,821	32,000	-3,317	+3,179
Total, National Institute of Food and Agriculture	1,277,067	1,335,536	1,273,804	-3,263	-61,732
Office of the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs	893	898	898	+5	---
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service:					
Salaries and expenses	821,721	834,341	867,505	+45,784	+33,164
Buildings and facilities	3,175	3,175	3,175	---	---
Total, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service	824,896	837,516	870,680	+45,784	+33,164
Agricultural Marketing Service:					
Marketing Services	79,914	82,963	81,192	+1,278	-1,771
Standardization activities (user fees) NA	(64,000)	(64,000)	(64,000)	---	---
(Limitation on administrative expenses, from fees collected)	(60,435)	(60,709)	(60,709)	(+274)	---
Funds for strengthening markets, income, and supply (Section 32):					
Permanent, Section 32	1,107,000	1,122,000	1,122,000	+15,000	---
Marketing agreements and orders (transfer from section 32)	(20,056)	(20,317)	(20,056)	---	(-261)
Payments to States and Possessions	1,363	1,235	1,235	-128	---
Total, Agricultural Marketing Service program	1,248,712	1,266,907	1,265,136	+16,424	-1,771
Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration:					
Salaries and expenses	40,261	44,017	43,722	+3,461	-295
Limitation on inspection and weighing services	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	---	---
Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety	811	816	816	+5	---
Food Safety and Inspection Service	1,010,689	1,001,402	1,005,189	-5,500	+3,787
Lab accreditation fees	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	---	---
Total, Production, Processing, and Marketing	6,231,666	6,175,033	6,290,901	+59,235	+115,868

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Farm Assistance Programs					
Office of the Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services	893	898	898	+5	---
Farm Service Agency:					
Salaries and expenses	1,177,926	1,139,323	1,205,068	+27,142	+65,745
(Transfer from Food for Peace (P.L. 480))	(2,735)	(2,528)	(2,528)	(-207)	---
(Transfer from export loans)	(354)	(354)	(354)	---	---
(Transfer from ACIF)	(306,998)	(306,998)	(306,998)	---	---
Subtotal, transfers from program accounts	(310,087)	(309,880)	(309,880)	(-207)	---
Total, Salaries and expenses	(1,488,013)	(1,449,203)	(1,514,948)	(+26,935)	(+65,745)
State mediation grants	3,782	3,404	3,404	-378	---
Grassroots source water protection program	5,526	---	2,500	-3,026	+2,500
Dairy indemnity program	250	500	500	+250	---
Subtotal, Farm Service Agency	1,187,484	1,143,227	1,211,472	+23,988	+68,245
Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund (ACIF) Program Account:					
Loan authorizations:					
Farm ownership loans:					
Direct	(575,000)	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)	(+925,000)	---
Guaranteed	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	---	---
Subtotal	(2,575,000)	(3,500,000)	(3,500,000)	(+925,000)	---
Farm operating loans:					
Direct	(1,195,620)	(1,252,004)	(1,252,004)	(+56,384)	---
Unsubsidized guaranteed	(1,500,000)	(1,393,443)	(1,393,443)	(-106,557)	---
Subtotal	(2,695,620)	(2,645,447)	(2,645,447)	(-50,173)	---
Emergency loans	(34,658)	(34,667)	(34,667)	(+9)	---
Indian tribe land acquisition loans	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)	---	---
Conservation loans:					
Guaranteed	(150,000)	(150,000)	(150,000)	---	---
Indian Highly Fractionated Land Loans	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	---	---
Boll weevil eradication loans	(60,000)	(60,000)	(60,000)	---	---
Total, Loan authorizations	(5,527,278)	(6,402,114)	(6,402,114)	(+874,836)	---

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Loan subsidies:					
Farm ownership loans:					
Direct	4,428	---	---	-4,428	---
Farm operating loans:					
Direct	65,520	63,101	63,101	-2,419	---
Unsubsidized guaranteed	18,300	14,770	14,770	-3,530	---
Subtotal	83,820	77,871	77,871	-5,949	---
Emergency Loans	1,698	856	856	-842	---
Indian Highly Fractionated Land Loans	68	---	---	-68	---
Individual development account grants	---	2,500	---	---	-2,500
Total, Loan subsidies and grants	90,014	81,227	78,727	-11,287	-2,500
ACIF administrative expenses:					
Salaries and expense (transfer to FSA)	306,998	306,998	306,998	---	---
Administrative expenses	7,721	7,920	7,920	+199	---
Total, ACIF expenses	314,719	314,918	314,918	+199	---
Total, Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund	404,733	396,145	393,645	-11,088	-2,500
(Loan authorization)	(5,527,278)	(6,402,114)	(6,402,114)	(+874,836)	---
Total, Farm Service Agency	1,592,217	1,539,372	1,605,117	+12,900	+65,745
Risk Management Agency:					
Administrative and operating expenses	71,496	76,779	77,094	+5,598	+315
Total, Farm Assistance Programs	1,664,606	1,617,049	1,683,109	+18,503	+66,060
Corporations					
Federal Crop Insurance Corporation:					
Federal crop insurance corporation fund	9,502,944	8,666,022	8,666,022	-836,922	---
Commodity Credit Corporation Fund:					
Reimbursement for net realized losses	12,538,880	9,067,281	9,067,281	-3,471,599	---
Hazardous waste management (limitation on expenses)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	---	---
Total, Corporations	22,041,824	17,733,303	17,733,303	-4,308,521	---
Total, Title I, Agricultural Programs	29,938,096	25,525,385	25,707,313	-4,230,783	+181,928
(By transfer)	(330,143)	(330,197)	(329,936)	(-207)	(-261)
(Loan authorization)	(5,527,278)	(6,402,114)	(6,402,114)	(+874,836)	---
(Limitation on administrative expenses)	(115,435)	(115,709)	(115,709)	(+274)	---

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
TITLE II - CONSERVATION PROGRAMS					
Office of the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment	893	898	898	+5	---
Natural Resources Conservation Service:					
Conservation operations	812,939	814,772	843,053	+30,114	+28,281
Farm Security and Rural Investment program (transfer authority)	---	(732,819)	---	---	(-732,819)
Total, Public Lands Conservation operations	812,939	1,547,591	843,053	+30,114	-704,538
Watershed rehabilitation program	12,000	---	25,000	+13,000	+25,000
Total, Natural Resources Conservation Service	824,939	814,772	868,053	+43,114	+53,281
Total, Title II, Conservation Programs	825,832	815,670	868,951	+43,119	+53,281
TITLE III - RURAL DEVELOPMENT					
Office of the Under Secretary for Rural Development	893	898	898	+5	---
Rural Development:					
Rural development expenses:					
Salaries and expenses	203,424	225,101	224,201	+20,777	-900
(Transfer from RHIF)	(415,100)	(397,296)	(415,100)	---	(+17,804)
(Transfer from RDLFP)	(4,439)	(4,249)	(4,439)	---	(+190)
(Transfer from Healthy Foods, HNI)	---	(750)	---	---	(-750)
(Transfer from RETLP)	(34,478)	(33,000)	(34,478)	---	(+1,478)
(Transfer from RTB)	---	---	---	---	---
Subtotal, Transfers from program accounts	(454,017)	(435,295)	(454,017)	---	(+18,722)
Total, Rural development expenses	(657,441)	(660,396)	(678,218)	(+20,777)	(+17,822)
Rural Housing Service:					
Rural Housing Insurance Fund Program Account:					
Loan authorizations:					
Single family direct (Sec. 502)	(900,000)	(360,000)	(1,042,276)	(+142,276)	(+682,276)
Unsubsidized guaranteed	(24,000,000)	(24,000,000)	(24,000,000)	---	---
Subtotal, Single family	(24,900,000)	(24,360,000)	(25,042,276)	(+142,276)	(+682,276)

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Housing repair (Sec. 504)	(26,280)	(26,279)	(26,372)	(+92)	(+93)
Rental housing (Sec. 515)	(28,432)	(28,432)	(28,398)	(-34)	(-34)
Multi-family housing guarantees (Sec. 538)	(150,000)	(150,000)	(150,000)	---	---
Site development loans (Sec. 524)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	---	---
Single family housing credit sales	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	---	---
Self-help housing land develop. (Sec. 523)	(5,000)	---	(5,000)	---	(+5,000)
Farm Labor Housing (Sec.514)	(23,855)	(23,854)	(23,602)	(-253)	(-252)
Total, Loan authorizations	(25,148,567)	(24,603,565)	(25,290,648)	(+142,081)	(+687,083)
Loan subsidies:					
Single family direct (Sec. 502)	24,480	26,568	76,920	+52,440	+50,352
Housing repair (Sec. 504)	2,176	3,687	3,700	+1,524	+13
Rental housing (Sec. 515)	6,656	9,812	9,800	+3,144	-12
Farm labor housing (Sec.514)	5,656	7,681	7,600	+1,944	-81
Total, Loan subsidies	38,968	47,748	98,020	+59,052	+50,272
Farm labor housing grants	8,336	8,336	8,336	---	---
RHIF administrative expenses (transfer to RD)	415,100	397,296	415,100	---	+17,804
Total, Rural Housing Insurance Fund program	462,404	453,380	521,456	+59,052	+68,076
(Loan authorization)	(25,148,567)	(24,603,565)	(25,290,648)	(+142,081)	(+687,083)
Rental assistance program:					
Rental assistance (Sec. 521)	1,110,000	1,088,500	1,088,500	-21,500	---
Multi-Family Housing Revitalization Program Account:					
Rural housing voucher program	12,575	8,000	8,000	-4,575	---
Multi-family housing revitalization program	20,000	20,000	20,000	---	---
Total, Multi-family housing revitalization	32,575	28,000	28,000	-4,575	---
Mutual and self-help housing grants	25,000	10,000	30,000	+5,000	+20,000
Rural housing assistance grants	32,239	25,000	27,000	-5,239	+2,000
Rural community facilities program account:					
Loan authorizations:					
Community facility:					
Direct	(2,200,000)	(2,200,000)	(2,200,000)	---	---
Guaranteed	(59,543)	---	(73,222)	(+13,679)	(+73,222)
Total, Loan authorizations	(2,259,543)	(2,200,000)	(2,273,222)	(+13,679)	(+73,222)

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Loan subsidies and grants:					
Community facility:					
Guaranteed	3,775	---	3,500	-275	+3,500
Grants	13,000	17,000	13,000	---	-4,000
Rural community development initiative	5,967	---	5,000	-967	+5,000
Economic impact initiative grants	5,778	---	5,000	-778	+5,000
Tribal college grants	4,000	4,000	4,000	---	---
Total, RCFP Loan subsidies and grants	32,520	21,000	30,500	-2,020	+9,500
Subtotal, grants and payments	89,759	56,000	87,500	-2,259	+31,500
Total, Rural Housing Service	1,694,738	1,625,880	1,725,456	+30,718	+99,576
(Loan authorization)	(27,408,110)	(26,803,565)	(27,563,870)	(+155,760)	(+760,305)
Rural Business--Cooperative Service:					
Rural Business Program Account:					
(Guaranteed business and industry loans)	(958,097)	(590,802)	(880,626)	(-77,471)	(+289,824)
Loan subsidies and grants:					
Guaranteed business and industry subsidy	66,971	30,190	45,000	-21,971	+14,810
Rural business development grants	26,568	---	20,000	-6,568	+20,000
Delta regional authority	3,000	---	---	-3,000	---
Total, RBP loan subsidies and grants	96,539	30,190	65,000	-31,539	+34,810
Rural Business and Cooperative Grants	---	57,500	---	---	-57,500
Intermediary Relending Program Fund Account:					
(Loan authorization)	(18,889)	(10,013)	(16,234)	(-2,655)	(+6,221)
Loan subsidy	4,082	3,084	5,000	+918	+1,916
Administrative expenses (transfer to RD)	4,439	4,249	4,439	---	+190
Total, IRP Fund	8,521	64,833	9,439	+918	-55,394
Rural Economic Development Loans Program Account:					
(Loan authorization)	(33,077)	(59,456)	(59,456)	(+26,379)	---
Limit cushion of credit interest spending	(172,000)	(155,000)	(155,000)	(-17,000)	---
(Rescission)	-172,000	-155,000	-155,000	+17,000	---

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Rural Cooperative Development Grants:					
Cooperative development	5,800	---	5,800	---	+5,800
Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas	2,250	2,087	2,500	+250	+413
Grants to assist minority producers	3,000	3,000	3,000	---	---
Value-added agricultural product market development	15,000	11,000	10,750	-4,250	-250
Total, Rural Cooperative development grants	26,050	16,087	22,050	-4,000	+5,963
Rural Microenterprise Investment Program Account:					
(Loan authorization)	---	(25,683)	---	---	(-25,683)
Loan subsidies and grants	---	3,290	---	---	-3,290
Total, Rural Microenterprise Investment	---	3,290	---	---	-3,290
Rural Energy for America Program					
(Loan authorization)	(12,760)	(47,259)	(33,081)	(+20,321)	(-14,178)
Loan subsidy	3,500	5,000	3,500	---	-1,500
Grants	---	5,000	---	---	-5,000
Total, Rural Energy for America Program	3,500	10,000	3,500	---	-6,500
Rural Business Investment Program Account					
(Loan authorization)	---	(39,254)	(39,254)	(+39,254)	---
Loan subsidy	---	4,000	4,000	+4,000	---
Grants	---	2,000	---	---	-2,000
Total, Rural Business Investment Program	---	6,000	4,000	+4,000	-2,000
Healthy Foods, Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative:					
Grants	---	12,250	---	---	-12,250
Administrative expenses (transfer to RD)	---	750	---	---	-750
Total, Healthy Foods, Healthy Neighborhoods	---	13,000	---	---	-13,000
Total, Rural Business-Cooperative Service	-37,390	-11,600	-51,011	-13,621	-39,411
(Loan authorization)	(1,022,823)	(772,467)	(1,028,651)	(+5,828)	(+256,184)

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Rural Utilities Service:					
Rural water and waste disposal program account:					
Loan authorizations:					
Direct	(1,200,000)	(1,200,000)	(1,200,000)	---	---
Guaranteed	(50,000)	---	(84,746)	(+34,746)	(+84,746)
Direct loans authorized by P.L. 83-566	(40,000)	---	---	(-40,000)	---
Total, Loan authorization	1,290,000	1,200,000	1,284,746	-5,254	+84,746
Loan subsidies and grants:					
Direct subsidy	---	---	---	---	---
Direct loans authorized by PL 83-566	---	---	---	---	---
Guaranteed subsidy	355	---	500	+145	+500
Water and waste revolving fund	1,000	---	1,000	---	+1,000
Water well system grants	993	---	993	---	+993
Colonias and AK/HI grants	66,500	36,480	66,500	---	+30,020
Water and waste technical assistance	19,000	9,120	19,000	---	+9,880
Circuit rider program	15,000	7,600	15,000	---	+7,400
Solid waste management grants	4,000	4,000	4,000	---	---
High energy cost grants	10,000	---	---	-10,000	---
Water and waste disposal grants	345,523	246,800	359,900	+14,377	+113,100
Total, Loan subsidies and grants	462,371	304,000	466,893	+4,522	+162,893
Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loans Program Account:					
Loan authorizations:					
Electric:					
Direct, 5%	---	---	---	---	---
Direct, FFB	(5,000,000)	(5,000,000)	(5,000,000)	---	---
Guaranteed underwriting	(500,000)	---	(500,000)	---	(+500,000)
Subtotal, Electric	(5,500,000)	(5,000,000)	(5,500,000)	---	(+500,000)
Telecommunications:					
Direct, Treasury rate	(690,000)	(345,000)	(690,000)	---	(+345,000)
Total, Loan authorizations	(6,190,000)	(5,345,000)	(6,190,000)	---	(+845,000)
RETLP administrative expenses (transfer to RD)	34,478	33,000	34,478	---	+1,478
Total, Rural Electrification and Telecommunications Loans Program Account	34,478	33,000	34,478	---	+1,478
(Loan authorization)	(6,190,000)	(5,345,000)	(6,190,000)	---	(+845,000)
Distance learning, telemedicine, and broadband program:					
Loan authorizations:					
Broadband telecommunications	(34,483)	(44,238)	(24,077)	(-10,406)	(-20,161)
Total, Loan authorizations	(34,483)	(44,238)	(24,077)	(-10,406)	(-20,161)

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
Loan subsidies and grants:					
Distance learning and telemedicine:					
Grants	24,323	24,950	20,000	-4,323	-4,950
Broadband telecommunications:					
Direct	4,500	8,268	4,500	---	-3,768
Grants	10,372	20,372	10,372	---	-10,000
Total, Loan subsidies and grants	39,195	53,590	34,872	-4,323	-18,718
Total, Rural Utilities Service	536,044	390,590	536,243	+199	+145,653
(Loan authorization)	(7,514,483)	(6,589,238)	(7,498,823)	(-15,660)	(+909,585)
Total, Title III, Rural Development Programs	2,397,709	2,230,869	2,435,787	+38,078	+204,918
(By transfer)	(454,017)	(435,295)	(454,017)	---	(+18,722)
(Loan authorization)	(35,945,416)	(34,165,270)	(36,091,344)	(+145,928)	(+1,926,074)
TITLE IV - DOMESTIC FOOD PROGRAMS					
Office of the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services	811	816	816	+5	---
Food and Nutrition Service:					
Child nutrition programs	19,262,957	20,472,000	20,471,795	+1,208,838	-205
School breakfast program equipment grants	25,000	35,000	25,000	---	-10,000
Demonstration projects (Summer EBT)	---	30,000	27,000	+27,000	-3,000
Total, Child nutrition programs	19,287,957	20,537,000	20,523,795	+1,235,838	-13,205
Special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children (WIC)	6,715,841	6,823,000	6,623,000	-92,841	-200,000
Supplemental nutrition assistance program:					
(Food stamp program)	79,168,947	79,250,389	79,250,140	+81,193	-249
Reserve	3,000,000	5,000,000	3,000,000	---	-2,000,000
FDPIR nutrition education services	998	998	998	---	---
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion	---	---	---	---	---
National food consumption survey	---	5,000	---	---	-5,000
Nutrition education	---	---	---	---	---
FY 2016 (first quarter)	---	21,064,097	---	---	-21,064,097
Total, Food stamp program	82,169,945	105,320,484	82,251,138	+81,193	-23,069,346
Fiscal year 2015	(82,169,945)	(84,256,387)	(82,251,138)	(+81,193)	(-2,005,249)
Commodity assistance program:					
Commodity supplemental food program	202,682	208,682	208,682	+6,000	---
Farmers market nutrition program	16,548	16,548	16,548	---	---
Emergency food assistance program	49,401	49,401	49,401	---	---
Pacific island and disaster assistance	1,070	1,070	1,070	---	---
Total, Commodity assistance program	269,701	275,701	275,701	+6,000	---
Nutrition programs administration	141,348	155,000	150,824	+9,476	-4,176
Total, Food and Nutrition Service	108,584,792	133,111,185	109,824,458	+1,239,666	-23,286,727
FY 2015	(108,584,792)	(112,047,088)	(109,824,458)	(+1,239,666)	(-2,222,630)
Total, Title IV, Domestic Food Programs	108,585,603	133,112,001	109,825,274	+1,239,671	-23,286,727
FY 2015	(108,584,792)	(112,047,088)	(109,824,458)	(+1,239,666)	(-2,222,630)

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
TITLE V - FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND RELATED PROGRAMS					
Foreign Agricultural Service					
Salaries and expenses	177,863	182,563	182,563	+4,700	---
(Transfer from export loans)	(6,394)	(6,394)	(6,394)	---	---
Total, Salaries and expenses	184,257	188,957	188,957	+4,700	---
Food for Peace Title I Direct Credit and Food for Progress Program Account, Administrative Expenses					
Farm Service Agency, Salaries and expenses (transfer to FSA)	2,735	2,528	2,528	-207	---
Unobligated balances (rescission)	---	-13,000	-13,000	-13,000	---
Food for Peace Title II Grants:					
Expenses	1,466,000	1,400,000	1,466,000	---	+66,000
Commodity Credit Corporation Export Loans Program Account (administrative expenses):					
Salaries and expenses (Export Loans):					
General Sales Manager (transfer to FAS)	6,394	6,394	6,394	---	---
Farm Service Agency S&E (transfer to FSA)	354	354	354	---	---
Total, CCC Export Loans Program Account	6,748	6,748	6,748	---	---
McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program grants	185,126	185,126	198,126	+13,000	+13,000
Total, Title V, Foreign Assistance and Related Programs	1,838,472	1,763,965	1,842,965	+4,493	+79,000
(By transfer)	(6,394)	(6,394)	(6,394)	---	---
TITLE VI - RELATED AGENCIES AND FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION					
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES					
Food and Drug Administration					
Salaries and expenses, direct appropriation	2,551,905	2,575,383	2,574,080	+22,175	-1,303
Prescription drug user fees	(760,000)	(798,000)	(798,000)	(+38,000)	---
Medical device user fees	(114,833)	(128,282)	(128,282)	(+13,449)	---
Human generic drug user fees	(305,996)	(312,116)	(312,116)	(+6,120)	---
Biosimilar biological products user fees	(20,716)	(21,014)	(21,014)	(+298)	---
Animal drug user fees	(23,600)	(22,464)	(22,464)	(-1,136)	---
Animal generic drug user fees	(7,328)	(6,944)	(6,944)	(-384)	---
Tobacco product user fees	(534,000)	(566,000)	(566,000)	(+32,000)	---
Food and Feed Recall user fees	(12,925)	---	(1,434)	(-11,491)	(+1,434)
Food Reinspection fees	(15,367)	---	(6,414)	(-8,953)	(+6,414)
Voluntary qualified importer program fees	---	---	(5,300)	(+5,300)	(+5,300)
Subtotal (including user fees)	(4,346,670)	(4,430,203)	(4,442,048)	(+95,378)	(+11,845)
Mammography user fees	(19,318)	(19,705)	(19,705)	(+387)	---
Export and color certification user fees	(12,447)	(13,651)	(13,651)	(+1,204)	---
Food and Feed Recall user fees	---	(1,434)	---	---	(-1,434)
Food Reinspection fees	---	(6,414)	---	---	(-6,414)
Voluntary qualified importer program fees	---	(5,300)	---	---	(-5,300)
Pharmacy compounding fees (CBO estimate)	---	(1,000)	(1,000)	(+1,000)	---
Subtotal, FDA user fees	(1,826,530)	(1,902,324)	(1,902,324)	(+75,794)	---
Subtotal, FDA (with user fees)	(4,378,435)	(4,477,707)	(4,476,404)	(+97,969)	(-1,303)

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
FDA New User Fees (Leg. proposals):					
Food Facility registration and inspection user fees	---	(60,120)	---	---	(-60,120)
Food import user fees	---	(169,021)	---	---	(-169,021)
International courier user fees	---	(5,807)	---	---	(-5,807)
Cosemetic user fees	---	(19,457)	---	---	(-19,457)
Food contact substance notification user fees	---	(5,098)	---	---	(-5,098)
Subtotal, FDA new user fees (Leg Proposals)	---	(259,503)	---	---	(-259,503)
Buildings and facilities	8,788	8,788	8,788	---	---
Total, FDA (w/user fees, including proposals)	(4,387,223)	(4,745,998)	(4,485,192)	(+97,969)	(-260,806)
Total, FDA (w/enacted user fees only)	(4,387,223)	(4,486,495)	(4,485,192)	(+97,969)	(-1,303)
Total, FDA (excluding user fees)	2,560,693	2,584,171	2,582,868	+22,175	-1,303
INDEPENDENT AGENCIES					
Commodity Futures Trading Commission	215,000	280,000	217,578	+2,578	-62,422
Farm Credit Administration (limitation on administrative expenses)	(62,600)	(65,100)	(54,000)	(-8,600)	(-11,100)
Total, Title VI, Related Agencies and Food and Drug Administration	2,775,693	2,864,171	2,800,446	+24,753	-63,725
TITLE VII - GENERAL PROVISIONS					
Emergency livestock assistance program (rescission) (Sec. 709)	---	-125,000	-125,000	-125,000	---
Limit Dam Rehab (Sec.717(1))	-153,000	---	-50,000	+103,000	-50,000
(rescission)	---	-153,000	---	---	+153,000
Limit Environmental Quality Incentives (Sec.717(2))	-272,000	-250,000	-95,000	+177,000	+155,000
Limit Agricultural Easement Program (Sec.717(3))	---	---	-30,000	-30,000	-30,000
Limit Conservation Stewardship Program (Sec.717(4))	---	---	-31,000	-31,000	-31,000
Limit Biomass Crop Assistance Program (Sec.717(5))	---	---	-10,000	-10,000	-10,000
Limit Rural Energy for America Program (Sec.717(6))	---	---	-16,000	-16,000	-16,000
Limit Biorefinery Assistance (Sec.717(7))	---	---	-24,000	-24,000	-24,000
Limit fruit and vegetable program (Sec.718)	-119,000	-122,000	-122,000	-3,000	---
Section 32 (rescission) (Sec.718)	-189,000	-203,000	-121,000	+68,000	+82,000
Resource Conservation and Development (rescission)	-2,017	---	---	+2,017	---
Geographic Disadvantaged farmers	1,996	---	---	-1,996	---
Hardwood Trees (Reforestation Pilot Program)	600	---	---	-600	---
Agriculture Buildings and Facilities and Rental Payments (rescission)	-30,000	---	---	+30,000	---
Rural Housing Service (rescission)	-1,314	---	---	+1,314	---
Section 9005 Bioenergy program (rescission)	-8,000	---	---	+8,000	---
Water Bank program	4,000	---	---	-4,000	---
Section 9003 Biorefinery program (rescission)	-40,694	---	---	+40,694	---
Hunger Commission	1,000	---	---	-1,000	---
FDA user fees	79,000	---	---	-79,000	---
Citrus greening (APHIS)	20,000	---	---	-20,000	---
Southwest Border Regional Commission	---	2,000	---	---	-2,000
Total, Title VII, General provisions	-708,429	-851,000	-624,000	+84,429	+227,000
Grand total	145,652,976	165,461,061	142,856,736	-2,796,240	-22,604,325
Appropriations fiscal year 2015	(146,096,001)	(145,045,964)	(143,270,736)	(-2,825,265)	(-1,775,228)
Rescissions	(-443,025)	(-649,000)	(-414,000)	(+29,025)	(+235,000)
Advance appropriations, FY 2016	---	(21,064,097)	---	---	(-21,064,097)
(By transfer)	(790,554)	(771,886)	(790,347)	(-207)	(+18,461)
(Loan authorization)	(41,472,694)	(40,567,384)	(42,493,458)	(+1,020,764)	(+1,926,074)
(Limitation on administrative expenses)	(178,035)	(180,809)	(169,709)	(-8,326)	(-11,100)

AGRICULTURE-RURAL DEVELOPMENT-FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS (H.R. 4800)
(Amounts in thousands)

	FY 2014 Enacted	FY 2015 Request	Bill	Bill vs. Enacted	Bill vs. Request
RECAPITULATION					
Title I - Agricultural programs	29,938,096	25,525,385	25,707,313	-4,230,783	+181,928
Mandatory	(23,149,074)	(18,855,803)	(18,855,803)	(-4,293,271)	---
Discretionary	(6,789,022)	(6,669,582)	(6,851,510)	(+62,488)	(+181,928)
Title II - Conservation programs (discretionary)	825,832	815,670	868,951	+43,119	+53,281
Title III - Rural development (discretionary)	2,397,709	2,230,869	2,435,787	+38,078	+204,918
Title IV - Domestic food programs	108,585,603	133,112,001	109,825,274	+1,239,671	-23,286,727
Mandatory	(101,432,902)	(125,787,484)	(102,722,933)	(+1,290,031)	(-23,064,551)
Discretionary	(7,152,701)	(7,324,517)	(7,102,341)	(-50,360)	(-222,176)
Title V - Foreign assistance and related programs (discretionary)	1,838,472	1,763,965	1,842,965	+4,493	+79,000
Title VI - Related agencies and Food and Drug Administration (discretionary)	2,775,693	2,864,171	2,800,446	+24,753	-63,725
Title VII - General provisions (discretionary)	-708,429	-851,000	-624,000	+84,429	+227,000
Total	145,652,976	165,461,061	142,856,736	-2,796,240	-22,604,325

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise having cosponsored this bill as the ranking member on the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. I have to say that I think we have worked very well together. We have worked together as chair and ranking member over a period of time. It is an interesting perspective. I think we have crossed the cultural divide when a Californian can understand the language of an Alabaman, and we have become friends.

I have to say that probably 90 percent of this bill is something we all agree on. Ten percent is what we don't agree on, and it is a horrible 10 percent—a big 10 percent. The bill allocates $20.8 billion, which is the same as what we came up with last year in the conference level.

I appreciate the working relationship that Mr. ADERHOLT already outlined and the wonderful staff that both his office and I have, and my office and the committee has. We all work well together as a team. So we bring this bill to the floor today.

It is quite a privilege to be able to have this position, and I think that we all understand the privilege, because the USDA, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which is our main focus, in addition to the Food and Drug Administration, and to the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the Department of Agriculture, many people don't understand, was created during the Civil War by Abraham Lincoln. It was a department that needed to be created as the United States was facing the Western expansion. Abraham Lincoln was very insightful in realizing that people who moved out into the boonies needed help. There is no infrastructure there. There is nothing there. It became kind of a home ec department. And to this day, the Department of Agriculture still has a division of rural water, a division of rural housing, farmworker housing, and of rural telecommunications.

It is obviously involved with all the science research in agriculture and a big research section. The USDA has a specialist in almost every county in the United States and almost every country in the world, as we have ag advisers in all of our Embassies.

It is an awesome responsibility to govern a very complex system of trade and balances, of phytosanitary inspections, of fighting diseases that get into this country. And it is a lot of fun, also, and I think that is why we get along well trying to put together a good bill.

Now, I voted against this bill in committee because of the concerns of several aspects. Among these concerns are two highly objectionable nutrition riders. I am really concerned that the bill would allow school food authorities to get waivers from complying with the improved lunch and breakfast nutrition standards in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which we enacted in 2010. The bill would allow them to get waivers if they show they are operating at a net loss.

I believe that rather than going backwards and serving children in some schools less healthy meals, we should be encouraging the USDA to continue giving schools the technical assistance they need to meet the standards. We should also be encouraging USDA to continue providing flexibility, where warranted, in meeting nutritional standards. The approach in this bill, however, is unacceptable.

Second, despite the recommendations of the medical community indicating that consumption of starchy vegetables meets or exceeds recommended amounts, and the food in-take data showing that white potatoes are the most widely used vegetables and therefore by law or by statute have been excluded from the WIC program, where you get vouchers to buy fresh fruits and vegetables, this bill allows white potatoes to be purchased under that program. It is not necessary at all. The white potato lobby is a very effective lobby.

I am troubled by the inclusion of this bill requiring white potatoes be eligible for purchase in the WIC program. The WIC program, as I said, gives supplemental nutrition through specified foods, and white potatoes is not one of them. So there are some real concerns with this bill. This is the first time that Congress has dictated as to what has to be purchased with those vouchers, and we have never before mandated an inclusion of a specific food item in the WIC food package in the history of the program.

While the funding levels in this bill are, in general, acceptable, there are some exceptions. The most notable to that is the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. This is a Commission that reviews about $300 trillion in trade. That is almost $1 trillion a day. And what we do is provide funding to have the referees so that they know when the trading is being fair or not fair, and it is essentially a review process, but they need money to hire those referees, as we call them. The President asked for $62 million more than we are allowing him to have to fill the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act. Those are big concerns.

On the positive side, the bill restores the Food for Peace funding to 2014 levels. It increases the McGovern-Dole program by $13 million over the 2014 levels. But I am also concerned that in these programs there is an exclusion of important reforms that would have furthered the impact of each dollar spent on food aid.

Given the high level of need, our food aid has to be as cost effective and as efficient as possible, so I am disappointed that food aid reforms enabling more people to be fed at lower cost were not included in the bill.

I would like to say that you are going to hear a lot of my colleagues raise issues on some of these issues because it is very important that we try to get it right and hopefully defeat some of the bad provisions that are in this bill.

Food is peace. America leads the world in food assistance. California is the number one agriculture State in the Union. I am proud to be the ranking member in bringing this bill to the floor for healthy debate.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. ROGERS) the chairman of the full committee.

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of this bill. This is the fifth of the twelve 2015 appropriations cycle bills. It provides $20.9 billion in discretionary funding for important agriculture, rural development, and FDA programs.

With this legislation, we ensure America's farmers and ranchers—who contribute billions to our economy, as well as create jobs and put food on our tables—have the resources they need to continue to remain successful.

We have provided responsible funding for programs that work to stop crop, plant, and animal disease that can cripple U.S. producers and entire industries. Funding is also directed to programs that help conserve and protect farmland, and improve water quality and food safety.

In addition, this bill also provides funding for infrastructure development, housing loans and rental assistance, and economic opportunities for America's rural communities. These vital loans and programs help foster an environment for economic growth and will help rural America thrive.

The committee also prioritized the safety of our Nation's food and drug supply, targeting increases to FDA food and drug safety activities.

The funding in this bill will maintain 8,000 inspection personnel for meat, poultry, and egg products and facilities across the Nation.

I am also pleased that we have included language that forces the FDA to develop more robust guidelines for abuse-deterrent opioid pill formulations. We withhold $20 million from the Commissioner's office until these long-overdue regulations are finalized, because the drugs on the market that are not abuse-deterrent result in opioid addictions, overdoses, and deaths. They need to be corrected.

□ 1415

Prescription drug abuse is a scourge on this Nation, and FDA can and should be doing more to battle this epidemic.

Beyond funding these critical USDA and FDA programs, the bill also includes funding for a variety of nutrition programs, making sure our most vulnerable, including our children and elderly, don't go hungry.

The discretionary funding level in this bill is about the same as last year,

which is a testament to the hard work of this subcommittee to find savings wherever possible to make that possible. Each and every program within this bill has been closely examined to help make the best decisions about where to direct tax dollars and where to trim funding.

The bill also makes strides to make these programs more efficient, more effective, and more useful for the American people and strengthens congressional oversight, particularly where it comes to mandatory spending on important nutrition programs.

For example, within SNAP, formerly called food stamps, we have required the enforcement of a ban on certain outreach with foreign governments and implemented protocols to help weed out waste, fraud, and abuse.

Mr. Chairman, the bill before us today is a commonsense bill that makes every step to adequately fund important agricultural programs, to support our most vulnerable citizens, and to act with fiscal restraint.

I want to thank Chairman ADERHOLT, Ranking Member FARR, the subcommittee members, and their staffs for all they did to achieve this very good bill. It was not easy because the allocation they had was not perfect, but they made do with it, and they made do well. I want to thank them for their hard work and congratulate them on a good bill. I urge unanimous support for the bill.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. LOWEY), the ranking member of the full committee.

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the efforts of the chairman and the ranking member in putting together this bill. While many of the funding decisions are appropriate, I do oppose this bill because I have deep objections to controversial riders.

First, this bill would begin to back away from much-needed efforts to make school meals healthier. According to the CDC, as of 2012, more than one-third of children and adolescents were obese.

Obese children are more likely to become obese adults, and thus are at a much greater risk of developing heart diseases, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and forms of cancer. Schools should support and teach healthy eating habits.

Instead of providing waivers, this bill should help the districts meet this higher standard by providing the technical assistance and training to become compliant.

Additionally, bill language would make white potatoes eligible for purchase by WIC participants, which is inconsistent with the purpose of the WIC program to include only foods based on documented nutritional deficiencies.

White potatoes are excluded today based on the best available science, and science, not special interests, should continue to be the guide for WIC's policies.

The majority should have fully embraced the work and purpose of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission and fully funded the administration's request. I am also concerned that the bill provides only half of the requested funds to expand and improve oversight of drug compounding to ensure products are safe and effective.

I thank the chairman for working with me to ensure that the summer feeding pilot program remains open to children in rural and urban areas and adding report language related to sunscreen ingredients, sprays, and high SPF products.

I very much support the additional $13 million in funding for the McGovern-Dole food aid program and the restoration of funding for the Food for Peace program.

However, the bill should have also included the administration's proposal to allow up to 25 percent of title II resources to be made available in cash for emergencies to better respond to multiple, high-level crises around the world. This change alone would have allowed U.S. aid to reach an estimated 2 million more people in chronically food-insecure communities.

The bill provides sufficient funds for nutritional assistance programs, such as WIC and SNAP, and provides needed discretionary funds for food safety programs within FDA and the Food Safety and Inspection Service.

It is my sincere hope that we can improve these shortcomings before a bill is signed into law.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. CRAWFORD).

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Chairman, I rise to engage in an important colloquy with Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman ADERHOLT of Alabama and the ranking member of the Livestock Subcommittee on the House Ag Committee, Mr. COSTA of California, regarding the issue of mandatory country of origin labeling, or COOL, for beef, pork, and poultry.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, I strongly support discontinuing the overreaching country of origin labeling regulations that not only burden our Nation's livestock industry, but threaten massive retaliatory tariffs from Canada and Mexico on a vast range of U.S. industry and products.

I appreciate your work in the Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee to include a directive in the bill's report language requiring USDA to discontinue enforcement of COOL, should the WTO compliance panel rule against the United States when they make their decision in a few weeks.

However, I believe the final appropriations bill should include the strongest language possible to prevent any further harm to the livestock industry and all industries threatened on the retaliatory trade list.

COOL represents yet another failed policy of the Federal Government, imposing costly and burdensome mandates on private sector industry. While the primary goal of COOL is to give American-grown meat a competitive advantage, the result has been exactly the opposite.

As a direct result of this policy, we are not only seeing sharp increases in the cost of marketing and selling beef and pork, but trade retaliation from our closest trading partners will cost us billions of dollars in trade, which will kill U.S. jobs, harm our competitiveness, and have a long-term negative impact on American industry.

As you prepare for conference, I hope we can work together to make sure the final bill provides the most appropriate response to this problem.

With that, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Chairman, we are again, I think, missing an opportunity with regard to the country of origin labeling, otherwise referred to as COOL.

COOL has proven, as Mr. CRAWFORD has stated, to be a failed experiment. We are seeing an increased cost to ranchers and processors in order to comply with these regulations that are ultimately passed on to the consumers and to make it more difficult to provide the separate lines of animal source from different countries to fulfill the intent of the law.

This program has added nothing but cost to the cattle industry in America, and it is time where we make an attempt to deal with these added costs.

To be totally honest, we don't even know what the actual costs to the industry are. Its producers and processors have had difficulty putting together a formal economic impact, so an analysis has never yet been done.

Finally—and probably more important—it is threatening to the trade relationship with our two biggest markets in the export of U.S. beef, pork, and chicken, which is Canada and Mexico.

Should, as we all assume, the WTO rule against the United States, we will face harsh retaliatory efforts against the products produced here and we are trying to encourage, not only in my home State of California, but in America.

No one wants to see retaliatory efforts made by Canada or Mexico. I know, in talking with producers and people in the industry in Canada and Mexico, they don't want to pursue retaliatory efforts.

We have the data and the studies and the WTO experience to show that it is time that we fix COOL. We want to see this problem resolved, and we want to work together to do it. Hopefully, we will use this legislation to do just that.

Mr. Chairman, we hope you will work with us to provide relief in the event the World Trade Organization does rule against the United States.

Mr. CRAWFORD. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT).

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I assure the gentleman from California that I will be committed to working with both he and Mr. CRAWFORD as we continue on this issue. I agree with my

colleagues that the final WTO ruling on the pending COOL case could bring irreparable harm to various U.S. industries.

As has been noted, report language has been included expressing the committee's concern that U.S. exports to Mexico and Canada will suffer an economic impact of approximately $2 billion in retaliatory tariffs. The report directs USDA not to implement or enforce the COOL final rule for meat labeling, should the WTO issue a final ruling against the United States.

Again, I can assure both of my colleagues here this afternoon that it is my intention to protect our domestic industries from retaliation. We will closely monitor the progress of the WTO in this matter and will respond as necessary, so that our U.S. economy does not suffer.

I thank the gentleman for the opportunity to discuss this important issue with both of you, and I look forward to working with both of you as we move forward.

Mr. CRAWFORD. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD), the second generation of congresspersons from the Roybal family.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to provisions in this bill that undermine nutrition standards for school meals and the WIC program. Nutrition programs that support balanced diets are vital tools in protecting against childhood hunger and reducing childhood obesity.

While I appreciate Chairman ADERHOLT's efforts to fully fund childhood nutrition programs, I strongly oppose this bill because it weakens, unnecessarily, Federal child nutrition standards; rather than allowing USDA to work with schools to help them meet healthier nutrition criteria, this bill undermines the national school meal program by allowing a blanket waiver to any school that says it can't meet the new standards.

In addition, the bill adds white potatoes to the WIC food package, ignoring research findings that white potatoes are already consumed above recommended levels and should not compete with other fruits and vegetables for limited WIC vouchers.

Mr. Chairman, we have an obesity crisis in our country, and our Nation's children and families are best served when Federal nutrition standards are guided by science. Now is not the time to lower the benchmarks that protect our children's health now and in the future.

I urge my colleagues to support amendments that remove these damaging riders to the bill.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, at this time, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. WENSTRUP).

Mr. WENSTRUP. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your and the committee's hard work on crafting the agriculture appropriations bill on the floor today. It is a bill that supports American farmers, protects the safety of our food, keeps rural America vibrant, and ensures that our taxpayer dollars are being used efficiently and effectively.

I also want to thank you and the committee's continued support for an issue that is very important to my constituents of the Second District of Ohio, the Asian long-horned beetle. This pest, also known as ALB, is one of the most destructive, invasive species that has entered the United States.

These beetles have been discovered in New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Illinois, and they were first seen in my district in 2012. Mr. Chairman, ALB is devastating our trees. These insects burrow themselves into the heartwood of our trees, where they lay larvae and feast off the wood.

As a result, trees in my community are dying or becoming so structurally weak that they are unsafe to even be near them. This doesn't just affect one type of tree, unfortunately, but over a dozen different species.

Eradicating this infestation is extremely important to me and my constituents. Unfortunately, the infestation has already come at a very high cost. To date, roughly 43,000 trees have been removed in Clermont County of Ohio, due to the Asian long-horned beetle, including over 30,000 trees that have not even yet been infested.

This is 43,000 less trees that can no longer provide shade on a sunny day or protect against erosion; not to mention, this infestation and tree removal is directly impacting the property values of homeowners.

Currently, cutting down and removing trees is the most common method used to eradicate these beetles. My constituents are having their trees removed from their own private properties, turning front yards into lumber yards.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that you insert language into the conference report that would encourage the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture to support alternative methods to tree removal to combat the Asian long-horned beetle.

Thank you, and I appreciate your past and continued efforts to eradicate this destructive pest.

□ 1430

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this agriculture funding bill. Budgeting is about choices, and this bill makes the wrong choices for the American people.

Time and again in this legislation the House majority has chosen to put profits and politics before nutrition and food safety. It puts partisan ideology before impartial science, and the interests of big corporate industries over the needs of families and children.

Examples: for decades our Federal nutrition policies have been based on the principle of sound scientific research and evidence-based decision-making. Until now, Congress has never prescribed the details of Federal nutrition programs. This bill circumvents the Institute of Medicine process for determining the appropriate foods to offer in the Supplemental Women, Infants, and Children program, or the WIC package.

To benefit industry, the House majority adds white potatoes to WIC, despite the advice and findings of nutritionists that white potatoes are not lacking in a mother's and children's diets. In fact, they are the most consumed vegetable in America. This is the same type of thinking from Congress that got pizza called a vegetable.

Further, this bill would waive requirements for schools to meet the nutrition standards that we passed as part of the 2010 Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. These standards, developed by experts, improve school meals, remove unhealthy junk foods in our Nation's schools. The standards have already been achieved at over 90 percent of America's schools and are working to help kids choose healthier food options. House Republicans are trying to appease special interests by weakening child nutrition programs in this bill.

The bill also undermines menu labeling and creates carve-outs for industries at the expense of health. It assumes a passage of an accelerated and unsafe poultry inspection system that increases the chance of contaminated chicken on our kitchen tables just so companies can make more profit.

At a time when foodborne illness outbreaks are a continual challenge, it cuts the Food Safety and Inspection Service, a linchpin of our food safety efforts, by $6 million, putting families at risk, and no permanent inspectors will be able to be hired.

This bill dangerously underfunds the Commodity Futures Trading Commission. It allows risky financial transactions to continue, putting the profits of Wall Street ahead of consumers.

These are all unprecedented attempts to use the appropriations process to do the bidding of industry and special interests at the expense of the public interest.

Our job—our job—is to craft a budget that does right by the American people, that helps kids get the nutrition that they need to grow, that fights hunger in all of our communities, and that ensures that our food supply is safe. This budget fails in all of these regards, and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey, Dr. HOLT.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of the nutrition standards for school meals and in strong opposition to the waivers to those standards in this legislation that would result in schools providing nutritionally deficient meals.

Federal child nutrition programs help alleviate hunger and poor nutrition, and were it not for these programs, many students would not receive enough to eat. In New Jersey alone, my home State, the number of children who were eligible for free and reduced school meals increased by 22 percent in the past 5 years to a total that now exceeds half a million children.

According to a study from Harvard released earlier this year, because of the nutrition standards, children are eating more fruits and vegetables. These standards are working, and they are helping children receive better nutrition.

We knew a decade ago that almost half of school lunches were based on prepackaged foods high in calories and fat and salt. Many schools did not offer fruits and vegetables as part of their meals. Congress acted and raised the standards. Healthy children are the source of our country's well-being. The effects of these new standards last long after the children leave school.

At a time when one in three American children is overweight or obese, school nutrition standards can reduce the long-term health costs. And at a time when medical costs are growing ever higher, we should be thinking of ways to reduce health care costs, especially by encouraging more healthful living. We should support Mr. FARR's amendment when he brings it up that would retain, in this bill, the good nutritional standards.

Almost all schools are meeting the new standards now. The USDA has provided flexibility to schools to allow schools to successfully implement the standards, and that is reflected in the high adoption rate among schools across the Nation.

Through the Farm to School Program that I helped write in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, Hopewell Elementary School, for example, in my district is providing more local produce on their menu. This is helping the kids learn about healthy eating, learn where our food comes from—not a package or a box, but from the ground and from farmers. We should give them the best nutrition.

Congress should continue to ensure that schools have the resources to meet the standards, not to lower the standards or exempt schools from them.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chair, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the distinguished gentlelady from New Mexico (Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM).

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise in opposition to the language in this bill that rolls back standards that ensure our children are being fed nutritious foods at school.

As a former State health secretary, I want to refocus this debate where I think it belongs, and that is on health. What we are really talking about here is the health of our children. More than one-third of children and adolescents are overweight or obese, and more than 2 million adolescents are prediabetic.

Mr. Chair, children who learn to eat nutritious food are more likely to continue those healthy habits as adults. The best place to teach children about healthy eating is where they spend most of their time—in school.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues concerned about the cost of nutritious food to think about the cost of obesity and malnutrition and to think about our children's future. My colleagues say that it is too hard, that children really don't like healthy foods. I agree that making change isn't easy, but we are going to have to invest some time and energy into teaching our children to make healthy choices. That is a change worth making.

I thank the gentleman from California, who has been a real leader on this issue, and I urge my colleagues to support his efforts to fix the bill.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Chair, I would like to thank my colleague from Alabama for his leadership on this issue.

This is an issue where I think we all agree. We want children in this country to eat healthier. We all want to fight childhood obesity. But I come up to this podium in opposition to this amendment because I am a parent. I have three kids in public schools. I coach youth football. I coach Little League. I talk to children. I have talked to superintendents and principals in central Illinois about this problem. And it is not just a problem that Washington can solve, but it is a problem that Washington created that we need to fix.

There is a lot of plate waste. You look at a recent Los Angeles Times article, upwards of $20 million per year the Los Angeles, California, school district is losing to plate waste. 1.2 million less children in this country are participating in the school lunch program, the school nutrition program.

In my district, schools like Monticello, Illinois, have pulled out of the school nutrition program because they were losing upwards of $100,000 a year to comply with regulations that were thought of in a concrete building in Washington, D.C., rather than rural America.

Now, what have we done?

We have asked Secretary Vilsack to offer some flexibility to schools like Monticello so that more kids will participate and that school district doesn't have to choose between following the rules and regulations set forth in Washington, D.C., and choosing to hire two teachers.

We have asked the White House and the USDA to voluntarily comply with the same rules and regulations that every school nutrition program, every school cafeteria in this country has to comply with. No answer.

We have offered for Secretary Vilsack to come visit the school districts that have talked to me about this being a burden and a problem financially for them. Still no answer.

Giving schools flexibility does not mean that I want kids to eat unhealthy. It means parents and local schools districts know better how to feed our children rather than bureaucrats in Washington, D.C.

I am going to continue to advocate for more flexibility for these regulations so that we don't lose more than the 1.2 million children that should be participating in the school lunch program.

What I want to know is why this administration and why the USDA fails to recognize that there is a problem in rural America and a problem in our urban schools when it comes to money that could be better spent educating our children in this great country.

Support this legislation. Do not support this amendment.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chair, may I inquire as to how much time each side has remaining?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from California (Mr. FARR) has 12½ minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. HOLT) has 3½ minutes remaining.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from the great State of California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER), the author of the Child Nutrition Act. He probably knows more about child nutrition than anybody in Congress.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Chair, these are not regulations that were written in Washington, D.C. These are regulations that were written in cooperation with school food service personnel, superintendents and teachers and school districts all over the country.

After many years of deliberation, we have continued to improve this program. Plate waste is less now than it was before. What we have discovered is, if children can select what they wanted to eat from a healthy menu, where we didn't have to worry that they were just selecting high-sugar content and high-salt content, they were eating what they liked, what they became familiar with, plate waste went down.

The purpose of this program is not to increase the profits of food processors or the agribusiness industry in this country. The purpose of this program is to improve the nutrition of children in our schools. Why? Because we understand that nutrition is directly connected to how well those children do in the classroom, not because I say so, not because the Secretary of Education says so or the Secretary of Agriculture, but because classroom teachers will tell you that if children don't have nutrition in the morning, if there is not food in their homes and they come to

school, they start to act out in class because they start to drift. And the fact is the school breakfast program has made a remarkable difference. The school lunch program has made a remarkable difference in children not acting out in class and children being able to concentrate and to perform better, to get better grades, to graduate from high school. It is directly connected.

Now what we see is that industry thinks that this is simply some kind of marketing system for their products. It is like white potatoes aren't available to poor people, white potatoes aren't available to people on food stamps, white potatoes aren't available in America. Yes, they are. But in the WIC program, it is directly related to the health of that mother, the fetus, the newborn infant, and the young child. We have to think about what a healthy meal means to the healthy development of that child. A surplus of white potatoes in that diet is not necessarily what you want to have happen.

In that schoolroom, what we want is good nutrition. We are not going to let that be dictated by the industry. The idea that somehow school districts can't comply, well, 90 percent have complied, and 90 percent have complied within the additional amount of money that the Federal Government made available so they could comply.

□ 1445

The Secretary has been reaching out to those districts in trouble, and I suggest those districts reach out to other districts in their area that are complying and finding this to be helpful. This isn't some big burden by the Federal Government. This is working in 90 percent of the districts.

Our own School Nutrition Association of California is against this waiver. We have very creative people. In our committee, we brought those people in and we talked about plate waste, we talked about flexibility, and that was incorporated in this legislation when it became the law of the land.

So on the whim and the misinformation that somehow it is not working, somehow it is impossible to do, I will stand with 90 percent of the districts and school food service people who are implementing it. I will stand with the health officials. I will stand with the teachers that understand what a difference it means to have healthy and nutritious food available to these children during the school day.

We have got to support the Farr amendment. We have got to take care of our children. We have got to give them an opportunity to learn in our schools, and good nutrition provides that opportunity. Bad nutrition interrupts that opportunity.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. And the time is expired for this kind of legislation.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I know this has been a controversial issue in this bill. I sincerely think that everybody in this House is well-intentioned about kids' meals, so I in no way want to say the other side is trying to hurt the schoolchildren. To indicate that the Republicans are trying to hurt the school kids is a complete misreading on what the Republicans are trying to do and what we are trying to do in this bill.

There are so many good intentions about this. I think what has happened is, a lot of the regulations as they have come down to a lot of these school districts, every school district is different, and it is hard to have a cookie cutter mentality in every school district in the Nation. That is really what makes this Nation. We are many States but we are one Nation, and they are not all the same.

What this legislation would do with just some commonsense standards—and I by no means say that my colleagues have bad intentions. I would never say that to my colleague from California, and I hope he would not say that about me on this issue. We are talking about providing lunches and flexibility to students and to the school nutritionists to meet their needs. We are not asking that this roll back the nutrition standards, we are not asking that it gut the underlying law. But some of the comments made, those would be the comments that you would think that we are trying to gut the entire law.

Mr. DAVIS made some very important comments when he spoke. All of us want kids to eat healthy meals, and we want to see child obesity decline. But simply providing school lunches that the kids won't eat and stopping there is not what this is about.

Student participation in the program continues to decline. A lot of the students are now bringing their lunches while the kids that are on these meal programs, they have no choice to eat this food while the other kids are bringing much more unhealthy food to the cafeteria, and watching them eat this other kind of food. It is just really disconcerting to see this. But we all have the same goal. Like I said, it is very disconcerting to hear that some of us would want our kids to be obese or to be unhealthy, and that is furthest from the truth.

I just want to say that because I think it is very important as we move forward with this debate.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

First of all, I would like to announce that the Tom Colicchio group—he is one of those celebrity chefs and his group is called the Food Policy Action Network—they have told us that they are going to score the vote on this bill because of this provision that we are talking about right now and the amendment that I am going to offer to strike the provision.

The reason I want to strike the provision in the bill is because it just gives it a blank waiver. It says, schools, you don't have to comply. That is too broad. We could have worked out some compromise language and more flexible language. But just to give them blank waiver, I think, is just an opt-out and doesn't necessarily get them back in, doesn't have any guidelines for how you can improve and get back on track. That's why I think it is a pretty extreme provision in the bill and ought to be knocked out.

Another reason is that we are paying for it. The taxpayers of this country put up the money and we are allocating it to this program, and I don't think the taxpayers want their money to go to food that isn't nutritious, that doesn't help kids to be healthier. I am not insinuating that the other side wants that, but I am saying that with that money, as in everything we do in the whole rest of this bill, it comes with conditionality.

Congress is a heavy parent. We don't just give money out. We also give instructions on what to spend it for and not to spend it for. When we are giving money to schools for school nutrition—for school lunch, school breakfast, school snack programs—we put some conditionality in it, and the conditionality is, let's buy healthy food with it, fruits and vegetables, and serve them to the kids.

I know there are places that say that is not what the kids eat at home or what they like, and so they are throwing it away. That is called ''plate waste.'' But frankly, there is plate waste in our cafeteria here in Congress. There is plate waste everywhere. There is too much plate waste in America. When so much of the world can't get access to food we are throwing away about 50 percent of what we prepare every day, which is just appalling.

How do you change that? One is you get kids to like what they are eating. We have to encourage our kids to eat vegetables. As was said earlier, you have to encourage your kids to take a bath, you have to encourage your kids to turn off the television set, you have to encourage your kids to do the math homework that they don't want to do. We give instruction.

I think what is missing in this whole debate is the instructional opportunity. Frankly, America has got to face the fact that we have not really put much attention into raising a culture of people that have values in food health, in body health, and the fast food industry has been very good at getting a lot of sugar, a lot of salt, a lot of things out there that taste really great, and people want to eat that all the time, but your body is not made to handle all that.

I think it is an opportunity for us to use the school nutrition program as a learning method. I point out that when I grew up there weren't any fast foods. McDonald's was the first fast food industry to come to our area. It came to the biggest city in my county in 1964. I had already graduated from college. So

all my youth experience was eating at home, eating in the school, and there were never any fast foods. It was all fresh prepared every day. I didn't have the ability to get all that. If anything, it was in a can, and a whole new industry was developing to have fresh frozen.

So we have an opportunity to help our national security problem with food nutrition because the military officers tell us that 75 percent of the youth today cannot qualify to get in the military—75 percent. That is just appalling. That is why they have indicated that we need to have a school nutrition program.

We also see it in health care costs, the biggest cost in America. Why we did this whole health care reform was to bring down cost. Underlying all of that was, hey, we are going to raise healthier people in this country so we can avoid—the ounce of prevention—avoid those expensive costs when people get diabetes, obesity, and other things that are preventable. So what better way to teach the cost of prevention than through nutritional health and exercise.

Lastly, why it is important that we wipe out this provision in the bill is because we are paying. The money is all there. So the schools that would be able to get the flexibility that you talk about, the waiver, they get to keep all the money but they don't have any of the responsibility to deliver the product, to deliver the nutritional foods. I think that is where we are wrong. We can't just give them money and then no responsibility to be wisely spent on the purposes for which it was intended.

So that amendment is going to come up later, and I hope that I can get support from this amendment across the aisle.

Mr. COHEN. Will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining so I can see how much time I can yield?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from California has 4½ minutes remaining.

Mr. FARR. All right. I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee for a colloquy.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. MILLER was talking about white potatoes. How does this bill affect white potatoes? I saw this movie called ''Fed Up,'' and white potatoes in general are the evil that cause people to get obese and gain weight. How are white potatoes in this bill?

Mr. FARR. Thank you for asking. The other provision is not in this school nutrition program, but in the WIC—the Women, Infants, and Children—program where we give vouchers to mothers of newborns or pregnant women in expectation that they are having children. To give them access to healthy fruits and vegetables we give them vouchers.

In that recommended formula, what the voucher should be spent on is, they are not allowed to spend them on white potatoes. Why? Because Americans eat about 90 pounds of white potatoes or potatoes per year. Think of it. They have hash browns for breakfast, french fries for lunch, and baked potatoes for night. That is a lot of potatoes in one day. Certainly, a newborn and about-to-be-born are not necessarily needing potatoes.

Nonetheless, the potato industry is very powerful here and they were able to get a provision in demanding that the vouchers also include the ability to buy white potatoes. That is what stirred up this whole comment, because Congress has never dictated as to what you have to buy with it or to get into buying things that haven't been recommended as nutritional.

Mr. COHEN. That is what I was astonished about, Mr. FARR, when I watched this movie. It was Katie Couric, and I forget all the other people involved in producing it. But it was about how Congress had basically acquiesced to special interests to change the dietary guidelines, to the detriment of children, women, and infants. Carbohydrates and the production of insulin causing the digestive system and body to produce fat is the main cause of obesity. It is not exercise. It is not pushing yourself away from the table so much, but they discovered it is carbs and white potatoes. So we are now putting white potatoes back because of the potato industry? This is the Idaho provision?

Mr. FARR. It is often said as a food analogy that if you like sausages or laws you should never watch either of them being made. Perhaps what you are watching is that white potato mandate is getting stuck into this bill.

Mr. COHEN. Sausages and white potatoes. Thank you, sir.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, we worked hard to try to put together a pretty good bill, except for these two provisions that we were just talking about and the underfunding of the Federal Commodities Futures Trading Commission, and we will be having amendments on those issues.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. May I inquire as to how many speakers the minority has.

Mr. FARR. We don't have any further speakers.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, how much time do I have remaining?

The CHAIR. The gentleman from California has 1½ minutes remaining. The gentleman from Alabama has 1 minute remaining and the right to close.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS).

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Chairman, this is an issue that, unfortunately, I think is misunderstood.

In school districts like Monticello, Illinois, that had to make the tough decision to pull out of the program, they don't get the Federal dollars anymore. They don't get the reimbursement. But they had to make the cost-benefit decision of whether or not to still feed those who qualify for free and reduced lunch out of their own pocket so they wouldn't lose the $100,000 a year. When the Los Angeles school district is losing upwards of $20 million a year, it is a big deal because school districts are having to choose between teachers and complying with Federal rules and regulations.

I believe that the decision on how to feed children is best left to parents and our local school districts. Do you know what? The kids that are hurt the worst by this, that is why we are asking for this waiver. We are asking for the USDA to approve a waiver. That is it; nothing more, nothing less.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. ADERHOLT. I just wanted to clarify. I think the school district in Illinois you are talking about, they got out of the system because a hard boiled egg was not appropriate, or anything more than 12 ounces of skim milk was deemed inappropriate. That is what we are talking about, the regulations that are so out of whack.

Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois. And the kids that are hurt the worst are the poorest kids who don't have the ability to go out to the convenience store when they are hungry afterwards, like many of the children of ours, and feed themselves. That is the only meal they may get that day, and we can't have Washington determining what that meal is.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, let me explain that not a drop of this money, a cent of it, can be spent on a teacher's salary. This is not, ''We are going to spend it on food or a teacher's salary.'' This is only for food, and the Federal Government takes sole responsibility for that. If States want to add something they can. But it is a Federal program, one of the only solid Federal programs in K–12 education.

I yield the remainder of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr. TAKANO).

Mr. TAKANO. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of Congressman FARR's amendment that would remove the waiver that would exempt schools from providing even half a cup of fruits and vegetables to their students for lunch. More than 200 education and nutrition organizations oppose the weakening of nutrition standards. While it may be difficult to get kids to eat healthier, it is possible, as 90 percent of schools are already meeting the standards.

Rodney Taylor, the food service director at Riverside Unified School District, which is in my district, sent me a letter about the importance of nutrition standards, saying:

> Children in our district and many others are enjoying meals that meet updated school lunch requirements from the USDA, proving that it is possible to have healthy children and healthy budgets. Letting schools opt out

of these standards will not help them move forward and will be detrimental to the children they serve.

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I thank Congressman FARR for introducing this amendment, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it, so we can move forward in the fight against childhood obesity.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of Section 738, a section allowing for the inclusion of white potatoes in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), in the fiscal year 2015 Agriculture Appropriations Act. I commend Chairman ADERHOLT as well as Chairman ROGERS for their work crafting this legislation in a bipartisan manner.

Washington State is blessed with an incredibly diverse agriculture industry, providing our nation and the rest of the world with top-quality products including asparagus, apples, cherries, peas, lentils, wheat—and of course—potatoes. In fact, Washington State is second in the nation when it comes to potato production, contributing 23 percent of the nation's potato crop. Additionally, potatoes are the fourth largest agricultural commodity in Washington, providing jobs for hundreds of people in Eastern Washington and all across the state. To that end, I was pleased to join my colleagues this past January in passing the bipartisan Omnibus spending bill which directed the U.S. Department of Agriculture to include in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for WIC a range of fruits and vegetables including nutritious white potatoes.

Science has proven that fresh white potatoes are more nutrient dense than many of the vegetables already included in the WIC program and possess a significant amount of vitamin C and potassium. Despite the latest research and the clear intention of Congress, the Administrative has repeatedly fought to exclude white potatoes from the WIC program. Relying on decades-old consumption data cited in a 2005 Institute of Medicine report, the Department of Agriculture has arbitrarily limited this healthy option from the diets of millions of Americans. In fact, the most current science available, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, recommends greater consumption of starchy vegetables.

Mr. Chair, I believe the exclusion of potatoes in the WIC program is both scientifically unfounded and unfair to those Americans seeking a greater variety of healthy food options. I appreciate the work done in this bill to correct this arbitrary restriction and I urge my colleagues to support Section 738 of this bill.

The CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

During consideration of the bill for amendment, each amendment shall be debatable for 10 minutes equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent and shall not be subject to amendment. No pro forma amendment shall be in order except that the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Appropriations, or their respective designees, may offer up to 10 pro forma amendments each at any point for the purpose of debate. The chair of the Committee of the Whole may accord priority in recognition on the basis of whether the Member offering an amendment has caused it to be printed in the portion of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD designated for that purpose. Amendments so printed shall be considered read.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows.

H.R. 4800

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the following sums are appropriated, out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, namely:

TITLE I

AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS

PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, AND MARKETING

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Secretary, $41,284,000, of which not to exceed $5,051,000 shall be available for the immediate Office of the Secretary; not to exceed $498,000 shall be available for the Office of Tribal Relations; not to exceed $1,507,000 shall be available for the Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Coordination; not to exceed $1,209,000 shall be available for the Office of Advocacy and Outreach; not to exceed $26,115,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which $22,811,000 shall be available for Departmental Administration to provide for necessary expenses for management support services to offices of the Department and for general administration, security, repairs and alterations, and other miscellaneous supplies and expenses not otherwise provided for and necessary for the practical and efficient work of the Department; not to exceed $3,869,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations to carry out the programs funded by this Act, including programs involving intergovernmental affairs and liaison within the executive branch; and not to exceed $5,535,000 shall be available for the Office of Communications: *Provided*, That the Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to transfer funds appropriated for any office of the Office of the Secretary to any other office of the Office of the Secretary: *Provided further*, That no appropriation for any office shall be increased or decreased by more than 5 percent: *Provided further*, That not to exceed $11,000 of the amount made available under this paragraph for the immediate Office of the Secretary shall be available for official reception and representation expenses, not otherwise provided for, as determined by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That the amount made available under this heading for Departmental Administration shall be reimbursed from applicable appropriations in this Act for travel expenses incident to the holding of hearings as required by 5 U.S.C. 551—558: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations may be transferred to agencies of the Department of Agriculture funded by this Act to maintain personnel at the agency level: *Provided further*, That no funds made available under this heading for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations may be obligated after 30 days from the date of enactment of this Act, unless the Secretary has notified the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress on the allocation of these funds by USDA agency.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. LEE OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. SMITH of Nebraska). The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 2, line 14, after the first dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $5,000,000)''.

Page 2, line 21, after the dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $5,000,000)''.

Page 2, line 22, after the dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $5,000,000)''.

Page 43, line 18, after the dollar amount insert ''(increased by $8,150,000)''.

Page 44, line 2, after the dollar amount insert ''(increased by $8,150,000)''.

Page 48, line 4, after the dollar amount insert ''(reduced by $5,000,000)''.

Ms. LEE of California (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentlewoman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Chairman, first, let me thank our chair and our ranking member for working with me on this amendment. I appreciate the bipartisan cooperation. Also, I want to thank our staff for helping us with this.

This amendment would provide a badly needed increase to the school breakfast grant program of approximately $8.1 million. The offset for this amendment is the Secretary's administrative account and the administrative and expenses account.

These competitive grants allow States, schools, and local educational agencies to purchase important equipment for their school breakfast program. The school breakfast program is a critical tool in the fight to keep our students fed with a nutritious meal at the start of the day.

Oftentimes, this is the meal that children rely on to help them get through the day, especially toward the end of the day, when they are about ready to go home and they have not been fully fed at the beginning of the day.

The bottom line is breakfast is very, very important to the growth, health, welfare, and development of our children.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Will the gentlewoman yield?

Ms. LEE of California. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, the bill provides $25 million for USDA to

make the school meal equipment grants. I understand the intent of this amendment would be to increase the funding to match the President's request for a total of $35 million. Since there is an acceptable offset, we would be willing to accept this amount.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. It is especially critical for low-income children, many of whom who have not had a nutritious meal since the previous day of school, so I really appreciate your support.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. THOMPSON OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 2, line 14, after the first dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $1,000,000)''.

Page 2, line 21, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $1,000,000)''.

Page 2, line 22, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $1,000,000)''.

Page 6, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $1,000,000)''.

Mr. THOMPSON of California (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this amendment authored by myself and Mr. HUFFMAN from California.

Our amendment would help support the USDA Office of the Inspector General by providing them with additional resources to protect our Nation's food supply.

In February of this year, Rancho Feeding, a slaughterhouse bordering my district, recalled 8.7 million pounds of beef that it produced in the year 2013. That is no small recall. Unfortunately, the USDA was slow to share information about the nature of the recall and what would happen to the beef already processed by the Rancho facility.

From the beginning of this recall, public safety has been our number one concern. We can't let food get out that puts the health and safety of the American people at risk. That is why it is important that the Office of the Inspector General have the support it needs from Congress to do its job and ensure our food is safe. This amendment provides them with that additional support.

Jobs, businesses, and livelihoods are on the line. The longer this investigation drags on, the more uncertainty businesses face. Following the results of the investigation, USDA must put in place practices and procedures that prevent this type of recall from occurring in the future.

I want to thank my colleague and friend, Mr. HUFFMAN, for working closely with me on this issue. He and I both represent ranchers affected by this recall. He has shared my frustration during the past few months.

If you support protecting our food supply and ensuring the integrity of USDA programs, then I urge you to support this amendment.

I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN).

Mr. HUFFMAN. Thank you, Mr. THOMPSON.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to ensure our food safety and to make sure that the meat we barbecue this summer doesn't come with harmful diseases.

It is the responsibility of the inspectors and the oversight agencies to stop unsafe practices from occurring in the first place and to proactively address problems before they require massive recalls.

Unfortunately, it doesn't always happen that way. The facility in my district that is now experiencing a sweeping recall of 8.7 million pounds of meat does not represent a simple breakdown in the inspection process.

The Office of the Inspector General has launched a criminal investigation into improper activities that include deceptive practices by the owners of the slaughterhouse. We know, from a CNN investigation, that misconduct may even include some of the very USDA inspectors that were charged with protecting the public.

This incident clearly demands a serious investigation. The public has a right to know what happened, how the process broke down, and who will be held responsible for it. Unfortunately, to date, we have received virtually no information about this from USDA.

This sweeping recall, coupled with a complete lack of information, not only shakes public confidence, it affects, in a very serious way, many of the ranchers in my district whose livelihoods have been harmed. They deserve answers from the USDA, too.

I have many constituents who are facing serious financial losses, and they can't get any information about what happened. Many ranchers in the North Bay had tens of thousands of pounds of their premium beef recalled, and the USDA won't tell them what happened, whether their beef was actually contaminated, or even when this case will be closed.

We have gotten far more information, frankly, from CNN than we have gotten from USDA. This is completely unacceptable.

Our amendment transfers $1 million from the USDA's administrative account to the inspector general's office, so that we can have the resources needed to swiftly complete this investigation, close the case, and make sure we get answers, so that we can prevent this from happening again.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. HUFFMAN. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. ADERHOLT. I was simply asking the gentleman to yield to say we would accept your language.

Mr. HUFFMAN. Reclaiming my time, thank you very much.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. I thank the chairman and ranking member for cooperating with us and working with us on this very important matter, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GALLEGO

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 2, line 14, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $3,869,000)''.

Page 3, line 4, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $3,869,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Texas and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Chairman, I offer this amendment because I believe that government must respect the people that it serves and always remember that government is a servant of the people.

Several years ago, the Department of Agriculture closed an inspection station that was incredibly important to the city of Presidio in Presidio County, Texas.

When I took office some 18 months ago and made inquiries, USDA never returned phone calls, never made any effort to work with us to determine why it is that that inspection station was closed.

They refused to work with the city or the county or the local business community, and so businesses across the area were harmed in a way that they will never get their money back as a result of all of the lost business. Presidio was the leading cattle importation port in the country at the time.

This amendment would zero fund their Office of Congressional Relations in an attempt to get the attention of the Department of Agriculture and indicate to them that their behavior is totally, thoroughly, and completely unacceptable.

People in Presidio, as well as people elsewhere across the Nation, deserve respect. Those men and women who run businesses and depend on the cattle

industry in that part of the State deserve to have their questions answered.

For the Department to drag its feet for more than 2 years before giving a simple answer as to why that action was taken by the Department is totally, thoroughly and completely inexcusable.

As I said, Mr. Chairman, this amendment would zero fund their Office of Congressional Relations in an attempt to get their attention.

Having offered the amendment, Mr. Chairman, and made my point, I ask unanimous consent to withdraw the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas.

There was no objection.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY HINOJOSA

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 2, line 14, after the first dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $2,500,000)''.

Page 2, line 21, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $2,500,000)''.

Page 2, line 22, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $2,500,000)''.

Page 13, line 8, after the first dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $2,500,000)''.

Page 13, line 24, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $2,500,000)''.

Mr. HINOJOSA (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be considered as read.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Texas and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Congressman MIKE THOMPSON from California for joining me on this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, my amendment to H.R. 4800 is simple. It would increase funding for the specialty crop pests program at the Department of Agriculture by $2.5 million in order to provide more funding to strongly combat the invasive pests that threaten our agriculture industry.

□ 1515

From the Mediterranean fruit fly, which attacks fruits and nuts throughout California, to the imported fire ant that destroys corn and soybean and okra in Louisiana, the need for this program is higher than it has ever been.

Nowhere is this more important than in my own congressional district in south Texas, which is being ravaged by citrus greening. Citrus greening is one of the most destructive plant diseases in the world. Once a citrus tree is infected, it produces bitter, unusable fruit and kills the tree, itself, within a few years. There is no cure, and it has proven to be difficult to eradicate. As a result, over half of the trees in every citrus orchard in Florida have contracted this disease. Right now, both Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, in my district, are under a full emergency quarantine. This is a growing epidemic that threatens to eradicate an entire agricultural industry if we do not do everything we can to stop it.

While I am pleased that the recently passed farm bill included $125 million in funding over a 5-year period to study ways to wipe it out, that funding is focused on long-term solutions through competitive grants. The funding for the invasive pest control, which the amendment would increase, is specifically meant to help deal with the immediate impacts on the ground today, programs such as coordinated area-wide suppression programs, pest surveys, protecting disease-free nursery stock, and public outreach and education programs.

While I am happy that the committee provided a modest increase to this funding in the underlying bill, I believe this additional funding is greatly needed to increase our on-the-ground presence to stop the outbreak in Texas from its alarming spread, which threatens the entire State. For these reasons, I would urge the support of my amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, the House bill does provide significant funding for this project and report language regarding the citrus growing disease. Mr. ROONEY, Mr. VALADAO, along with Mr. MCCARTHY and Mr. FARR, have raised this issue. We understand how devastating this disease has been, especially to the Florida growers and, certainly, to California as well.

The bill, itself, provides $44.5 million for the programs that protect the citrus industry, so I believe we have addressed the urgency of the need in this bill. I do accept the gentleman's amendment, understanding this is a very important issue.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HINOJOSA. I thank the gentleman for accepting my amendment.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, in my area just a year ago, we went to see and meet with all of the producers, and they were showing us the comparison of where we are in Texas as compared to the damage that was done in Florida and in California. Within less than 6 months, we were put under quarantine in my area, and we are one of the three largest citrus growing regions in the whole country—in California, in Florida, and in deep south Texas—where we grow the Ruby Reds and the Navel oranges and all of that.

We are really needing it not over a 5-year period—we need to attack it now. We have the research going on with the Texas A&M University Research Center in Weslaco, and this money will help us to be able to stop the damage that has already been done.

I thank you for accepting my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HINOJOSA).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

EXECUTIVE OPERATIONS

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ECONOMIST

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Chief Economist, $16,777,000, of which $4,000,000 shall be for grants or cooperative agreements for policy research under 7 U.S.C. 3155.

NATIONAL APPEALS DIVISION

For necessary expenses of the National Appeals Division, $13,317,000.

OFFICE OF BUDGET AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS

For necessary expenses of the Office of Budget and Program Analysis, $9,392,000.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Chief Information Officer, $45,025,000, of which not less than $22,000,000 is for cybersecurity requirements of the Department.

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, $6,028,000.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GOSAR

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 5, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $220,000)''.

Page 6, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $220,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Arizona and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to offer the simplest of amendments.

This amendment transfers $220,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's wasteful and ineffective Office of the chief financial officer to the Department's Office of Inspector General, bringing their appropriations in line with the President's request. It seems only fitting that the inspector general's office receive additional resources, particularly at the expense of the office it will most likely first investigate.

In April of this year, the inspector general reported that the Department's chief financial officer failed to comply with the Improper Payments Information Act for the third year in a row. The CFO would have saved more than $415 million by simply following Federal law and ensuring certain programs met their spending reduction goals. Instead, the CFO continued to turn a

blind eye, and the inspector general reported that, last year alone, the USDA made $6.2 billion in improper payments. Let me repeat that: $6.2 billion in improper payments were made by the USDA last year alone. I would like to provide a few examples of this wasteful spending.

In fiscal year 2013, the USDA paid more than $50 million to special interest groups to promote Christmas. The USDA's chief financial officer authorized a loan to a well-established brewing company for over $450,000. The USDA spent $20 million on IT software that did not work. On the chief financial officer's watch, $403,627 was wasted last year on a study to see if we could turn cow manure into electricity. Over 100 people received loan guarantees of $500,000 or more to buy a home in Hawaii. This ''Hawaiian beachfront property'' loan program lost nearly $500 million last year according to the Office of Inspector General.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. GOSAR. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. ADERHOLT. We will accept your amendment.

Mr. GOSAR. We will accept the gentleman's proposal.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, $898,000.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 5, line 9, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000)''.

Page 7, line 17, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000)''.

Page 12, line 22, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000)''.

Page 18, line 23, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000)''.

Page 20, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000)''.

Page 25, line 12, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000)''.

Page 26, line 25, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000)''.

Page 43, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $5,000)''.

Page 82, line 2, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $40,000)''.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia (during the reading). Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Georgia and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, this amendment simply gathers the arbitrary budget increases of $5,000 added to seven under secretaries' offices and one assistant secretary's office, totaling $40,000, and it applies that amount to the spending reduction account.

What would a $5,000 increase to the budget of the office of an under secretary even pay for? Would it pay for one taxpayer-funded trip? for pencils? for paper clips? maybe pay raises to the Federal bureaucrats to implement the nearly $1 trillion new farm bill?

According to the Web site wallstcheatsheet.com, a person can start a business for $5,000 or less in overhead; but, Mr. Chairman, the Federal Government is not a business, and it does not run like one, unfortunately, as $5,000 is a drop in the bucket compared to the accounts we are considering today.

This increase is a symbol of this government's out-of-control spending. Both political parties are guilty. If Congress can't cut $40,000, then we are facing the root of our spending problem—thousands of dollars can quickly add up to millions, which would soon become billions, and all the while, Congress keeps approving more and more even when there is no good reason for the increase.

The American people have demanded that we cut the outrageous spending that is going on here in Washington by Republicans and Democrats alike. We must look to every corner of the budget to do so. We must become better stewards of taxpayers' dollars, and this amendment is one small step in that right direction.

I urge my colleagues to support my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the gentleman's amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the gentleman's concern for the Federal deficit and the debt problem that we are facing in this Nation. It is something that is very serious, and I appreciate his hard work on this issue. I know that he is very concerned, as we all are, about it.

I am going to have to reluctantly oppose the amendment. We have carefully reviewed the President's budget request, and we believe that we have appropriately and adequately funded the various mission areas within the Department of Agriculture, and because of that, as I say, I will oppose the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS

For necessary expenses of the Office of Civil Rights, $24,070,000.

AGRICULTURE BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

For payment of space rental and related costs pursuant to Public Law 92–313, including authorities pursuant to the 1984 delegation of authority from the Administrator of General Services to the Department of Agriculture under 40 U.S.C. 121, for programs and activities of the Department which are included in this Act, and for alterations and other actions needed for the Department and its agencies to consolidate unneeded space into configurations suitable for release to the Administrator of General Services, and for the operation, maintenance, improvement, and repair of Agriculture buildings and facilities, and for related costs, $54,825,000, to remain available until expended, for building operations and maintenance expenses: *Provided*, That the Secretary may use unobligated prior year balances of an agency or office that are no longer available for new obligation to cover shortfalls incurred in prior year rental payments for such agency or office.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses of the Department of Agriculture, to comply with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.), $3,600,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That appropriations and funds available herein to the Department for Hazardous Materials Management may be transferred to any agency of the Department for its use in meeting all requirements pursuant to the above Acts on Federal and non-Federal lands.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

For necessary expenses of the Office of Inspector General, including employment pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, $97,020,000, including such sums as may be necessary for contracting and other arrangements with public agencies and private persons pursuant to section 6(a)(9) of the Inspector General Act of 1978, and including not to exceed $125,000 for certain confidential operational expenses, including the payment of informants, to be expended under the direction of the Inspector General pursuant to Public Law 95–452 and section 1337 of Public Law 97–98.

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

For necessary expenses of the Office of the General Counsel, $44,383,000.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GOSAR

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 7, line 9, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $2,181,000)''.

Page 82, line 2, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $2,181,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Arizona and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer another amendment to the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2015.

This amendment pertains to the Department of Agriculture's Office of General Counsel.

By way of background, this office was appropriated $41,202,000 in fiscal year 2014. The President's budget for FY15 requested a steep increase of $6,365,000. The President attempts to justify this 15.4 percent increase by saying that these moneys will go towards: ''31 full-time equivalents to handle an increased workload, to support current staff, rent, and enhance OGC's information technology reporting capabilities and litigation management tools.'' In other words, most of that money will be used to hire both government attorneys and to give raises to government attorneys already on staff.

You see, because I am from the Western States, I take issue with that.

I represent a rural district in western Arizona, and I serve on the House Natural Resources Committee, which oversees much of the executive branch's activities with regard to resources and lands. I am quite familiar with the effects government attorneys often have on States, their resources, and their lands, and my colleagues and I are generally disgusted with the overreaching policies the Obama administration has imposed on Western States. Therefore, I oppose any plans by the Department to hire more government attorneys, many of whom will be used to implement and defend the administration's overreaching landgrabs, watergrabs, and climate change policies.

I appreciate that this committee decided not to fulfill the President's request in full, but it did propose appropriating roughly half of his request. I simply cannot, in good conscience, allow more attorneys to be hired at the USDA—attorneys who will infringe upon many States' 10th Amendment rights.

My amendment proposes to cut most of the increase the Appropriations Committee has offered in this bill, but it leaves a portion of the increase for the sole purpose of improving the informational technology of the Office of the General Counsel.

□ 1530

I understand the Federal Government generally has major issues with information technology. Our departments and agencies are often using archaic IT systems and many should be updated for efficiency and security purposes.

IT issues are often highlighted at my other committee assignment on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. This a bipartisan issue and has been addressed regularly by Chairman ISSA, Ranking Member CUMMINGS, and the rest of my colleagues.

To close, I ask my colleagues to support this amendment. It would help to reserve States' rights, curb executive branch overreach, cut spending, and improve information technology systems all at once.

As always, I appreciate the work of the committee, particularly the work of the chair and the ranking member.

I urge passage of my commonsense amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chair, again, I appreciate the gentleman's concern for the Federal debt, the deficit problem that we are facing in this Nation. Again, it is a very serious issue, and we need to address it in many ways.

However, I would have to oppose this amendment, reluctantly. We have carefully reviewed the President's budget, the request that he has made, and we have tried to appropriately and adequately fund the mission areas within the Department of Agriculture.

For that reason, again, we would have to oppose the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GOSAR. Mr. Chairman, I would like to reiterate the government's overreach, particularly in Western States. With due respect, this budget does not look at the appropriate utilization of funds for attorneys. And when you look at the overreach of this administration with climate change, with water, and with resources, it is about time that we made conscious use of attorneys' fees.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. JOLLY). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Arizona (Mr. GOSAR).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

OFFICE OF ETHICS

For necessary expenses of the Office of Ethics, $3,440,000.

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND ECONOMICS

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Under Secretary for Research, Education, and Economics, $898,000.

ECONOMIC RESEARCH SERVICE

For necessary expenses of the Economic Research Service, $85,784,000.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. COHEN

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 7, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $3,000,000)''.

Page 43, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $3,000,000)''.

Page 44, line 9, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $3,000,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Tennessee and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, I rise to urge my colleagues to support the Kelly-Cohen-Titus amendment to increase funding to the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer program.

For many young people, the end of school is an exciting day, and they get out for the summer. But for the millions of children and families who rely on school lunch for meals, the summer months are a time of stress, anxiety, and hunger when those meals disappear.

The Summer Food Service Program, created by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, provides free, nutritious meals and snacks to help children get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow throughout the summer months when they are out of school.

Last Monday, I joined the Summer Food Kickoff at Emerald Square in Memphis in support of this program. I had the opportunity to speak with kids, watch them in delight as they ate their lunch and listened to them read books provided by Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

This amendment would increase the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children program by $3 million. The project allows USDA to study alternative approaches to providing food assistance to low-income children in urban and rural districts through the summer months.

Additional funding to this program for children would not only reduce childhood hunger when school is out and encourage healthier eating but allow us to learn more about food insecurity among children and the best approaches to reducing it long-term.

The wealthiest Nation of the world should not send its children to bed hungry, so making sure they have the food they need must be a top priority.

This program helps fill the gap when students are not in school, providing meals for many children that would otherwise go hungry in Memphis, Chicago, Las Vegas, and throughout the Nation.

By increasing funding to this program, we can be sure we are feeding our kids a healthy meal each day. I urge passage of the amendment to restore funding to the Summer Food Service Program.

Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentlewoman from Illinois (Ms. KELLY).

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with the gentleman from

Tennessee and the gentlewoman from Nevada to offer a commonsense amendment to the Agriculture Appropriations Act that would ensure that this summer, when students walk away from their classroom, they don't walk into homes and communities that allow them to go hungry.

Most of us can remember the excitement of the last day of school. But too many of us forget the fact that, for millions of children in rural, suburban, and urban communities, the summer months, when you no longer have lunchtime in the cafeteria, are often the hungriest time of the year.

Our amendment is a fiscally responsible effort to be there for our kids while providing funds for the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer for Children program, which will help the USDA offer responsible solutions that respond to the food security needs of children across our Nation.

When children wake up in Illinois and feel the same exact hunger as kids in Memphis, Las Vegas, and the Speaker's district, we are doing something wrong. I urge my colleagues to work in a bipartisan manner and put kids first and pass this amendment.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. TITUS).

Ms. TITUS. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to join with my colleagues, Representatives KELLY and COHEN, to introduce this amendment to increase the summer food program for children by $3 million.

Across the country, one of every five children is at risk of going hungry. In Nevada, more than 233,000 children qualify for free or reduced lunch. That means that 54 percent of Nevada's students come from low-income households that struggle with hunger.

While these children can eat free and reduced-price lunch during the school year, the vast majority are left without adequate nutrition during the summer.

The Summer EBT program is a pilot program that helps fill this gap by providing eligible families with additional SNAP benefits during the summer months. It works.

In 2012, it served almost 67,000 children who might have otherwise gone hungry. The participation in this program is dramatically higher than in other programs, serving up to 75 percent of eligible children.

That is why I believe that we should meet the President's budget request and increase funding to feed as many hungry children as possible. A vacation from school shouldn't mean a hungry child.

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COHEN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 7, line 20, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $7,726,000)''.

Page 82, line 2, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $7,726,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Georgia and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I rise to offer an amendment that would reduce the funding for the USDA's Economic Research Service by $7,726,000 and increase the spending reduction account by that same amount.

This amendment would maintain, I repeat, maintain current funding levels, while helping to end the duplicative research the USDA is currently conducting.

The Economic Research Service makes social science inquiries into the nutritional choices of citizens, as well as farmers' decisions to participate in risk management programs. According to the USDA, this program is ''the primary source of statistical indicators of the farm sector,'' and it is the only USDA research agency based entirely in D.C., according to the Congressional Research Service.

However, there is a second agency within the USDA, the National Agricultural Statistics Agency, which serves essentially the same purpose. This agency is funded at $169,371,000 in this bill.

But wait, Mr. Chairman. The underlying bill also provides $1.2 billion in mandatory spending for research, education, and economics studies, the same function as the Economic Research Service and the National Agricultural Statistics Agency.

Mr. Chairman, we are in an economic and fiscal emergency. The Federal Government spends too much money. It is irresponsible to keep spending money beyond our means. Not only do we need to reduce our deficit, but we need to begin to make an impact on eliminating the huge debt that has been accumulating over the last several years.

I applaud the Appropriations Committee for bringing to the floor five appropriations bills in roughly the same number of weeks. In fact, we haven't seen this particular bill here in the House since 2011.

I offered a similar amendment to this one during the consideration of that bill, to cut $7 million from the Economic Research Service.

So I ask my colleagues, let's try again. Let's cut the duplicative spending that is in this bill for that agency. Let's make meaningful cuts to show the American people that we are serious about controlling spending and serious about the future of our country. I urge support of my amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I respect the gentleman's desire to cut, squeeze, and trim and be a deficit hawk, but I think you are really cutting the wrong area.

There are a lot of statistical departments in the Department of Agriculture because it is involved with a lot of different issues, sort of the whole rural economics of America, all the trade issues.

You have got two departments. You have got one that does the big data and one that does the small data.

You are a doctor of medicine, and it would be like comparing an MRI to a thermometer. They both are diagnostic tools but they don't do the same things. And neither does ERS or NAS.

You stated they seem like they duplicate. No, they are both involved in economic research, and I don't know how to explain it all, but it is the underlying data that drives everything, drives all the markets, drives decision-making. The growers are private sector capitalists, if you will, having to borrow from a banking system. They all have to have good data in order to make decisions.

□ 1545

I think, if you squeeze and trim these economic data collectors, you are really hurting the underlying economy of agriculture in the United States, so I would oppose your amendment.

We need crop data. We need market data. We need nutritional data. We need rural economy data, and these are the agencies, particularly the ERS that you are cutting, that collects that, so I oppose the amendment.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. FARR. I yield to the gentleman.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. I thank my friend for yielding.

In this bill, we are appropriating $1.2 billion of mandatory spending to gather data for research education and economic studies.

Is there any reason why, within that $1.2 billion of getting data, that they cannot do the same function as we are with the Economic Research Service?

Mr. FARR. Well, I am not sure that I understand the gentleman's question, but there are different kinds of data, and there are different places that you collect that data, as there is in everything we do in government and the private sector.

I think what you are doing, I mean, you are taking a program—if you just kind of open the book and look at government and find all these areas where you think there is duplication, I think that the next step is to go and find out exactly where there is waste.

Everybody is against—and we do trim waste because we are always looking for money, but this is not the place. There is no trim there. It doesn't get you anything. In fact, it hurts the

users of that data, not being able to have it.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS SERVICE

For necessary expenses of the National Agricultural Statistics Service, $169,371,000, of which up to $47,842,000 shall be available until expended for the Census of Agriculture: *Provided*, That amounts made available for the Census of Agriculture may be used to conduct Current Industrial Report surveys subject to 7 U.S.C. 2204g(d) and (f).

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Agricultural Research Service and for acquisition of lands by donation, exchange, or purchase at a nominal cost not to exceed $100, and for land exchanges where the lands exchanged shall be of equal value or shall be equalized by a payment of money to the grantor which shall not exceed 25 percent of the total value of the land or interests transferred out of Federal ownership, $1,120,253,000: *Provided*, That appropriations hereunder shall be available for the operation and maintenance of aircraft and the purchase of not to exceed one for replacement only: *Provided further*, That appropriations hereunder shall be available pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 2250 for the construction, alteration, and repair of buildings and improvements, but unless otherwise provided, the cost of constructing any one building shall not exceed $375,000, except for headhouses or greenhouses which shall each be limited to $1,200,000, and except for 10 buildings to be constructed or improved at a cost not to exceed $750,000 each, and the cost of altering any one building during the fiscal year shall not exceed 10 percent of the current replacement value of the building or $375,000, whichever is greater: *Provided further*, That the limitations on alterations contained in this Act shall not apply to modernization or replacement of existing facilities at Beltsville, Maryland: *Provided further*, That appropriations hereunder shall be available for granting easements at the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center: *Provided further*, That the foregoing limitations shall not apply to replacement of buildings needed to carry out the Act of April 24, 1948 (21 U.S.C. 113a): *Provided further*, That appropriations hereunder shall be available for granting easements at any Agricultural Research Service location for the construction of a research facility by a non-Federal entity for use by, and acceptable to, the Agricultural Research Service and a condition of the easements shall be that upon completion the facility shall be accepted by the Secretary, subject to the availability of funds herein, if the Secretary finds that acceptance of the facility is in the interest of the United States: *Provided further*, That funds may be received from any State, other political subdivision, organization, or individual for the purpose of establishing or operating any research facility or research project of the Agricultural Research Service, as authorized by law.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

For the acquisition of land, construction, repair, improvement, extension, alteration, and purchase of fixed equipment or facilities as necessary to carry out the agricultural research programs of the Department of Agriculture, where not otherwise provided, $155,000,000 to remain available until expended.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

For payments to agricultural experiment stations, for cooperative forestry and other research, for facilities, and for other expenses, $774,465,000, which shall be for the purposes, and in the amounts, specified in the table titled ''National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Research and Education Activities'' in the report accompanying this Act: *Provided*, That funds for research grants for 1994 institutions, education grants for 1890 institutions, the agriculture and food research initiative, veterinary medicine loan repayment, multicultural scholars, graduate fellowship and institution challenge grants, and grants management systems shall remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That each institution eligible to receive funds under the Evans–Allen program receives no less than $1,000,000: *Provided further*, That funds for education grants for Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions be made available to individual eligible institutions or consortia of eligible institutions with funds awarded equally to each of the States of Alaska and Hawaii: *Provided further*, That funds for education grants for 1890 institutions shall be made available to institutions eligible to receive funds under 7 U.S.C. 3221 and 3222: *Provided further*, That not more than 5 percent of the amounts made available by this or any other Act to carry out the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative under 7 U.S.C. 450i(b) may be retained by the Secretary of Agriculture to pay administrative costs incurred by the Secretary in carrying out that authority.

NATIVE AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS ENDOWMENT FUND

For the Native American Institutions Endowment Fund authorized by Public Law 103–382 (7 U.S.C. 301 note), $11,880,000, to remain available until expended.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

For payments to States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Islands, Micronesia, the Northern Marianas, and American Samoa, $467,339,000, which shall be for the purposes, and in the amounts, specified in the table titled ''National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Extension Activities'' in the report accompanying this Act: *Provided*, That funds for facility improvements at 1890 institutions shall remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That institutions eligible to receive funds under 7 U.S.C. 3221 for cooperative extension receive no less than $1,000,000: *Provided further*, That funds for cooperative extension under sections 3(b) and (c) of the Smith–Lever Act (7 U.S.C. 343(b) and (c)) and section 208(c) of Public Law 93–471 shall be available for retirement and employees' compensation costs for extension agents.

INTEGRATED ACTIVITIES

For the integrated research, education, and extension grants programs, including necessary administrative expenses, $32,000,000, which shall be for the purposes, and in the amounts, specified in the table titled ''National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Integrated Activities'' in the report accompanying this Act: *Provided*, That funds for the Food and Agriculture Defense Initiative shall remain available until September 30, 2016.

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR MARKETING AND REGULATORY PROGRAMS

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Under Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs, $898,000.

ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, including up to $30,000 for representation allowances and for expenses pursuant to the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 4085), $867,505,000, of which $470,000, to remain available until expended, shall be available for the control of outbreaks of insects, plant diseases, animal diseases and for control of pest animals and birds (contingency fund) to the extent necessary to meet emergency conditions; of which $11,520,000, to remain available until expended, shall be used for the cotton pests program for cost share purposes or for debt retirement for active eradication zones; of which $35,339,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for Animal Health Technical Services; of which $697,000 shall be for activities under the authority of the Horse Protection Act of 1970, as amended (15 U.S.C. 1831); of which $52,340,000, to remain available until expended, shall be used to support avian health; of which $4,251,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for information technology infrastructure; of which $156,500,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for specialty crop pests; of which, $8,826,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for field crop and rangeland ecosystem pests; of which $47,417,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for tree and wood pests; of which $4,222,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for the National Veterinary Stockpile; of which up to $1,500,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for the scrapie program for indemnities; of which $1,500,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for the wildlife damage management program for aviation safety: *Provided*, That of amounts available under this heading for wildlife services methods development, $1,000,000 shall remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That of amounts available under this heading for the screwworm program, $4,990,000 shall remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That no funds shall be used to formulate or administer a brucellosis eradication program for the current fiscal year that does not require minimum matching by the States of at least 40 percent: *Provided further*, That this appropriation shall be available for the operation and maintenance of aircraft and the purchase of not to exceed four, of which two shall be for replacement only: *Provided further*, That in addition, in emergencies which threaten any segment of the agricultural production industry of this country, the Secretary may transfer from other appropriations or funds available to the agencies or corporations of the Department such sums as may be deemed necessary, to be available only in such emergencies for the arrest and eradication of contagious or infectious disease or pests of animals, poultry, or plants, and for expenses in accordance with sections 10411 and 10417 of the Animal Health Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 8310 and 8316) and sections 431 and 442 of the Plant Protection Act (7 U.S.C. 7751 and 7772), and any unexpended balances of funds transferred for such emergency purposes in the preceding fiscal year

shall be merged with such transferred amounts: *Provided further*, That appropriations hereunder shall be available pursuant to law (7 U.S.C. 2250) for the repair and alteration of leased buildings and improvements, but unless otherwise provided the cost of altering any one building during the fiscal year shall not exceed 10 percent of the current replacement value of the building.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. SCHIFF

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 13, line 8, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $1,000,000) (increased by $1,000,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Chairman, for decades, there has been a growing debate among marine biologists and other professionals over maintaining marine mammals in captivity, but it was last year's release of the documentary ''Blackfish'' that spurred a broader public discussion over whether the conditions in which marine mammals, particularly orcas, are held for public display are humane and whether these animals should even be held in captivity.

I have serious concerns about the psychological and physical harm to orcas and other large marine mammals in captivity. Isolating these animals—which can travel hundreds of miles in a day in the wild and which live in large, complex social groupings—in a small enclosure is troubling.

There is substantial evidence that orcas in captivity live much shorter lives than those in the wild and display high levels of stress and aberrant and sometimes dangerous behavior.

Two weeks ago, Representative HUFFMAN and I, along with 38 of our colleagues, sent a letter to the Department of Agriculture, urging them to move forward with a rulemaking regarding conditions of captivity for marine mammals under the Animal Welfare Act.

Twenty years ago, the Department recognized the need to revise regulations. Ten years ago, the Department proposed such a rulemaking and received many public comments. Since then, progress has stalled, despite the public outcry about this issue.

Our amendment would serve to kickstart that effort by providing $1 million for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to study the effect of captivity on large marine mammals, so that USDA can follow through with proposing a rule that is long overdue.

Among the issues that would benefit from an unbiased examination by APHIS are the effects of captivity on the longevity of marine mammals, whether they suffer from physical and mental maladies at a higher rate than animals in the wild and whether they display unnatural and unhealthy behaviors indicating high levels of stress.

The finding of this study will inform the USDA's consideration of reopening a rulemaking process, which could result in scientifically-based regulations that ensure humane conditions for these awe-inspiring animals.

The amendment does not change existing rules and regulations. Instead, we are calling on the USDA to gather all scientific evidence and propose a rule that has been 20 years in the making. I urge adoption of the amendment.

At this point, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. HUFFMAN), who is a leader on this issue.

Mr. HUFFMAN. I thank my colleague from southern California for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Chairman, like many people, I did a lot of reflecting after I saw the documentary ''Blackfish.'' Specifically, I looked into whether our Federal authorities were using the most updated science-based information in their regulation of marine mammal captivity.

I was disappointed to find that our government has done virtually nothing to update these regulations in the last two decades.

APHIS, the agency charged with this responsibility, has not updated the Animal Welfare Act regulations since 1995, and these rules should have been updated 10 years ago, when APHIS opened up a rulemaking process. Unfortunately, they dropped the ball, so it is time to try again.

As Congressman SCHIFF mentioned, we recently led a sign-on letter with three dozen of our colleagues to Agriculture Secretary Vilsack, demanding action on that issue.

In that letter, we urged him to complete the updating of these regulations for captive marine mammals, including publishing the proposed rule and allowing a public comment period, so that we can incorporate the latest science.

We have had no response to that letter, so today, we are offering an amendment to provide APHIS with the funding needed to start that process again and ensure that our regulations for captive orcas and other marine mammals are based on modern science.

This amendment reminds APHIS that inaction is unacceptable. The agency must use the funds provided to ensure that we have on the books the best possible standards for captive marine mammals based on solid modern science and informed by all of the information that we have gleaned in the past two decades.

I ask my colleagues to support this amendment

Mr. SCHIFF. I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

In fiscal year 2015, the agency is authorized to collect fees to cover the total costs of providing technical assistance, goods, or services requested by States, other political subdivisions, domestic and international organizations, foreign governments, or individuals, provided that such fees are structured such that any entity's liability for such fees is reasonably based on the technical assistance, goods, or services provided to the entity by the agency, and such fees shall be reimbursed to this account, to remain available until expended, without further appropriation, for providing such assistance, goods, or services.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

For plans, construction, repair, preventive maintenance, environmental support, improvement, extension, alteration, and purchase of fixed equipment or facilities, as authorized by 7 U.S.C. 2250, and acquisition of land as authorized by 7 U.S.C. 428a, $3,175,000, to remain available until expended.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

MARKETING SERVICES

For necessary expenses of the Agricultural Marketing Service, $81,192,000: *Provided*, That this appropriation shall be available pursuant to law (7 U.S.C. 2250) for the alteration and repair of buildings and improvements, but the cost of altering any one building during the fiscal year shall not exceed 10 percent of the current replacement value of the building.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. ROYCE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 16, line 14, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $15,500,000)''.

Page 48, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $10,000,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chairman, I want to compliment the chairman and the ranking member for the work that they have done to bring this bill to the floor, but this bill can be improved.

There is growing bipartisan support for improving our international food assistance to ensure that more people are helped for less money. Unfortunately, this bill fails to advance international food aid reform, and it actually reverses progress achieved in the 2014 farm bill, legislation enacted by this body just a few months ago.

It fails to provide flexibility, so that up to 25 percent of the Food for Peace title II budget would be exempt from U.S. purchase requirements. If enacted, this proposal would have generated over $100 million in efficiency savings and enabled the United States to reach an additional 2 million people in dire need of food aid. An effective international food aid program helps those in need, and it strengthens our international security.

Finally, the bill fails to fund a congressionally authorized, broadly supported Local and Regional Procurement program. Following upon a successful pilot, the 2014 farm bill authorized $80 million per year for the Local and Regional Procurement program.

That means we can buy food closer to the area in crisis, reducing transit time by more than 10 weeks, reducing the cost per food aid recipient by 20 to 30 percent. This was considered an important reform that won, again, broad bipartisan support.

This amendment contains a modest shift in funding that will have a major impact, $10 million, while reducing funds for the administration of marketing and promotion programs that benefit major corporations. We can save lives. It is an easy choice.

Mr. Chairman, our food aid takes too long to arrive and costs too much to get there. A former top aid official told our committee that:

> In fast onset famines, such as Somalia in 1991–1992, and wars involving mass population displacement, such as in Darfur in 2003 and 2004, I watched people die waiting for food arrive.

Obviously, he strongly backs this reform.

Lastly, I recently traveled to the Philippines and witnessed firsthand the impact that LRP can have. Devastated by a powerful typhoon and left with virtually nothing, the people of Tacloban did not have the luxury of time to wait for U.S. food aid to arrive from warehouses in Sri Lanka.

In fact, it took more than 3 weeks for those shipments to arrive, but with local and regional procurement, we were able to start helping people right away, and we saved lives.

I would say, in Syria, where the delivery of U.S. food is nearly impossible, the combination of vouchers with local and regional purchase is the only viable option.

It is time to make a change. This requires $10 million. Vote ''yes,'' please, on the Royce amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, my colleague from California (Mr. ROYCE) has been working at this issue for a very long time, and he has considerable knowledge and certainly a compassion and a deep understanding of these issues. There is far more to this than was explained in your presentation.

There is an ongoing debate about how the United States ought to be assisting in the disasters and famines around the world. That debate came to a head last year in which it was decided that we ought to continue with the longstanding appeal for a Food for Peace program, with some modifications.

My concern here with this particular amendment is that it may open the door for a continuation of that debate and ultimately lead to the demise of the P.L. 480 program, which has extraordinary political support as a result of the combination of American farmers, the merchant marine industry, as well as many NGOs around the Nation.

I recognize that, in many places, it is necessary to have local purchases of food, and the chairman actually cited a couple of those examples. It turned out that the local purchase of food was accomplished through an existing program that USAID presently has, and that program is the international disaster assistance program, where money is available for the local purchase of food.

The bottom line is that this $10 million really doesn't add anything that isn't already available in the current appropriation—in the current bill, so I would say let's not go down this road right now. Let's not open up this door to what may very well be a very extensive debate that we have already had, so I would softly oppose the amendment.

I yield to the gentleman from Tennessee on the other side of the aisle.

Mr. FINCHER. I thank the gentleman from California for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the gentleman's amendment. This amendment would essentially duplicate an existing program already in place at the U.S. Agency for International Development under the international development assistance account.

□ 1600

USAID already allows for local and regional purchases so there is no need for the same program at the USDA.

More importantly, this amendment would use taxpayer dollars to purchase commodities from foreign countries rather than right here at home. Unlike other foreign aid programs, the Food for Peace program is American-made through and through. It was designed to take American commodities on American ships overseas to feed those in need.

The Food for Peace program supports American agriculture, exports, and jobs while increasing goodwill overseas and helping those in need. The USDA estimates that for every $1 billion in U.S. agricultural exports, 8,400 American jobs are created. We need to be focused on creating jobs here at home and growing our economy so the United States is able to be abundantly generous to countries that can't grow enough food to feed their growing populations.

This amendment gives away American tax dollars to our foreign competitors and puts American jobs at risk. I urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment and support American farmers, workers, and taxpayers.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield my remaining 1 minute to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of Mr. ROYCE's amendment. I want to work with him on an offset that I think might be a little more desirable.

But the notion here somehow that we are going to undercut the reforms that were achieved in the farm bill that require food, on average, to take 74 days longer, when you use U.S.-sourced commodities, when it is going to be, on average, 25 percent more expensive, and to talk about our ''foreign competitors,'' when we are talking about being able to purchase locally from people who are on the edge of impoverishment, rather than flooding American commodities that are more expensive late in the game and undercutting local production, I think is a sad step forward.

I appreciate the gentleman's leadership and strongly urge support of this as we work for a better offset.

Mr. ROYCE. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROYCE. In closing, I would just say that I am open to working with the chairman and ranking member to find an appropriate offset in conference. However, it is essential to adopt this amendment now so that this matter can be set, we can put a marker down, and get this in place. I thank the gentleman for the support for the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. VALADAO) having assumed the chair, Mr. JOLLY, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4800) 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, had come to no resolution thereon.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess subject to the call of the Chair.

Accordingly (at 4 o'clock and 4 minutes p.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1651

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HOLDING). Pursuant to House Resolution 616 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 4800.

Will the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) kindly take the chair.

□ 1652

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 4800) 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, with Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose earlier today, a request for a recorded vote on amendment No. 7, printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), had been postponed, and the bill had been read through page 16, line 19.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

Fees may be collected for the cost of standardization activities, as established by regulation pursuant to law (31 U.S.C. 9701).

LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Not to exceed $60,709,000 (from fees collected) shall be obligated during the current fiscal year for administrative expenses: *Provided*, That if crop size is understated or other uncontrollable events occur, the agency may exceed this limitation by up to 10 percent with notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

FUNDS FOR STRENGTHENING MARKETS, INCOME, AND SUPPLY (SECTION 32)

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

Funds available under section 32 of the Act of August 24, 1935 (7 U.S.C. 612c), shall be used only for commodity program expenses as authorized therein, and other related operating expenses, except for: (1) transfers to the Department of Commerce as authorized by the Fish and Wildlife Act of August 8, 1956; (2) transfers otherwise provided in this Act; and (3) not more than $20,056,000 for formulation and administration of marketing agreements and orders pursuant to the Agricultural Marketing Agreement Act of 1937 and the Agricultural Act of 1961.

PAYMENTS TO STATES AND POSSESSIONS

For payments to departments of agriculture, bureaus and departments of markets, and similar agencies for marketing activities under section 204(b) of the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 (7 U.S.C. 1623(b)), $1,235,000.

GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AND STOCKYARDS ADMINISTRATION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, $43,722,000: *Provided*, That this appropriation shall be available pursuant to law (7 U.S.C. 2250) for the alteration and repair of buildings and improvements, but the cost of altering any one building during the fiscal year shall not exceed 10 percent of the current replacement value of the building.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GARDNER

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) be listed as a cosponsor of my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. An amendment may not be cosponsored.

The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 18, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $3,461,000)''.

Page 42, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $3,461,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Colorado and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in support of the amendment which provides an additional $3.4 million for telemedicine and distance learning services in rural areas.

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine program was reduced from FY14-enacted levels, and my amendment restores some of the funding to improve access to health care and education for rural areas.

Rural areas are typically areas where they have local primary care physicians who perform routine checkups and primary care. But what if a patient requires a specialist or has a more complicated medical condition?

My hometown of Yuma, Colorado, is more than 2 hours from a number of specialized medical services, complex trauma centers, or oncology centers. The doctors in our area and in other rural areas do the best job they can with the resources that they have, but most lack the specialization to treat more complicated cases.

We can improve patient outcomes, quality of life, lower costs, and improve care by utilizing technology that is already available. This amendment provides additional resources for our rural communities to do just that. Increases in funding for telemedicine will give patients access to health care anywhere at any time.

Additionally, this amendment would provide funding to support distance learning services. These funds will go toward providing better educational opportunities to students in rural areas. There is no reason children should be at a disadvantage simply because of their location.

This amendment reduces the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration by $3.4 million back to the FY14-enacted levels. GIPSA's responsibility is to oversee the marketing of livestock, poultry, meats, grains, and other agriculture products. This agency has more than ample resources to do its work, and it is only reducing funds to the FY14-enacted levels.

This amendment will provide so much more to the people in our rural communities, and I urge a ''yes'' vote.

I reserve the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. Does anyone wish to speak in opposition to the amendment?

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. Chairman, I thank the chairman for his support, and I thank the chairman of the subcommittee for his support and encourage passage of this bill to help rural Colorado and rural America produce and provide greater telemedicine opportunities for the country.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

LIMITATION ON INSPECTION AND WEIGHING SERVICES EXPENSES

Not to exceed $50,000,000 (from fees collected) shall be obligated during the current fiscal year for inspection and weighing services: *Provided*, That if grain export activities require additional supervision and oversight, or other uncontrollable factors occur, this limitation may be exceeded by up to 10 percent with notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOOD SAFETY

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Under Secretary for Food Safety, $816,000.

FOOD SAFETY AND INSPECTION SERVICE

For necessary expenses to carry out services authorized by the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act, including not to exceed $50,000 for representation allowances and for expenses pursuant to section 8 of the Act approved August 3, 1956 (7 U.S.C. 1766), $1,005,189,000; and in addition, $1,000,000 may be credited to this account from fees collected for the cost of laboratory accreditation as authorized by section 1327 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 138f): *Provided*, That funds provided for the Public Health Data Communication Infrastructure system shall remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That no fewer than 148 full-time equivalent positions shall be employed during fiscal year 2015 for purposes dedicated solely to inspections and enforcement related to the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act: *Provided further*, That this appropriation shall be available pursuant to law (7 U.S.C. 2250) for the alteration and repair of buildings and improvements, but the cost of altering any one building during the fiscal year shall not exceed 10 percent of the current replacement value of the building.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GRAYSON

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 19, line 8, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $5,500,000)''.

Page 20, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert ''(decreased by $5,500,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman

from Florida and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, the purpose of this amendment is to reverse $5.5 million in cuts for food safety and food inspection here in the United States.

Currently, the Food Safety and Inspection Service is funded at $1,005,189,000 in this bill. That is $5.5 million below the current enacted amount and $17.581 million below the Senate allocation in their agriculture appropriations bill.

This bill seeks to remove $5.5 million from a pay-for from the Farm Service Agency. The Farm Service Agency is funded at $1,205,068,000 in this bill. That is over $27 million above the current enacted amount, and it is $65.5 million above the President's request and $22.5 million above the Senate allocation.

Certainly, farm conservation and regulation is very important, and that is the function of the Farm Service Agency. However, food safety and food inspection is paramount because of all the problems that the country is facing today on this count.

According to this study by Robert Scharff that I have in my hand here from the Journal of Food Protection, dated 2012, the economic burden of health loss is due to foodborne illnesses in the United States. The cost of foodborne illnesses in the United States each year is $77.7 billion. That is $77.7 billion. Food safety and food losses and foodborne illnesses lead to 128,000 hospitalizations every year and, unfortunately, 3,000 deaths every year in the United States.

Specifically, we have a total of 3,036 deaths caused by bacteria, by parasites, and by viruses. The shame of it, Mr. Chairman, the ultimate shame, is that food poisoning is 100 percent preventable. Every single instance of death, hospitalization could be avoided if we had a properly funded and fully funded food inspection system. That is the dilemma that faces us today.

□ 1700

Each year, under this bill, the inspectors are required to inspect every animal before slaughter and each carcass after slaughter, in order to ensure that public health requirements are met.

In one recent year, this included 50 billion pounds of livestock carcasses, 59 billion pounds of poultry carcasses, and 4.3 billion pounds of processed egg products. At U.S. borders, they also inspected 3.3 billion pounds of imported meat and poultry products.

Increasingly, food safety is a global concern. Globalization of food production and trade increases the likelihood of international incidents involving contaminated food. Imported food products and ingredients are common in many countries, including our own.

Stronger food safety systems in export countries can reinforce local and cross border health security, but, frankly, the ultimate responsibility is ours.

Seventy-five percent of new infectious diseases affecting humans over the past 10 years were caused by bacteria, viruses, and pathogens that started in animals and in animal products. Many of these diseases are in people who are related to the handling of infected domestic and wild animals during food production, in food markets, and at slaughterhouses.

Preventing disease starts at the farm, which is where the inspections take place. Preventing animal infections at the farm level can reduce foodborne illnesses.

For example, reducing the amount of salmonella in farm chickens by 50 percent through better farm management and inspections results in 50 percent fewer incidences of people getting sick from the bacteria. Salmonella-free chicken herds are what this country needs.

It is fundamentally irresponsible for this body to be cutting the Food Safety and Inspection Service budget. God help us all if there is some widespread outbreak in this country where we don't have 3,000 deaths a year, we don't have 30,000 deaths a year, but we have 300,000 deaths a year caused by poor food inspection standards.

We must restore this money to the budget, and I ask my colleagues to support this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, the bill that we have on the floor provides over $1 billion for the Food Safety and Inspection Service. The amount is an increase of $3.8 million above the President's own request.

Food safety is certainly important. I don't think anyone can argue that that is not a very important issue that we have made in this bill. We have proven that by exceeding the amount requested by the minority's own administration request.

Now is not the time to be reducing funds from the Farm Service Agency. They are tying trying to implement the new farm bill and provide assistance to American farmers and ranchers.

We have a bipartisan request to prevent the administration from implementing their plan to close FSA offices. Support of the amendment is equivalent to supporting a closure of FSA offices across the country.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this amount, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, I would simply submit that we cannot expect more for less. If we are going to be reducing the budget for food inspection in this country, we will have less food inspections, we will have more disease, we will have more hospitalizations, and we will have more deaths.

That is not something that I want on my conscience. God help us all if such a thing happens, but I want to know that I did everything I could to avoid that from happening. It is fundamentally silly and wrong to think that we can cut the budget and somehow expect people to do more for less.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, let me just say that the Farm Service Agency is a very important aspect of this bill. We are hearing from a lot of our Members about FSA office closure. If this amendment passes, this may mean the closure of some of the FSA offices.

Again, I would oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FARM AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICES

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services, $898,000.

FARM SERVICE AGENCY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses of the Farm Service Agency, $1,205,068,000: *Provided*, That the Secretary is authorized to use the services, facilities, and authorities (but not the funds) of the Commodity Credit Corporation to make program payments for all programs administered by the Agency: *Provided further*, That other funds made available to the Agency for authorized activities may be advanced to and merged with this account: *Provided further*, That funds made available to county committees shall remain available until expended.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. MCNERNEY

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. HOLDING). The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 20, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $11,000,000) (increased by $11,000,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Chairman, the amendment my colleague Mr. GARAMENDI and I are offering simply decreases the funding for the Farm Service Agency by $11 million and increases it by the same amount. The intent of this amendment is to ensure

that $11 million goes towards the Emergency Conservation Program, or ECP.

Mr. Chairman, you might wonder why I would decrease and increase the amount by the same amount, but in the arcane world of appropriations, it is the intent of Congress—and we want to make sure that the intent is there—to put this money into the Emergency Conservation Program.

The ECP helps farmers and ranchers during severe drought. They are able to use this program's funding to repair damaged farm land or install measures for water conservation.

My State of California has more than 80,000 farmers and ranchers, accounting for 15 percent of national receipts for crops and 77.1 percent for the U.S. revenue for livestock and livestock products. State exports totaled approximately $18 billion in value.

Unfortunately, California is experiencing a prolonged and serious drought. Conditions haven't improved. Snowpack and reservoirs are at historically low levels. This drought is a State emergency, and support will be needed through the rest of this year and next.

Our farmers and ranchers need every available resource right now, rather than responding after the fact when the damage is more severe. Programs like the ECP are critical for these farmers and ranchers in times of exceptional drought.

Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time to my colleague from California (Mr. GARAMENDI).

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, my colleague from California has it right. California is in a severe drought, as well as half a dozen other States, including Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Georgia, Oregon, and Nevada.

The intent of this amendment is to signal to the Department of Agriculture to move some money out of the salaries and the support for the Farm Service Agency and over to the Emergency Conservation Program. We know $11 million isn't going to do it, but it is a good start, and it is a signal that we need to send.

I know that, in my own district, we normally have over 500,000 acres of rice. This year, it will be 300,000 acres of rice planted. We have tens of thousands of acres of walnuts and almonds. Many of those orchards are going to die, unless there is an opportunity to provide for the emergency conservation programs that will be needed. Those are wells, pumps, and other systems.

We ought to do this. I urge an ''aye'' vote on this amendment. It moves money from one account to another account and back to the original account.

This is a messaging amendment. I ask for your ''aye'' vote.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Chairman, our farmers need the assistance right now. I am glad that the House appears to be ready to take a vote.

I urge my colleagues to vote ''yes,'' and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MCNERNEY).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GARAMENDI

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 20, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert '', of which $50,000,000 shall be for the emergency conservation program under title IV of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, I love messaging, and I appreciate the House acquiescing to the previous amendment that is a messaging amendment.

Now, let's do something. Let's not just send a message. Let's send $50 million to the Department of Agriculture's Emergency Conservation Program, so that they can carry out an absolutely essential task, which is to assist farmers in States such as California, Nevada, Oregon, New Mexico, Texas, and Georgia. Those States are all experiencing drought. There will be others as this year progresses.

The money can be used immediately to set up water conservation programs. For example, earlier today, a research program that has been administered by the Department of Agriculture that has proven in several States, such as Maryland, Georgia, California, and others, is using modern technology like soil moisture sensing devices, coupled directly with irrigation systems that can be turned on when the plant needs water, not when the irrigator needs water.

Those systems can save between 20 and 40 percent of the normal consumption in the agricultural sector. That applies to virtually every kind of plant that might be grown.

It certainly applies in my own district with those almond orchards that are now without an adequate supply of water. If this was available to them now—as it could be if we were to pass this amendment and the appropriation bill—those farmers could then access this money, put in place those water conservation technologies, and stretch their supply, allowing them to keep their orchards alive.

God forbid that we have another drought.

Under the present scenario, thousands of orchards in California will die for lack of water, but if we can save this year and next year 20 to 40 percent of the water that is available, which is possible if we actually enact this legislation and provide the kind of incentive—in this case, 75 percent Federal, 25 percent farmer—we could keep those orchards alive.

So I appeal to my colleagues that we allow this to be done. The money comes from the overall account that is within the Department that provides for administrative expenses and salaries. Move it from there over to this conservation account. That money would then be available to farmers to use.

We ought to do this. We have other drought legislation that has moved through this House and went to the Senate, but there is no money in those accounts—well, we have the money.

The question is: Are we willing to make it available for farmers in any State where there is a drought emergency?

I would ask for your ''aye'' vote on this, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, this is the first time that we have seen this amendment.

I do have to rise in opposition. We are very concerned that this is not the appropriate time to be reducing funds for FSAs. We are trying to implement the new farm program at this time, providing assistance to the farmers and ranchers across America.

□ 1715

We have had bipartisan requests to prevent the administration from implementing its plan to close FSA offices. Members on both sides of the aisle have voiced their concerns to us about these closures. Supporting this amendment is equivalent to supporting the closure of offices, so I would urge my colleagues to oppose the amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

STATE MEDIATION GRANTS

For grants pursuant to section 502(b) of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1987, as amended (7 U.S.C. 5101–5106), $3,404,000.

GRASSROOTS SOURCE WATER PROTECTION PROGRAM

For necessary expenses to carry out wellhead or groundwater protection activities under section 1240O of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3839bb–2), $2,500,000, to remain available until expended.

DAIRY INDEMNITY PROGRAM

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses involved in making indemnity payments to dairy farmers and

manufacturers of dairy products under a dairy indemnity program, such sums as may be necessary, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That such program is carried out by the Secretary in the same manner as the dairy indemnity program described in the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (Public Law 106–387, 114 Stat. 1549A–12).

AGRICULTURAL CREDIT INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For gross obligations for the principal amount of direct and guaranteed farm ownership (7 U.S.C. 1922 et seq.) and operating (7 U.S.C. 1941 et seq.) loans, emergency loans (7 U.S.C. 1961 et seq.), Indian tribe land acquisition loans (25 U.S.C. 488), boll weevil loans (7 U.S.C. 1989), guaranteed conservation loans (7 U.S.C. 1924 et seq.), and Indian highly fractionated land loans (25 U.S.C. 488) to be available from funds in the Agricultural Credit Insurance Fund, as follows: $2,000,000,000 for guaranteed farm ownership loans and $1,500,000,000 for farm ownership direct loans; $1,393,443,000 for unsubsidized guaranteed operating loans and $1,252,004,000 for direct operating loans; emergency loans, $34,667,000; Indian tribe land acquisition loans, $2,000,000; guaranteed conservation loans, $150,000,000; Indian highly fractionated land loans, $10,000,000; and for boll weevil eradication program loans, $60,000,000: *Provided*, That the Secretary shall deem the pink bollworm to be a boll weevil for the purpose of boll weevil eradication program loans.

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans and grants, including the cost of modifying loans as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as follows: farm operating loans, $63,101,000 for direct operating loans, $14,770,000 for unsubsidized guaranteed operating loans, and emergency loans, $856,000, to remain available until expended.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, $314,918,000, of which $306,998,000 shall be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''Farm Service Agency, Salaries and Expenses''.

Funds appropriated by this Act to the Agricultural Credit Insurance Program Account for farm ownership, operating and conservation direct loans and guaranteed loans may be transferred among these programs: *Provided*, That the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress are notified at least 15 days in advance of any transfer.

RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Risk Management Agency, $77,094,000: *Provided*, That not to exceed $1,000 shall be available for official reception and representation expenses, as authorized by 7 U.S.C. 1506(i).

CORPORATIONS

The following corporations and agencies are hereby authorized to make expenditures, within the limits of funds and borrowing authority available to each such corporation or agency and in accord with law, and to make contracts and commitments without regard to fiscal year limitations as provided by section 104 of the Government Corporation Control Act as may be necessary in carrying out the programs set forth in the budget for the current fiscal year for such corporation or agency, except as hereinafter provided.

FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE CORPORATION FUND

For payments as authorized by section 516 of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1516), such sums as may be necessary, to remain available until expended.

COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION FUND

REIMBURSEMENT FOR NET REALIZED LOSSES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For the current fiscal year, such sums as may be necessary to reimburse the Commodity Credit Corporation for net realized losses sustained, but not previously reimbursed, pursuant to section 2 of the Act of August 17, 1961 (15 U.S.C. 713a–11): *Provided*, That of the funds available to the Commodity Credit Corporation under section 11 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act (15 U.S.C. 714i) for the conduct of its business with the Foreign Agricultural Service, up to $5,000,000 may be transferred to and used by the Foreign Agricultural Service for information resource management activities of the Foreign Agricultural Service that are not related to Commodity Credit Corporation business.

HAZARDOUS WASTE MANAGEMENT

(LIMITATION ON EXPENSES)

For the current fiscal year, the Commodity Credit Corporation shall not expend more than $5,000,000 for site investigation and cleanup expenses, and operations and maintenance expenses to comply with the requirement of section 107(g) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9607(g)), and section 6001 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (42 U.S.C. 6961).

TITLE II

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, $898,000.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION OPERATIONS

For necessary expenses for carrying out the provisions of the Act of April 27, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 590a–f), including preparation of conservation plans and establishment of measures to conserve soil and water (including farm irrigation and land drainage and such special measures for soil and water management as may be necessary to prevent floods and the siltation of reservoirs and to control agricultural related pollutants); operation of conservation plant materials centers; classification and mapping of soil; dissemination of information; acquisition of lands, water, and interests therein for use in the plant materials program by donation, exchange, or purchase at a nominal cost not to exceed $100 pursuant to the Act of August 3, 1956 (7 U.S.C. 428a); purchase and erection or alteration or improvement of permanent and temporary buildings; and operation and maintenance of aircraft, $843,053,000, to remain available until September 30, 2016: *Provided*, That appropriations hereunder shall be available pursuant to 7 U.S.C. 2250 for construction and improvement of buildings and public improvements at plant materials centers, except that the cost of alterations and improvements to other buildings and other public improvements shall not exceed $250,000: *Provided further*, That when buildings or other structures are erected on non-Federal land, that the right to use such land is obtained as provided in 7 U.S.C. 2250a.

WATERSHED REHABILITATION PROGRAM

Under the authorities of section 14 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, $25,000,000 is provided.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk, and I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) be listed as a cosponsor of my amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. An amendment may not be cosponsored.

The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 26, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced to $0)''.

Page 82, line 2, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $25,000,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Georgia and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, my amendment would eliminate all funding provided in the bill for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program.

Across the United States, 11,000 dams have been constructed in local communities under this program for the purpose of mitigating flood conditions. Most of these dams were built in the 1940s and 1950s, and thousands of them are suspected to be in need of attention. Of this amount, only about 120 dams have been repaired so as to extend their use into modern times. Indeed, given the advances of engineering technology in the last 50 years, these refurbished dams may last well into the next century, but Federal funding to maintain these many-State infrastructure projects is simply not sustainable.

Under the farm bill passed earlier this year, the Watershed Rehabilitation Program was authorized to receive both increased mandatory as well as discretionary funding. However, the President has not requested funding for this program in over 3 years, in large part because he recognizes that the responsibility to maintain these projects must ultimately fall on the local project sponsors. Likewise, over in the Senate, zero dollars has been provided via discretionary spending in recent years; and according to the Congressional Research Service, it is expected that the mandatory spending will ultimately be canceled permanently. In fact, the Watershed Rehabilitation Program has never been allowed to spend mandatory funding.

So why is the House falling all over itself to fund this program?

Mr. Chairman, as long as the Federal Government is involved in this dam program, the process of identifying problem dams and implementing rehabilitation plans will be much like everything else the Federal Government undertakes. It will be slow, painstaking, and way too expensive.

In my home State of Georgia, we have many dams that we depend on to mitigate heavy rains and prevent floods. I have to say, Mr. Chairman, that I agree with the President here. I don't agree with him sometimes, and I do agree with him many times, but in this place, I agree with him in that we ought to leave the maintenance of

these projects to the States. They know better than the Federal Government what works for their communities.

I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, which is to limit spending money that we just don't have.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to hear that my friend from Georgia agrees with the President on something. That is kind of a fascinating turn of events considering his traditional record, but let's focus for a moment on what the upstream flood control dams do.

This is a program that began in the 1940s to build small earthen dams—too small to fall within the Corps of Engineers' jurisdiction—to act as interlocking flood control structures to protect people and property and assets below the structures wherever they may be, all the way to the Atlantic Ocean or all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

The problem, you see, is that, as meritorious and as wonderful as these 3,000 structures have worked, time takes its toll on everything, and if we don't pursue this program to rehabilitate them—to extend the life—not only will they not continue the protection of people and of property and of wildlife and not only will they not restrain the silt and manage floods, but they will have to be taken out, and all of the good they have done will be undone.

So what does this language in the bill do?

It provides cost share money so that local entities can rehabilitate these structures.

My colleague was exactly right in that the advance of technology is tremendous. The work that is done should last—instead of 50 years—100 years or more, but we have got 3,000 of these structures, and they are getting older. Spending a little money to extend their lives to continue to protect wildlife and people and property from every structure all the way to the ocean seems like a wise use of resources.

Now, I understand that there is something like $900 million in requested funding in 2014 to meet this need. This farm bill language doesn't meet all of that need, but it takes a huge step in the right direction. We spend a lot of money around here on things that last just a few minutes or a few hours or a few days. This is an investment that will last a century in building on a previous half century's investment—a wise use of resources.

The government built these dams to protect life and property, and many of these structures are hitting their life expectancies. Let's spend a little bit to continue that wise investment. Yes, let's keep the silt out of the streams, and, yes, let's enhance the wildlife qualities up and down these streams, but don't ever forget not just the property but the people who can sleep at night without the fear of what Mother Nature may do because of the upstream flood control dams.

I urge my colleagues to reject this amendment. I urge them to continue to support the investment that has been so wisely made since the 1940s. Please vote ''no.''

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, my good friend, the chairman of the Agriculture Committee, is very erudite in his discussion against my amendment, but the facts are these: there is $250 million authorized in the farm bill—in his own bill. In this bill, there is $92 million in mandatory spending that is being appropriated, and I am not touching debt whatsoever. The mandatory spending has never gone out.

I certainly know about farm dams and how flood control works. In fact, back in 1994, I was living in Americus, Georgia—I was practicing medicine there—and we had a hurricane that parked itself right over Americus, Georgia. In a 24-hour period, we had 25 inches of rain, and 30 people died in southwest Georgia because of the upstream dams' failing one by one in a fashion that was just like dominoes that were falling over. The water ran into Lake Blackshear, Georgia. Then it went from there down to Albany, Georgia, and there was a tremendous flood in Albany. All of southwest Georgia got flooded, and 30 people were killed because of it.

I certainly know about that, and I have a great feeling for that, but the problem is that the mandatory spending has never been spent. What I am doing in my amendment is just striking the $25 million extra in discretionary spending. I believe that we ought to repair those dams. We need to help make sure that we have some flood mitigation, but we are not utilizing the authorized money or the appropriated money appropriately.

We are in an economic emergency as a nation. Let's utilize our money from a fiscally sane perspective. That is what I am trying to do, and I encourage the acceptance of my amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. BROUN of Georgia. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia will be postponed.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. DUNCAN OF TENNESSEE

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 26, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $10,000,000)''.

Page 82, line 2, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $10,000,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentleman from Tennessee and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Chairman, my amendment deals with the same part of the bill as Mr. BROUN's, and it is very similar.

My amendment would save $10 million by reducing the increase in this program, the Watershed Rehabilitation Program. Let me repeat that, Mr. Chairman. My amendment simply reduces the increase. It is not a cut. In fact, this program would still be getting a 25 percent increase in discretionary funds even if my amendment were approved. In addition, this program has had a restriction on mandatory spending since 2002. Under this bill, this restriction is being removed.

This means that, without my amendment, spending on this program, which was $12 million this year and $13.6 million last year, will go to $117 million this next fiscal year. No other department or agency in the Federal Government is receiving this type of increase—almost 10 times what is being spent on this program during this fiscal year.

This is a program for which the President requested no funding, as Mr. BROUN mentioned, and for which the Senate Appropriations Committee provides no funding, which he also mentioned. Surely, Republicans in the House are not going to allow the President or the Senate to act in a more fiscally conservative manner than we here in the House.

□ 1730

Most State and local governments are in much better fiscal shape than the Federal Government is with our $17.6 trillion national debt. They can carry out this program, where necessary, or farmers themselves can do some improvement.

The National Taxpayers Union supports this amendment and has announced that they will be including my amendment in their ratings of congressional votes.

Mr. Chairman, this is a very modest attempt to do at least a little something about our horrendous debt. Admiral Mike Mullen, a very respected man who was Chairman of our Joint Chiefs of Staff a couple of years ago gave several speeches and testified before several committees of the House and Senate; and he said over and over again that our national debt is the greatest threat to our national security. This amendment is a small step, but an important step toward doing something about that.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Chairman, I claim the time in opposition.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Oklahoma is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LUCAS. My friends, once again, slightly different amount, same subject.

What can I say?

Yes, in the process of putting the farm bill together, where we saved $23 billion, we looked very carefully at all of the programs underneath our jurisdictions. Many things were reformed, reducing spending.

Some things that have worked extremely well actually received more resources. I think that part of being competent and wise legislators is assessing how the resources are used, reducing spending in wasteful areas, and enhancing spending in areas that are wisely spent. I think that is what we are about here.

Now, I know that apparently there are outside groups that have chosen to score this, and I would remind my friends that they score a variety of things. But why do you have to pick on the things that affect rural America?

Why do you have to address the infrastructure issues that go after public safety, preservation of property, life itself?

I suppose if you are sitting somewhere in an ivory tower typing out scorecards, you can pick the things that are less relevant to you.

But of those 3,000 structures scattered across America, dating back to the 1940s, countless, countless lives and millions, if not hundreds of millions, of dollars of property have been protected. I think that is a good use of our resources, a wise commitment in how we allocate our funds.

Now, some of my colleagues have alluded to the way in which the funds are handled, the mandatory dollars coming through the farm bill every so many years and how, in the magical process called appropriations, some of that mandatory money becomes discretionary.

I do not pretend to have enough time to discuss the nuances of that art form, but I will say this: as long as the resources are of sufficient caliber to make a major effort in meeting the needs that exist, whether it is through the every 5-year farm bill or the annual appropriations process by our friends on the Ag Subcommittee of Appropriations, let's just do the right thing. And on this occasion, we are doing the right thing.

If you care about long-term investments, if you care about public safety, if you care about property—and I repeat one more time: for those of you have ever been in the field that look at these structures, they act to control silt flows in streams. That is important to wildlife and fish. That is important to water quality, and they inhibit these floods that come, and then they meter the water out in a slow fashion.

The overwhelming lion's share of them do not impound water, they simply slow the process down so that the streams and rivers below can handle it.

My real regret here is that we haven't put more effort in the last 50 years into these structures. If we had, if we would have, if we could, or if we will some day, the effect on the environment, the effect on our fellow citizens will be tremendous, even more than it is now.

Again, please reject this amendment. I know my Republican friends here are very sincere in following the President's lead on this, but please reject this amendment. Let's continue to make this investment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Chairman, I will simply repeat that my amendment does not go as far as Mr. BROUN's. It would save $10 million, if adopted.

This program, if my amendment is not adopted, will receive an increase almost 10 times the amount that is being spent on this program in this fiscal year. It would seem to me that most people in this country would feel it is ridiculous to give any program a tenfold increase. I know the Congress is very generous in spending other people's money, but they are going too far on this.

I urge my colleagues to support my very minimal, modest amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LUCAS. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I might consume.

I respect my colleague from Tennessee greatly. I believe he is very sincere in what he is trying do. I do not question his motives. I have great faith in Congressman DUNCAN.

But this amendment, like the previous amendment, has long-term ramifications. They have long-term ramifications on previous investments made.

Let's reject these two amendments. Let's continue the good work that has been done. Let's focus on the things that we need to be doing.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee will be postponed.

The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

TITLE III

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Under Secretary for Rural Development, $898,000.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT SALARIES AND EXPENSES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses for carrying out the administration and implementation of programs in the Rural Development mission area, including activities with institutions concerning the development and operation of agricultural cooperatives; and for cooperative agreements; $224,201,000: *Provided*, That no less than $15,000,000 shall be for the Comprehensive Loan Accounting System: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, funds appropriated under this heading may be used for advertising and promotional activities that support the Rural Development mission area: *Provided further*, That any balances available from prior years for the Rural Utilities Service, Rural Housing Service, and the Rural Business–Cooperative Service salaries and expenses accounts shall be transferred to and merged with this appropriation.

RURAL HOUSING SERVICE

RURAL HOUSING INSURANCE FUND PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For gross obligations for the principal amount of direct and guaranteed loans as authorized by title V of the Housing Act of 1949, to be available from funds in the rural housing insurance fund, as follows: $1,042,276,000 shall be for direct loans and $24,000,000,000 shall be for unsubsidized guaranteed loans; $26,372,000 for section 504 housing repair loans; $28,398,000 for section 515 rental housing; $150,000,000 for section 538 guaranteed multi-family housing loans; $10,000,000 for credit sales of single family housing acquired property; $5,000,000 for section 523 self-help housing land development loans; and $5,000,000 for section 524 site development loans.

For the cost of direct and guaranteed loans, including the cost of modifying loans, as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as follows: section 502 loans, $76,920,000 shall be for direct loans; section 504 housing repair loans, $3,700,000; and repair, rehabilitation, and new construction of section 515 rental housing, $9,800,000: *Provided*, That to support the loan program level for section 538 guaranteed loans made available under this heading the Secretary may charge or adjust any fees to cover the projected cost of such loan guarantees pursuant to the provisions of the Credit Reform Act of 1990 (2 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), and the interest on such loans may not be subsidized: *Provided further*, That of the amounts available under this paragraph for section 502 direct loans, no less than $5,000,000 shall be available for direct loans for individuals whose homes will be built pursuant to a program funded with a mutual and self-help housing grant authorized by section 523 of the Housing Act of 1949 until June 1, 2015.

In addition, for the cost of direct loans, grants, and contracts, as authorized by 42 U.S.C. 1484 and 1486, $15,936,000, to remain available until expended, for direct farm labor housing loans and domestic farm labor housing grants and contracts: *Provided*, That any balances available for the Farm Labor Program Account shall be transferred to and merged with this account.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, $415,100,000 shall be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''Rural Development, Salaries and Expenses''.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

For rental assistance agreements entered into or renewed pursuant to the authority under section 521(a)(2) or agreements entered

into in lieu of debt forgiveness or payments for eligible households as authorized by section 502(c)(5)(D) of the Housing Act of 1949, $1,088,500,000; and, in addition, such sums as may be necessary, as authorized by section 521(c) of the Act, to liquidate debt incurred prior to fiscal year 1992 to carry out the rental assistance program under section 521(a)(2) of the Act: *Provided*, That rental assistance agreements entered into or renewed during the current fiscal year shall be funded for a 1-year period: *Provided further*, That rental assistance contracts will not be renewed within the 12-month contract period: *Provided further*, That any unexpended balances remaining at the end of such 1-year agreements may be transferred and used for the purposes of any debt reduction; maintenance, repair, or rehabilitation of any existing projects; preservation; and rental assistance activities authorized under title V of the Act: *Provided further*, That rental assistance provided under agreements entered into prior to fiscal year 2015 for a farm labor multi-family housing project financed under section 514 or 516 of the Act may not be recaptured for use in another project until such assistance has remained unused for a period of 12 consecutive months, if such project has a waiting list of tenants seeking such assistance or the project has rental assistance eligible tenants who are not receiving such assistance: *Provided further*, That such recaptured rental assistance shall, to the extent practicable, be applied to another farm labor multi-family housing project financed under section 514 or 516 of the Act.

MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING REVITALIZATION PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For the rural housing voucher program as authorized under section 542 of the Housing Act of 1949, but notwithstanding subsection (b) of such section, and for additional costs to conduct a demonstration program for the preservation and revitalization of multi-family rental housing properties described in this paragraph, $28,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That of the funds made available under this heading, $8,000,000, shall be available for rural housing vouchers to any low-income household (including those not receiving rental assistance) residing in a property financed with a section 515 loan which has been prepaid after September 30, 2005: *Provided further*, That the amount of such voucher shall be the difference between comparable market rent for the section 515 unit and the tenant paid rent for such unit: *Provided further*, That funds made available for such vouchers shall be subject to the availability of annual appropriations: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, administer such vouchers with current regulations and administrative guidance applicable to section 8 housing vouchers administered by the Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development: *Provided further*, That if the Secretary determines that the amount made available for vouchers in this or any other Act is not needed for vouchers, the Secretary may use such funds for the demonstration program for the preservation and revitalization of multi-family rental housing properties described in this paragraph: *Provided further*, That of the funds made available under this heading, $20,000,000 shall be available for a demonstration program for the preservation and revitalization of the sections 514, 515, and 516 multi-family rental housing properties to restructure existing USDA multi-family housing loans, as the Secretary deems appropriate, expressly for the purposes of ensuring the project has sufficient resources to preserve the project for the purpose of providing safe and affordable housing for low-income residents and farm laborers including reducing or eliminating interest; deferring loan payments, subordinating, reducing or reamortizing loan debt; and other financial assistance including advances, payments and incentives (including the ability of owners to obtain reasonable returns on investment) required by the Secretary: *Provided further*, That the Secretary shall as part of the preservation and revitalization agreement obtain a restrictive use agreement consistent with the terms of the restructuring: *Provided further*, That if the Secretary determines that additional funds for vouchers described in this paragraph are needed, funds for the preservation and revitalization demonstration program may be used for such vouchers: *Provided further*, That if Congress enacts legislation to permanently authorize a multi-family rental housing loan restructuring program similar to the demonstration program described herein, the Secretary may use funds made available for the demonstration program under this heading to carry out such legislation with the prior approval of the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress: *Provided further*, That in addition to any other available funds, the Secretary may expend not more than $1,000,000 total, from the program funds made available under this heading, for administrative expenses for activities funded under this heading.

MUTUAL AND SELF-HELP HOUSING GRANTS

For grants and contracts pursuant to section 523(b)(1)(A) of the Housing Act of 1949 (42 U.S.C. 1490c), $30,000,000, to remain available until expended.

RURAL HOUSING ASSISTANCE GRANTS

For grants for very low-income housing repair made by the Rural Housing Service, as authorized by 42 U.S.C. 1474, $27,000,000, to remain available until expended.

RURAL COMMUNITY FACILITIES PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For gross obligations for the principal amount of direct and guaranteed loans as authorized by section 306 and described in section 381E(d)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, $2,200,000,000 for direct loans and $73,222,000 for guaranteed loans.

For the cost of guaranteed loans, including the cost of modifying loans, as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, $3,500,000, to remain available until expended.

For the cost of grants for rural community facilities programs as authorized by section 306 and described in section 381E(d)(1) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, $27,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That $5,000,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be available for a Rural Community Development Initiative: *Provided further*, That such funds shall be used solely to develop the capacity and ability of private, nonprofit community-based housing and community development organizations, low-income rural communities, and Federally Recognized Native American Tribes to undertake projects to improve housing, community facilities, community and economic development projects in rural areas: *Provided further*, That such funds shall be made available to qualified private, nonprofit and public intermediary organizations proposing to carry out a program of financial and technical assistance: *Provided further*, That such intermediary organizations shall provide matching funds from other sources, including Federal funds for related activities, in an amount not less than funds provided: *Provided further*, That $5,000,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be to provide grants for facilities in rural communities with extreme unemployment and severe economic depression (Public Law 106–387), with up to 5 percent for administration and capacity building in the State rural development offices: *Provided further*, That $4,000,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be available for community facilities grants to tribal colleges, as authorized by section 306(a)(19) of such Act: *Provided further*, That sections 381E–H and 381N of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act are not applicable to the funds made available under this heading.

RURAL BUSINESS—COOPERATIVE SERVICE

RURAL BUSINESS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For the cost of loan guarantees and grants, for the rural business development programs authorized by section 310B and described in section 310B (a), (c), and (g) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, $65,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That of the amount appropriated under this heading, not to exceed $500,000 shall be made available for one grant to a qualified national organization to provide technical assistance for rural transportation in order to promote economic development: *Provided further*, That $4,000,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be for business grants to benefit Federally Recognized Native American Tribes, including $250,000 for a grant to a qualified national organization to provide technical assistance for rural transportation in order to promote economic development: *Provided further*, That for purposes of determining eligibility or level of program assistance the Secretary shall not include incarcerated prison populations: *Provided further*, That sections 381E–H and 381N of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act are not applicable to funds made available under this heading.

INTERMEDIARY RELENDING PROGRAM FUND ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For the principal amount of direct loans, as authorized by the Intermediary Relending Program Fund Account (7 U.S.C. 1936b), $16,234,000.

For the cost of direct loans, $5,000,000, as authorized by the Intermediary Relending Program Fund Account (7 U.S.C 1936b), of which $531,000 shall be available through June 30, 2015, for Federally Recognized Native American Tribes; and of which $1,021,000 shall be available through June 30, 2015, for Mississippi Delta Region counties (as determined in accordance with Public Law 100–460): *Provided*, That such costs, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

In addition, for administrative expenses to carry out the direct loan programs, $4,439,000 shall be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''Rural Development, Salaries and Expenses''.

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING RESCISSION OF FUNDS)

For the principal amount of direct loans, as authorized under section 313 of the Rural Electrification Act, for the purpose of promoting rural economic development and job creation projects, $59,456,000.

Of the funds derived from interest on the cushion of credit payments, as authorized by section 313 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, $155,000,000 shall not be obligated and $155,000,000 are rescinded.

RURAL COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

For rural cooperative development grants authorized under section 310B(e) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act (7 U.S.C. 1932), $22,050,000, of which $2,500,000 shall be for cooperative agreements for the appropriate technology transfer for rural areas program: *Provided*, That not to exceed $3,000,000 shall be for grants for cooperative development centers, individual cooperatives, or groups of cooperatives that serve socially disadvantaged groups and a majority of the boards of directors or governing boards of which are comprised of individuals who are members of socially disadvantaged groups; and of which $10,750,000, to remain available until expended, shall be for value-added agricultural product market development grants, as authorized by section 231 of the Agricultural Risk Protection Act of 2000 (7 U.S.C. 1632a).

RURAL ENERGY FOR AMERICA PROGRAM

For the cost of a program of loan guarantees, under the same terms and conditions as authorized by section 9007 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8107), $3,500,000: *Provided*, That the cost of loan guarantees, including the cost of modifying such loans, shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

RURAL BUSINESS INVESTMENT PROGRAM ACCOUNT

For loans for the rural business investment program, as authorized by section 384F(b)(3)(A) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, $4,000,000, to remain available until expended.

RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE

RURAL WATER AND WASTE DISPOSAL PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For the cost of direct loans, loan guarantees, and grants for the rural water, waste water, waste disposal, and solid waste management programs authorized by sections 306, 306A, 306C, 306D, 306E, and 310B and described in sections 306C(a)(2), 306D, 306E, and 381E(d)(2) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, $466,893,000, to remain available until expended, of which not to exceed $1,000,000 shall be available for the rural utilities program described in section 306(a)(2)(B) of such Act, and of which not to exceed $993,000 shall be available for the rural utilities program described in section 306E of such Act: *Provided*, That $66,500,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be for loans and grants including water and waste disposal systems grants authorized by 306C(a)(2)(B) and 306D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, Federally recognized Native American Tribes authorized by 306C(a)(1), and the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (of the State of Hawaii): *Provided further*, That funding provided for section 306D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act may be provided to a consortium formed pursuant to section 325 of Public Law 105–83: *Provided further*, That not more than 2 percent of the funding provided for section 306D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act may be used by the State of Alaska for training and technical assistance programs and not more than 2 percent of the funding provided for section 306D of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act may be used by a consortium formed pursuant to section 325 of Public Law 105–83 for training and technical assistance programs: *Provided further*, That not to exceed $19,000,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be for technical assistance grants for rural water and waste systems pursuant to section 306(a)(14) of such Act, unless the Secretary makes a determination of extreme need, of which $6,000,000 shall be made available for a grant to a qualified non-profit multi-state regional technical assistance organization, with experience in working with small communities on water and waste water problems, the principal purpose of such grant shall be to assist rural communities with populations of 3,300 or less, in improving the planning, financing, development, operation, and management of water and waste water systems, and of which not less than $800,000 shall be for a qualified national Native American organization to provide technical assistance for rural water systems for tribal communities: *Provided further*, That not to exceed $15,000,000 of the amount appropriated under this heading shall be for contracting with qualified national organizations for a circuit rider program to provide technical assistance for rural water systems: *Provided further*, That not to exceed $4,000,000 shall be for solid waste management grants: *Provided further*, That any prior year balances for high-energy cost grants authorized by section 19 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 918a) shall be transferred to and merged with the Rural Utilities Service, High Energy Cost Grants Account: *Provided further*, That sections 381E–H and 381N of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act are not applicable to the funds made available under this heading.

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS LOANS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

The principal amount of direct and guaranteed loans as authorized by sections 305 and 306 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 935 and 936) shall be made as follows: loans made pursuant to section 306 of that Act, rural electric, $5,000,000,000; guaranteed underwriting loans pursuant to section 313A, $500,000,000; 5 percent rural telecommunications loans, cost of money rural telecommunications loans, and for loans made pursuant to section 306 of that Act, rural telecommunications loans, $690,000,000: *Provided*, That up to $2,000,000,000 shall be used for the construction, acquisition, or improvement of fossil-fueled electric generating plants (whether new or existing) that utilize carbon sequestration systems.

In addition, for administrative expenses necessary to carry out the direct and guaranteed loan programs, $34,478,000, which shall be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''Rural Development, Salaries and Expenses''.

DISTANCE LEARNING, TELEMEDICINE, AND BROADBAND PROGRAM

For the principal amount of broadband telecommunication loans, $24,077,000.

For grants for telemedicine and distance learning services in rural areas, as authorized by 7 U.S.C. 950aaa et seq., $20,000,000, to remain available until expended.

For the cost of broadband loans, as authorized by section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act, $4,500,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That the cost of direct loans shall be as defined in section 502 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

In addition, $10,372,000, to remain available until expended, for a grant program to finance broadband transmission in rural areas eligible for Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program benefits authorized by 7 U.S.C. 950aaa.

TITLE IV

DOMESTIC FOOD PROGRAMS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOOD, NUTRITION, AND CONSUMER SERVICES

For necessary expenses of the Office of the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, $816,000.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses to carry out the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.), except section 21, and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.), except sections 17 and 21; $20,523,795,000 to remain available through September 30, 2016, of which such sums as are made available under section 14222(b)(1) of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–246), as amended by this Act, shall be merged with and available for the same time period and purposes as provided herein: *Provided*, That of the total amount available, $17,004,000 shall be available to carry out section 19 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1771 et seq.): *Provided further*, That of the total amount available, $25,000,000 shall be available to provide competitive grants to State agencies for subgrants to local educational agencies and schools to purchase the equipment needed to serve healthier meals, improve food safety, and to help support the establishment, maintenance, or expansion of the school breakfast program: *Provided further*, That of the total amount available, $27,000,000 shall remain available until expended to carry out section 749(g) of the Agriculture Appropriations Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–80).

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION PROGRAM FOR WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN (WIC)

For necessary expenses to carry out the special supplemental nutrition program as authorized by section 17 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786), $6,623,000,000, to remain available through September 30, 2016: *Provided*, That notwithstanding section 17(h)(10) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C. 1786(h)(10)), not less than $60,000,000 shall be used for breastfeeding peer counselors and other related activities, $14,000,000 shall be used for infrastructure, $30,000,000 shall be used for management information systems, and $25,000,000 shall be used for WIC electronic benefit transfer systems and activities: *Provided further*, That none of the funds provided in this account shall be available for the purchase of infant formula except in accordance with the cost containment and competitive bidding requirements specified in section 17 of such Act: *Provided further*, That none of the funds provided shall be available for activities that are not fully reimbursed by other Federal Government departments or agencies unless authorized by section 17 of such Act: *Provided further*, That upon termination of a federally-mandated vendor moratorium and subject to terms and conditions established by the Secretary, the Secretary may waive the requirement at 7 CFR 246.12(g)(6) at the request of a State agency.

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

For necessary expenses to carry out the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), $82,251,138,000, of which $3,000,000,000, to remain available through September 30, 2016, shall be placed in reserve for use only in such amounts and at such times as may become necessary to carry out program operations: *Provided*, That funds provided herein shall be expended in accordance with section 16 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008: *Provided further*, That of the funds made available under this heading, $998,000 may be used to provide nutrition education services to State agencies and Federally recognized tribes participating in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations: *Provided further*, That this appropriation shall be subject to any work registration or workfare requirements as may be required by law: *Provided further*, That funds made available for

Employment and Training under this heading shall remain available through September 30, 2016: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for a study on Indian tribal administration of nutrition programs, as provided in title IV of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79), and a study of the removal of cash benefits in Puerto Rico, as provided in title IV of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79) shall be available until expended: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for section 28(d)(1) and section 27(a) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 shall remain available through September 30, 2016: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading for employment and training pilot projects, as provided in title IV of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–79), shall remain available through September 30, 2018: *Provided further*, That funds made available under this heading may be used to enter into contracts and employ staff to conduct studies, evaluations, or to conduct activities related to program integrity provided that such activities are authorized by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. SPEIER

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee). The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 45, line 16, insert ''(reduced by $1,000,000)'' after the 1st dollar amount.

Page 45, line 16, insert ''(increased by $1,000,000)'' after the 1st dollar amount.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentlewoman from California and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Chairman, I am joined in making this amendment by my colleague from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK).

This particular amendment addresses the issue of veterans in this country who are living on the edge, the 1.4 million veterans who are living in poverty, the 900,000 who are on food stamps.

We do know there is a backlog that exists, even now, with veterans' disability claims from 572,000 currently around the country, some waiting as long as 200 days. This amendment is going to make them eligible for SNAP benefits under the disabled category, which will, for all intents and purposes, allow them to access food that is prepared and also deduct medical expenses for their status.

Filing for SNAP under the disabled status can provide much-needed assistance with minimal cost. For a veteran with war-related mental or physical injuries, this small amount of help can make an enormous difference.

Again, I want to thank Congressman BENISHEK for his cosponsorship of this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in support of the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Michigan?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to support a very commonsense amendment.

I think we can all agree that no disabled veteran should go hungry. Those who have served our Nation with honor and distinction, and come home as wounded veterans deserve great honor, not a life of hardship.

Unfortunately, not all of our veterans have fared well following their tours of duty. From the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan alone, 45 percent of the 1.6 million veterans are applying for benefits with the VA. Only about one-third have been granted benefits so far.

□ 1745

The VA has almost 600,000 pending disability claims as of April 2014, with 23 percent of those from Iraq and Afghanistan veterans.

This amendment would allow veterans to apply for SNAP benefits while their disability claims are pending with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Just like all Americans, veterans would still be required to meet income eligibility requirements for SNAP. However, they would no longer have to wait on the backlog that is so prevalent at the VA to find out if they would be eligible for these specific benefits.

Mr. Chairman, our Nation's veterans should never live under the threat of hunger due to an administrative backlog in Washington. They deserve better. This amendment is fully paid for and just makes sense. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Chairman, as my colleague said, this is truly a simple amendment that holds our poor veterans harmless while we deal with the dysfunction in the VA. It is a compassionate and appropriate action by this House. I urge its passage.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from California (Ms. SPEIER).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

COMMODITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

For necessary expenses to carry out disaster assistance and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program as authorized by section 4(a) of the Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (7 U.S.C. 612c note); the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983; special assistance for the nuclear affected islands, as authorized by section 103(f)(2) of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–188); and the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, as authorized by section 17(m) of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, $275,701,000, to remain available through September 30, 2016: *Provided*, That none of these funds shall be available to reimburse the Commodity Credit Corporation for commodities donated to the program: *Provided further*, That notwithstanding any other provision of law, effective with funds made available in fiscal year 2015 to support the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, as authorized by section 4402 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, such funds shall remain available through September 30, 2016: *Provided further*, That of the funds made available under section 27(a) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2036(a)), the Secretary may use up to 10 percent for costs associated with the distribution of commodities.

NUTRITION PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION

For necessary administrative expenses of the Food and Nutrition Service for carrying out any domestic nutrition assistance program, $150,824,000: *Provided*, That of the funds provided herein, $2,000,000 shall be used for the purposes of section 4404 of Public Law 107–171, as amended by section 4401 of Public Law 110–246.

TITLE V

FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND RELATED PROGRAMS

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For necessary expenses of the Foreign Agricultural Service, including not to exceed $158,000 for representation allowances and for expenses pursuant to section 8 of the Act approved August 3, 1956 (7 U.S.C. 1766), $182,563,000: *Provided*, That the Service may utilize advances of funds, or reimburse this appropriation for expenditures made on behalf of Federal agencies, public and private organizations and institutions under agreements executed pursuant to the agricultural food production assistance programs (7 U.S.C. 1737) and the foreign assistance programs of the United States Agency for International Development: *Provided further*, That funds made available for middle-income country training programs, funds made available for the Borlaug International Agricultural Science and Technology Fellowship program, and up to $2,000,000 of the Foreign Agricultural Service appropriation solely for the purpose of offsetting fluctuations in international currency exchange rates, subject to documentation by the Foreign Agricultural Service, shall remain available until expended.

FOOD FOR PEACE TITLE I DIRECT CREDIT AND FOOD FOR PROGRESS PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING RESCISSION AND TRANSFER OF FUNDS)

For administrative expenses to carry out the credit program of title I of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) and the Food for Progress Act of 1985 (7 U.S.C. 1736o), $2,528,000 shall be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''Farm Service Agency, Salaries and Expenses'': *Provided*, That of the unobligated balances provided pursuant to title I of the Food for Peace Act, $13,000,000 are rescinded: *Provided further*, That no amounts may be rescinded pursuant to the previous proviso from amounts that were designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to a concurrent resolution on the budget or the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

FOOD FOR PEACE TITLE II GRANTS

For expenses during the current fiscal year, not otherwise recoverable, and unrecovered prior years' costs, including interest thereon, under the Food for Peace Act (Public Law 83–480), for commodities supplied in connection with dispositions abroad under title II of said Act, $1,466,000,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That, for

fiscal year 2015, the amount made available pursuant to section 412(e)(2) of the Food for Peace Act (7 U.S.C. 1736f(e)(2)) to carry out nonemergency food assistance programs under title II of such Act shall be $375,000,000.

MCGOVERN-DOLE INTERNATIONAL FOOD FOR EDUCATION AND CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM GRANTS

For necessary expenses to carry out section 3107 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S. C. 1736o–1), $198,126,000, to remain available until expended: *Provided*, That the Commodity Credit Corporation is authorized to provide the services, facilities, and authorities for the purpose of implementing such section, subject to reimbursement from amounts provided herein.

COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION EXPORT (LOANS) CREDIT GUARANTEE PROGRAM ACCOUNT

(INCLUDING TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

For administrative expenses to carry out the Commodity Credit Corporation's Export Guarantee Program, GSM 102 and GSM 103, $6,748,000; to cover common overhead expenses as permitted by section 11 of the Commodity Credit Corporation Charter Act and in conformity with the Federal Credit Reform Act of 1990, of which $6,394,000 shall be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''Foreign Agricultural Service, Salaries and Expenses'', and of which $354,000 shall be transferred to and merged with the appropriation for ''Farm Service Agency, Salaries and Expenses''.

TITLE VI

RELATED AGENCIES AND FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION

SALARIES AND EXPENSES

For necessary expenses of the Food and Drug Administration, including hire and purchase of passenger motor vehicles; for payment of space rental and related costs pursuant to Public Law 92–313 for programs and activities of the Food and Drug Administration which are included in this Act; for rental of special purpose space in the District of Columbia or elsewhere; for miscellaneous and emergency expenses of enforcement activities, authorized and approved by the Secretary and to be accounted for solely on the Secretary's certificate, not to exceed $25,000; and notwithstanding section 521 of Public Law 107–188; $4,442,048,000: *Provided*, That of the amount provided under this heading, $798,000,000 shall be derived from prescription drug user fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379h, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended; $128,282,000 shall be derived from medical device user fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379j, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended; $312,116,000 shall be derived from human generic drug user fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379j–42, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended; $21,014,000 shall be derived from biosimilar biological product user fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379j–52, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended; $22,464,000 shall be derived from animal drug user fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379j–12, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended; $6,944,000 shall be derived from animal generic drug user fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379j–21, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended; $566,000,000 shall be derived from tobacco product user fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 387s, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended; $1,434,000 shall be derived from food and feed recall fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379j–31, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended; $6,414,000 shall be derived from food reinspection fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379j–31, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended; and $5,300,000 shall be derived from voluntary qualified importer program fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379j–31, and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That in addition and notwithstanding any other provision under this heading, amounts collected for prescription drug user fees, medical device user fees, human generic drug user fees, biosimilar biological product user fees, animal drug user fees, and animal generic drug user fees that exceed the respective fiscal year 2015 limitations are appropriated and shall be credited to this account and remain available until expended: *Provided further*, That fees derived from prescription drug, medical device, human generic drug, biosimilar biological product, animal drug, and animal generic drug assessments for fiscal year 2015, including any such fees collected prior to fiscal year 2015 but credited for fiscal year 2015, shall be subject to the fiscal year 2015 limitations: *Provided further*, That the Secretary may accept payment during fiscal year 2015 of user fees specified under this heading and authorized for fiscal year 2016, prior to the due date for such fees, and that amounts of such fees assessed for fiscal year 2016 for which the Secretary accepts payment in fiscal year 2015 shall not be included in amounts under this heading: *Provided further*, That none of these funds shall be used to develop, establish, or operate any program of user fees authorized by 31 U.S.C. 9701: *Provided further*, That of the total amount appropriated: (1) $913,784,000 shall be for the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition and related field activities in the Office of Regulatory Affairs; (2) $1,326,402,000 shall be for the Center for Drug Evaluation and Research and related field activities in the Office of Regulatory Affairs; (3) $344,267,000 shall be for the Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research and for related field activities in the Office of Regulatory Affairs; (4) $171,783,000 shall be for the Center for Veterinary Medicine and for related field activities in the Office of Regulatory Affairs; (5) $420,548,000 shall be for the Center for Devices and Radiological Health and for related field activities in the Office of Regulatory Affairs; (6) $62,494,000 shall be for the National Center for Toxicological Research; (7) $531,527,000 shall be for the Center for Tobacco Products and for related field activities in the Office of Regulatory Affairs; (8) not to exceed $163,471,000 shall be for Rent and Related activities, of which $47,116,000 is for White Oak Consolidation, other than the amounts paid to the General Services Administration for rent; (9) not to exceed $228,839,000 shall be for payments to the General Services Administration for rent; and (10) $278,933,000 shall be for other activities, including the Office of the Commissioner of Food and Drugs, the Office of Foods and Veterinary Medicine, the Office of Medical and Tobacco Products, the Office of Global and Regulatory Policy, the Office of Operations, the Office of the Chief Scientist, and central services for these offices: *Provided further*, That not to exceed $25,000 of this amount shall be for official reception and representation expenses, not otherwise provided for, as determined by the Commissioner: *Provided further*, That any transfer of funds pursuant to section 770(n) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 379dd(n)) shall only be from amounts made available under this heading for other activities: *Provided further*, That funds may be transferred from one specified activity to another with the prior approval of the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

In addition, mammography user fees authorized by 42 U.S.C. 263b, export certification user fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 381, priority review user fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 360n, outsourcing facility fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 379j–62, prescription drug wholesale distributor licensing and inspection fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 353(e)(3), and third-party logistics provider licensing and inspection fees authorized by 21 U.S.C. 360eee–3(c)(1), may be credited to this account, to remain available until expended.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

For plans, construction, repair, improvement, extension, alteration, and purchase of fixed equipment or facilities of or used by the Food and Drug Administration, where not otherwise provided, $8,788,000, to remain available until expended.

INDEPENDENT AGENCIES

COMMODITY FUTURES TRADING COMMISSION

For necessary expenses to carry out the provisions of the Commodity Exchange Act (7 U.S.C. 1 et seq.), including the purchase and hire of passenger motor vehicles, and the rental of space (to include multiple year leases) in the District of Columbia and elsewhere, $217,578,000, including not to exceed $3,000 for official reception and representation expenses, and not to exceed $25,000 for the expenses for consultations and meetings hosted by the Commission with foreign governmental and other regulatory officials, of which $52,578,000, shall be for the purchase of information technology until September 30, 2016, and of which not less than $1,885,000 shall be for the Office of the Inspector General: *Provided*, That the Chairman of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission shall develop and report to the Committees of jurisdiction of both Houses of Congress within 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, a schedule of implementation and sequencing of all rules, regulations, and orders under section 716 or 722(d) of Public Law 111–203, section 1a(49)(D) or 4m of the Commodity Exchange Act, or any of the amendments made by section 737 of Public Law 111–203, including all Commission cost benefit analyses and studies relied upon in the formulation of any regulations issued in implementing any of such sections or amendments.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. DELAURO

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the amendment.

The Clerk read as follows:

Page 57, line 5, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $17,578,000)''.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 616, the gentlewoman from Connecticut and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, currently this bill mandates that the Commodity Futures Trading Commission spend $52.6 million of its already limited budget on information technology. My amendment, put forward with my colleagues Congresswoman WATERS of California and Congressman HIMES of Connecticut, reduces this IT set-aside back to its current level of $35 million.

Americans want to see more accountability from Wall Street and oil speculators and fewer reckless transactions,

market failures, and bailouts. That is the CFTC's job, to rein in gambling with risky derivatives on Wall Street and prevent undue speculation on oil.

Republican and Democratic experts both have argued that the current funding level purposefully sets the CFTC up for failure. The current bill leaves CFTC dangerously underfunded, 22 percent below the President's request. This increased IT set-aside is equivalent to reducing their budget by another 7 percent below last year's level.

By returning this set-aside to $35 million, our amendment gives the Commission more flexibility to spend the budget they have on enforcement and examinations, to put more ''cops on the beat,'' as it were, if they see fit.

This represents neither a cut nor a rise in the current level of CFTC funding. While I think we should fund them higher, this amendment merely lets them use their budget to do their job, and they manage to do a lot, even with the limited resources we have given them.

Last year, the Commission's enforcement division brought in just over $1 billion to the Treasury. That is more than the Congress has provided the Commission in the last 5 years.

According to Acting Chairman Wetjen:

> The unfortunate reality is that, at current funding levels, the Commission is unable to adequately fulfill the mission given to it by Congress.

The agency's enforcement staff is already smaller than it was in 2002, when the Commission was just responsible for the futures and options market.

Today, this smaller staff has additional important and extremely complex oversight responsibilities. They must now also oversee the $400 trillion swaps market, and they are responsible for pursuing cases against reckless, manipulative, or deceptive schemes.

We need to give the Commission the flexibility in allocating resources that it needs to do its job, to oversee risky market behaviors, protect consumers, and enforce the law. This amendment will allow them to do that, and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, this amendment would severely starve the very regulator charged with overseeing the swaps, futures, and options markets of desperately needed information technology resources.

The bill I brought before the House this afternoon would return information technology investments to just below the FY 2012 level, and this amendment would reduce IT by 33 percent.

This amendment would only accomplish one objective, to grow the size of our government bureaucracy by hiring unneeded personnel to write more overreaching rules and regulations. Staff at the CFTC is already at a record high.

The CFTC is preparing to regulate high-frequency trading. This amendment would ignore the reality of a regulator whose 82 percent of its employees make more than six-figure incomes, and staff enters by hand almost 20,000 paper forms per year. This is an exhaustive and costly exercise. This amendment would reward those misplaced resources.

CFTC has seen a 166 percent increase in the amount of data it takes in. It takes in hundreds of millions of records per day and does not have the capability to store that data internally.

The amendment ignores the advice of former CFTC chief economist, who was the recipient of the Chairman Gary Gensler's award for excellence in 2010, who stated:

> Financial regulation should recognize that automation and increasingly higher transaction speeds make it nearly impossible for humans to provide effective layers of risk management.
>
> Regulators need to change their surveillance and enforcement practices to be more cyber-centric rather than human-centric.

Therefore, based on that information, I strongly urge my colleagues to oppose this amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, the fact of the matter is that this amendment gives the CFTC flexibility. That is all it does. It could spend all of that money on IT. If they want to spend it on enforcement staff, they would be able to do it. This leaves them the flexibility to make the determinations based on what the needs are.

With that, I yield the balance of my time to my colleague from Connecticut (Mr. HIMES).

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Chairman, I rise to join happily in the amendment offered by my neighbor and close friend from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) and the gentlewoman from California, Ranking Member WATERS.

One of the crucial achievements of the Dodd-Frank bill, of course, was to drag a massive and, in some cases, very dangerous derivatives market into the light of day by giving CFTC authority to look at the instruments which brought down AIG, which were involved in the London Whale, which when used incorrectly can create a systemic risk to the system, and this is a market that has been growing very, very rapidly.

In 2010, the total derivatives market was about $124 trillion. That is trillion with a t. That is a multiple of the size of the U.S. economy. Today, it has almost doubled that, $223 trillion. Now, these are securities that can cause all sorts of havoc if not adequately regulated.

This amendment, as Ms. DELAURO pointed out, in no way expands bureaucracy. We are not saying spend more money, though there is a very powerful argument for spending more money on an agency that has been tasked to take on a massive new market. It is simply providing flexibility.

The question before this House on this amendment comes down to a very simple question: We are either going to provide discretion to the CFTC to run to where they think the danger is—and if they think that their IT is insufficient, they can spend this money on the IT—they are either going to run to where the danger is or we, as a House, are going to decide that we are such crack IT professionals that we should tell the CFTC that they must spend this money on their system. Folks, that doesn't make any sense.

Therefore, I urge support for this amendment to provide the CFTC the flexibility that they need in regulating this market.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman from Connecticut has expired.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FARR. Mr. Chairman, let's be very practical about this. I think you have to put it in the context of what has happened.

We passed the Dodd-Frank bill because of an incredible financial disaster in this country, and what we found out is that the regulators weren't regulating. We found out they couldn't regulate because they didn't even have regulations or any provisions about all of these derivatives swaps. They were inventing new things that weren't even in law.

The Federal Commodity Futures Trading Commission is right at the heart of all these new instruments and all these derivatives swaps and so on. In fact, we learned from Director Gensler—who came before our committee and pointed out the massive amount of trading that goes on, $300 trillion dollars.

We couldn't even figure out in the committee how to explain how many millions trillions were. It is so much, and it is scary. We have got to have people on the job to do this and the technology to do it.

Now, just to make sure that people are carrying out the law, you have got to have people review that process. In fact, because the industry doesn't want to be regulated, they go to my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and say: cut this, don't give them the tools to implement it, don't allow them to be the referees they have to be by law.

We approved, last year, $315 million, and we criticized that. The President came back for $280 million this year, and we have cut that. Even when he went along with knowing that he wouldn't be able to get all the things he asked for, we cut it again, so this bill fences off part of that. It seems to me a reasonable amendment to adopt, and I urge the adoption of it.

I yield to the gentlewoman from California, MAXINE WATERS, the ranking member of the committee.

Ms. WATERS. I would like to thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, as the ranking member of the Financial Services Committee, I feel it is extremely important to support this amendment. It is extremely important because we know that the work that we did on the reform measure, the Dodd-Frank measure, is so important to try to correct the lack of attention we were giving to our consumers and the fact that we needed to strengthen our financial services agencies.

So when I see there is an attempt to weaken something such as the CFTC or the SEC or the OCC or any of our regulatory agencies, it is important for me to speak out and help people to understand what is being attempted.

I urge support for this amendment to ensure our derivatives cop can protect our financial markets and economy.

Make no mistake, even with this amendment, inadequate Republican funding for the CFTC furthers a larger effort to undermine the oversight of derivatives.

□ 1800

While more funding is needed, this measure will at least prevent layoffs.

The CFTC thwarts Wall Street from manipulating the price of things like oil, corn, and gold. Without it, every American will feel the pain at the pump and the dinner table. The CFTC enforces laws Democrats enacted to rein in companies like AIG, whose activities led to the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

Despite overwhelming need, Republicans would undercut the CFTC under the guise of a modest IT increase, believing that if it just had the right computers, the CFTC could eliminate employees.

What they don't understand is that it takes real people to bring about justice and accountability. With funding far below the requested amount, the CFTC cannot operate without temporarily closing or sacking valuable talent, causing immediate harm to our markets with delays to agency guidance, to investors and businesses, examinations of companies entrusted with your funds, punishment of bad actors, and recovery of victims' money.

This is a continuation of an effort by Republicans and special interests to undercut laws and regulations that protect our consumers. I am not going to stand for it, and I urge Members to support this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentleman from California has expired.

The gentleman from Alabama has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Again, Mr. Chairman, I just rise in opposition to the amendment. Again, this bill is important. The bill that we have before the House would return the information technology investments to just below that of FY 2012, and this amendment will reduce IT by 33 percent. We feel like IT is very important. We think that the bill, as written, should stand, and therefore we would oppose the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chair announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Connecticut will be postponed.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will read.

The Clerk read as follows:

FARM CREDIT ADMINISTRATION

LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Not to exceed $54,000,000 (from assessments collected from farm credit institutions, including the Federal Agricultural Mortgage Corporation) shall be obligated during the current fiscal year for administrative expenses as authorized under 12 U.S.C. 2249: *Provided*, That this limitation shall not apply to expenses associated with receiverships: *Provided further*, That the agency may exceed this limitation by up to 10 percent with notification to the Committees on Appropriations of both Houses of Congress.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, proceedings will now resume on those amendments on which further proceedings were postponed, in the following order:

An amendment by Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

An amendment by Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

Amendment No. 7 by Mr. ROYCE of California.

An amendment by Mr. GRAYSON of Florida.

An amendment by Mr. GARAMENDI of California.

An amendment by Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee.

An amendment by Mr. BROUN of Georgia.

An amendment by Ms. DELAURO of Connecticut.

The Chair will reduce to 2 minutes the time for any electronic vote after the first vote in this series.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This is a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 178, noes 243, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 300]

AYES—178

Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Conaway
Cook
Cotton
Davis, Rodney
Denham
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hanna
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
Kingston
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latta
Long
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Nugent
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schweikert
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thornberry
Tipton
Upton
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho

NOES—243

Aderholt
Bachus
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Dent
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard

Gallego
Garamendi
Gerlach
Granger
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Harper
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McIntyre
McKeon
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller, George
Moore
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Noem
Nolan
Nunes
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Reichert
Richmond
Roby
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Simpson
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stewart
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Wolf
Womack
Yarmuth
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—10

Collins (GA)
Davis, Danny
Hoyer
LaMalfa
McGovern
Miller, Gary
Moran
Nunnelee
Rangel
Ryan (OH)

□ 1830

Messrs. CLEAVER, HALL, BACHUS, and HINOJOSA changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Messrs. KING of Iowa and REED changed their vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. WOODALL). The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 130, noes 290, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 301]

AYES—130

Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Barr
Barton
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Burgess
Byrne
Campbell
Cantor
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cook
Crenshaw
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Garrett
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith (VA)
Harris
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kingston
Kline
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Long
Lummis
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mulvaney
Nugent
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Polis
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roe (TN)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stockman
Stutzman
Thornberry
Tipton
Upton
Walberg
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Woodall
Yoho

NOES—290

Aderholt
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bucshon
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Gerlach
Gibson
Granger
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Huelskamp
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matheson
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McNerney
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Tiberi
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Welch
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Wolf
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—11

Collins (GA)
Davis, Danny
Grijalva
Hoyer
LaMalfa
McGovern
Miller, Gary
Moran
Nunnelee
Rangel
Ryan (OH)

□ 1835

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. ROYCE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the ayes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 223, noes 198, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 302]

AYES—223

Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bentivolio
Bilirakis

Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (IN)
Burgess
Butterfield
Cantor
Capps
Capuano
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clay
Clyburn
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Conyers
Cooper
Courtney
Cramer
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
Dent
DeSantis
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Fleischmann
Fortenberry
Foster
Foxx
Garrett
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gosar
Gowdy
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Hastings (WA)
Heck (WA)
Hensarling
Himes
Holding
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Hudson
Hultgren
Issa
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Jordan
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Lofgren
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Marino
Matsui
McCarthy (CA)
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McHenry
Meadows
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Miller (FL)
Moore
Mulvaney
Nadler
Napolitano
Nolan
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pelosi
Perry
Peters (CA)
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Polis
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Quigley
Reichert
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Richmond
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schwartz
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Stewart
Stockman
Stutzman
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Wasserman Schultz
Waxman
Welch
Wenstrup
Williams
Wilson (FL)
Wilson (SC)
Wolf
Yarmuth
Young (IN)

NOES—198

Aderholt
Amash
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Benishek
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brooks (AL)
Broun (GA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Bustos
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Capito
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Castor (FL)
Clarke (NY)
Cleaver
Coble
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Crawford
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
DelBene
Denham
DesJarlais
Ellmers
Enyart
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Frankel (FL)
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Gerlach
Gibson
Goodlatte
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hahn
Hanabusa
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Heck (NV)
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Hinojosa
Huelskamp
Huffman
Huizenga (MI)
Hunter
Hurt
Israel
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (PA)
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Lowenthal
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Maffei
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCaul
McClintock
McDermott
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meehan
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pearce
Perlmutter
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Rahall
Reed
Renacci
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rooney
Ross
Rothfus
Runyan
Sanchez, Loretta
Scalise
Schrader
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Speier
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Wagner
Walz
Waters
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—10

Braley (IA)
Collins (GA)
Davis, Danny
LaMalfa
McGovern
Miller, Gary
Moran
Nunnelee
Rangel
Ryan (OH)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1839

Messrs. POMPEO and WESTMORELAND changed their vote from ''aye'' to ''no.''

Mr. CROWLEY changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GRAYSON

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. GRAYSON) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 150, noes 272, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 303]

AYES—150

Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Burgess
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Garamendi
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Grimm
Hahn
Hanabusa
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Kaptur
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
King (NY)
Kirkpatrick
Langevin
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Miller, George
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Petri
Pocan
Polis
Quigley
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stockman
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Wilson (FL)

NOES—272

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Barber
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garcia
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Himes
Hinojosa
Holding
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Joyce
Keating
Kelly (PA)
Kind
King (IA)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta

Lewis
Loebsack
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McCollum
McDermott
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Michaud
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moore
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sessions
Shea-Porter
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—9

Bachus
Collins (GA)
Gutiérrez
LaMalfa
McGovern
Miller, Gary
Nunnelee
Rangel
Ryan (OH)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1843

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. GARAMENDI

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 148, noes 276, not voting 7, as follows:

[Roll No. 304]

AYES—148

Amodei
Barber
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Capps
Capuano
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clay
Cleaver
Coffman
Cohen
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Crowley
Cummings
Davis (CA)
DeFazio
DeGette
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Fattah
Fitzpatrick
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Garamendi
Gardner
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hanna
Hastings (FL)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hudson
Huffman
Hunter
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Langevin
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McClintock
McDermott
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Pallone
Pascrell
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Quigley
Reed
Richmond
Rohrabacher
Rooney
Royce
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Serrano
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)

NOES—276

Aderholt
Amash
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Bustos
Butterfield
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Cárdenas
Carter
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clarke (NY)
Clyburn
Coble
Cole
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Cuellar
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fincher
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garcia
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Holding
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hurt
Israel
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
Matheson
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McCollum
McHenry
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moore
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Palazzo
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Price (NC)
Rahall
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rokita
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vela
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—7

Collins (GA)
LaMalfa
McGovern
Miller, Gary
Nunnelee
Rangel
Ryan (OH)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1847

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. DUNCAN OF TENNESSEE

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. DUNCAN) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 119, noes 303, not voting 9, as follows:

[Roll No. 305]

AYES—119

Amash
Bachmann
Barr
Barton
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brooks (AL)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Conyers
Cotton
Crenshaw
Culberson
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Fleischmann
Fleming
Forbes
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Garrett
Gibbs

Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Griffith (VA)
Guthrie
Hanna
Harper
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hurt
Issa
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jones
Jordan
Kingston
Kline
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Long
Lummis
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McClintock
McHenry
McIntyre
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Palazzo
Paulsen
Perry
Petri
Pittenger
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Price (GA)
Reichert
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Roe (TN)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Roskam
Rothfus
Royce
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shuster
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Walberg
Walorski
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Woodall
Yoho
Young (IN)

NOES—303

Aderholt
Amodei
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barrow (GA)
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Edwards
Ellison
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Flores
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Gerlach
Gibson
Goodlatte
Gosar
Granger
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Grijalva
Grimm
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (FL)
Hastings (WA)
Heck (WA)
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Hunter
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Joyce
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matheson
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McCollum
McDermott
McKeon
McKinley
McNerney
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Pingree (ME)
Pitts
Pocan
Polis
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Reed
Renacci
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Ross
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (WA)
Speier
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walden
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Wolf
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoder
Young (AK)

NOT VOTING—9

Cole
Collins (GA)
Johnson (GA)
LaMalfa
McGovern
Miller, Gary
Nunnelee
Rangel
Ryan (OH)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1851

Mr. SOUTHERLAND changed his vote from ''no'' to ''aye.''

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MR. BROUN OF GEORGIA

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BROUN) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 62, noes 358, not voting 11, as follows:

[Roll No. 306]

AYES—62

Amash
Barr
Bentivolio
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Brady (TX)
Broun (GA)
Burgess
Byrne
Chabot
Chaffetz
DeSantis
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Fleischmann
Fleming
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Garrett
Gohmert
Gowdy
Graves (GA)
Hastings (FL)
Hensarling
Holding
Hudson
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hurt
Issa
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jordan
Kaptur
Labrador
Lamborn
Long
Massie
McCarthy (CA)
McClintock
McHenry
Meadows
Messer
Miller (FL)
Mulvaney
Palazzo
Price (GA)
Rice (SC)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Royce
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Stewart
Stockman
Stutzman
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Woodall

NOES—358

Aderholt
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barber
Barletta
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Benishek
Bera (CA)
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boustany
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter
Cartwright
Cassidy
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Coble
Coffman
Cohen
Cole
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Connolly
Conyers
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Cotton
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Cummings
Daines
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
Davis, Rodney
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Denham
Dent
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duffy
Edwards
Ellmers
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farenthold
Farr
Fattah
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Frelinghuysen
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gardner
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gibson
Gingrey (GA)
Goodlatte
Gosar
Granger
Graves (MO)
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grijalva
Grimm
Guthrie
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hall
Hanabusa
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Heck (WA)
Herrera Beutler
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huelskamp
Huffman
Hunter
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Jenkins
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jolly
Jones
Joyce
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kelly (PA)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kirkpatrick
Kline
Kuster
Lance
Langevin
Lankford
Larson (CT)
Latham
Latta
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lummis
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Marchant
Marino
Matheson
Matsui
McAllister
McCarthy (NY)
McCaul
McCollum
McDermott
McIntyre
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McNerney
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Mica
Michaud
Miller (MI)
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Mullin
Murphy (FL)
Murphy (PA)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Neugebauer
Noem
Nolan
Nugent
Nunes
O'Rourke
Olson
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Paulsen
Payne
Pearce
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Peterson
Petri
Pingree (ME)
Pittenger
Pitts
Pocan
Poe (TX)
Polis
Pompeo
Posey
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)

Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Runyan
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (WI)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schock
Schrader
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Southerland
Speier
Stivers
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Terry
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tierney
Tipton
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Wilson (FL)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Yarmuth
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—11

Collins (GA)
DeFazio
Ellison
LaMalfa
Larsen (WA)
McGovern
Miller, Gary
Nunnelee
Rangel
Ryan (OH)
Tiberi

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1854

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

AMENDMENT OFFERED BY MS. DELAURO

The Acting CHAIR. The unfinished business is the demand for a recorded vote on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) on which further proceedings were postponed and on which the noes prevailed by voice vote.

The Clerk will redesignate the amendment.

The Clerk redesignated the amendment.

RECORDED VOTE

The Acting CHAIR. A recorded vote has been demanded.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The Acting CHAIR. This will be a 2-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 194, noes 227, not voting 10, as follows:

[Roll No. 307]

AYES—194

Barber
Barrow (GA)
Barton
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera (CA)
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (NY)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Braley (IA)
Brooks (AL)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Cooper
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle
Duckworth
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Enyart
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Garcia
Gibson
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hanabusa
Hastings (FL)
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Holt
Honda
Horsford
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson (GA)
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larson (CT)
Lee (CA)
Levin
Lewis
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maffei
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matheson
Matsui
McCarthy (NY)
McCollum
McDermott
McIntyre
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Michaud
Miller, George
Moore
Moran
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Negrete McLeod
Nolan
O'Rourke
Owens
Pallone
Pascrell
Pastor (AZ)
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters (CA)
Peters (MI)
Pingree (ME)
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rahall
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanchez, Loretta
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schneider
Schwartz
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Shea-Porter
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Tierney
Titus
Tonko
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Wasserman Schultz
Waters
Waxman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOES—227

Aderholt
Amash
Amodei
Bachmann
Bachus
Barletta
Barr
Benishek
Bentivolio
Bilirakis
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Bridenstine
Brooks (IN)
Broun (GA)
Buchanan
Bucshon
Burgess
Byrne
Calvert
Camp
Campbell
Cantor
Capito
Carter
Cassidy
Chabot
Chaffetz
Coble
Coffman
Cole
Collins (NY)
Conaway
Cook
Costa
Cotton
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Daines
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Ellmers
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gardner
Garrett
Gerlach
Gibbs
Gingrey (GA)
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (MO)
Griffin (AR)
Griffith (VA)
Grimm
Guthrie
Hall
Hanna
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Hastings (WA)
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurt
Issa
Jenkins
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kingston
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Labrador
Lamborn
Lance
Lankford
Latham
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McAllister
McCarthy (CA)
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKeon
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Peterson
Petri
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Pompeo
Posey
Price (GA)
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rogers (MI)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Royce
Runyan
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schock
Schrader
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Southerland
Stewart
Stivers
Stockman
Stutzman
Terry
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Visclosky
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walorski
Walz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Wolf
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IN)

NOT VOTING—10

Collins (GA)
Conyers
Graves (GA)
LaMalfa
Larsen (WA)
McGovern
Miller, Gary
Nunnelee
Rangel
Ryan (OH)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE ACTING CHAIR

The Acting CHAIR (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1900

So the amendment was rejected.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Chairman, I move that the Committee do now rise.

The motion was agreed to.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah) having assumed the chair, Mr. WOODALL, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4800) 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, had come to no resolution thereon.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A further message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed with amendments a bill of the House of the following title:

H.R. 3230. An act making continuing appropriations during a Government shutdown to provide pay and allowances to members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who perform inactive-duty training during such period.

UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS

(Mr. PERRY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PERRY. Mr. Speaker, U.S. Customs and Border Protection currently possesses a very large fleet of unmanned aerial systems, or UAS's. Certainly, this technology can be a valuable asset. We want them to use it to our benefit on the border to enforce border security.

Between 2010 and 2012, the CBP flew nearly 700 missions on behalf of other Federal, State, and local agencies. They were not flying the border, in other words. As a matter of fact, some agencies have absolutely nothing to do with border security, such as the U.S. Forest Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

I have researched this issue, Mr. Speaker, and found no codified procedures for how DHS loans their drones out. Certainly, the use of drones for unapproved purposes is unacceptable and poses a myriad of civil liberty concerns, not to mention the fact that it potentially abuses taxpayer dollars, Mr. Speaker.

We need to ensure proper oversight is conducted, civil liberties are upheld, and taxpayer dollars aren't squandered.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT ALBERTO SANTIAGO

(Mr. GARCIA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GARCIA. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor U.S. Army Reserve Master Sergeant Alberto Santiago from Homestead, Florida, who has served our country with courage and honor for over 40 years.

During his career, Master Sergeant Santiago has deployed to Kuwait, Iraq, Djibouti, Niger, Somalia, and many other countries in the Horn of Africa and is a veteran of Operations Desert Storm, Iraqi Freedom, Desert Shield, and New Dawn.

For his service, he received the Bronze Star, Kuwait Liberation Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, and the Combat Action Badge. Master Sergeant Santiago and his family have made tremendous sacrifices in the defense of our country.

As Master Sergeant Santiago retires from the U.S. Army Reserve, I would like to honor his service and wish him the best in all his future endeavors and extend the thanks of a grateful Nation.

THE WATERS OF THE UNITED STATES RULE

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the EPA and Army Corps of Engineers' proposed regulation ''the waters of the United States rule.''

Undoubtedly, we all want and rightfully deserve clean water and healthy watersheds, especially those that make their living off the land, whether through farming, natural resource development and harvesting, or recreation and tourism.

The EPA suggested that expanding the reach of the Clean Water Act is necessary, yet they have not illustrated a clear end of the jurisdiction they seek. As a result, many are concerned about the threat to private property rights, active land management, agriculture, and energy development—especially in rural communities.

Without direct input from stakeholders and the legislative process, these new regulations would circumvent congressional approval, with limited transparency.

Economists have suggested the EPA has systematically underestimated the economic impact that may occur. Counties across the country are concerned about losing control over their ability for local planning and fear additional mandates from Washington, with little guidance or economic incentives.

Mr. Speaker, the American people elected the representatives of this body to preside over the making of law. An agency cannot rule by fiat.

The American people deserve better.

CELEBRATING NEW JERSEY'S 350TH ANNIVERSARY

(Mr. HOLT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the State of New Jersey, which is celebrating her 350th anniversary this year.

Tomorrow, I will introduce in the House a resolution with all the members of the New Jersey House delegation commemorating our State's rich heritage and this 350th anniversary milestone. It is my understanding that Senator MENENDEZ will be introducing a similar resolution.

Since its founding in the year 1664, New Jersey has played an instrumental role in the establishment of our country, serving as the location of more military engagements than any other colony and becoming the first State to ratify the Bill of Rights.

New Jersey authors and artists have forever enhanced our country's cultural landscape. Of course, the charm of our State's physical landscape and shoreline cannot be overstated.

New Jersey has long served as a cauldron of innovation, supporting leading scientists and innovators in the development of groundbreaking technologies and medicines.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating New Jersey's history of innovation, liberty, and diversity this year and every year.

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF ASIAN CARP

(Mr. PAULSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to highlight the bipartisan action that Congress has taken recently to stop invasive species like Asian carp from jeopardizing Minnesota's ecological and economic health.

The invasive Asian carp is more than a nuisance. It is a danger to over 158 different species of fish and is threatening Minnesota's thriving tourism industry, an industry that generates $11 billion in annual sales and supports thousands of jobs.

In addition to the economic impact, continued expansion of the Asian carp into our waterways will mean less recreational opportunities to enjoy Minnesota's beautiful lakes, rivers, and waterways.

Thankfully, Mr. Speaker, Congress took action to help stop the spread of this invasive fish by passing legislation requiring the closure of the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, helping prevent Asian carp from swimming upstream into Minnesota's northern waterways.

While more can be done, Mr. Speaker, to solve our problems with invasive species, this provision is an important step in preserving our aquatic ecosystems. I would like to thank my colleagues in the Minnesota delegation for coming together on this issue.

TERRORIST ACTIVITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MASSIE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, a great deal has been going on in the last 24 hours—a lot of surprises—which help make life interesting.

Mr. Speaker, I want to call to attention, again, the human tragedy that has arisen in Africa—and Nigeria specifically—as I was there at the end of last week for a couple of days meeting with some of the mothers of girls who were kidnapped.

There was an excellent story in The Blaze done by Sara Carter today where she says:

> Precious and Hope—two girls' names—ran for their lives through the thick brush of the Nigerian forest. They could feel their hearts pounding, their bare feet scraped from the rocks, and their legs throbbing from the thorns that penetrated their skin as they crawled low through the tangle to avoid detection.

□ 1915

> They were running from the armed Islamist fighters who had seized them and approximately 300 other schoolgirls from what they had believed was the safety of their boarding school in Chibok, Nigeria, in one of the most brazen mass kidnappings in history. Only the night before, the two 15-year-olds had been sleeping peacefully. It was mid-April, and many of the girls had chosen to try to stay cool by sleeping underneath the night sky in only their shirts and

undergarments while others left the windows of their dormitories wide open to stave off the humidity. What they didn't expect shortly after they closed their eyes was that their world would soon be turned upside down.

This is the story of the night that Precious and Hope were taken by Boko Haram and about their against-all-odds escape the next day while so many of their classmates remain missing.

I have met those girls, Mr. Speaker, and they are precious, hopeful girls, but their hearts have been quite broken. Even though they have escaped, they have had many nightmares when they have lain down, because they have realized that what happened to them is happening to their friends every day.

I did ask one of the pastors from Chibok, whom I met there—who was trying to assist the families, the mothers and the three girls who had escaped—what happened to the men? What happened to the fathers? I was told that so many of them feel so helpless and that they feel so guilty because now they don't even know where their girls are, but they know what is happening to them every day, and they can't stand the thought of what is happening to their daughters every day and what they know is happening. Many of the fathers don't feel worthy to be sleeping in their own homes, so they have gone into the bush to sleep, to be there while their daughters are suffering at the hands of these radical Islamists who think, somehow, they serve a god who thinks it is cute and it is funny, as one leader was laughing, talking about the sexual slavery of the girls and that they should be sold into sexual slavery.

It is just sheer evil.

I understand that moderate Muslims do not approve of this activity. I met and was with some moderate Muslims in Nigeria who understand how appalling and outrageous this activity is, but it is time moderate Muslims around the world actually stood up to the radical Islam that is doing so much damage in this world and is purveying so much evil. It is time they stood up.

Counselors told me that they have had so much trouble in trying to help these mothers because they are so distraught, and what they have been told over and over and over again is that nobody cares; and if America ever came up, it was made clear that nobody in America cares and that they were certainly not going to come. So it has been very rough for them. I got an email today from one of the principals of the NGO unlikely heroes who is helping the families and the girls who have been able to escape so far, and she said even just one person from America coming has opened the doors to their having hope.

Now, if one lowly, bald-headed guy from east Texas, just by going over and meeting with these women and children and meeting with the pastors and counselors, could provide hope sufficient to open the doors to so many more who have been victims—who thought it was hopeless and nobody cared now today and in the last few days coming forward—just think what could have happened if our beautiful First Lady had made a trip to Nigeria or if our President had even taken actions that got back to the families so they knew there was hope.

The United States has no business going to war in Nigeria—we should not—but there are things that could be done without declaring war on a country when you find out that there is such a pervasive evil as Boko Haram, as al Qaeda, as radical Islam that wants to wipe the United States off the map and doesn't mind killing, repeatedly raping young girls, burning churches, burning homes, terrorizing people all because they had this sick, perverted idea that their god thinks that is good fun. It is time for moderate Muslims to stand up and to stand for the god they believe in. That would give even more hope.

I took some pictures while I was there. I wasn't sure it was a good idea, but they said this is part of providing hope that somebody will take this to America and that others will understand, and then if they could see pictures of its being presented in Congress, that that would add even more hope and would help good people to rise up who have been victims for so long.

America doesn't have to fight everybody's war, but they certainly have to do more than a hashtag and a Twitter. 43 and Twitters, as we saw, were not sufficient to stop Putin from invading the Crimea. Hashtags and Twitters were not sufficient to keep Boko Haram leaders from laughing at the sexual and horrible abuse of young girls who were kidnapped from school—girls they are still holding. At least President Clinton was willing to send a missile from time to time to try to send a message. In this administration, we have sent hashtags instead. It doesn't provide a whole lot of hope. They don't follow Twitter in the jungles of Nigeria.

Mr. Speaker, these are many of the mothers of the girls who were kidnapped by the radical Islamist group Boko Haram. They were anxious, actually, to have a picture taken so that people could actually see and they wouldn't be forgotten. The faces of the minor girls have been blurred out. This woman here, Mr. Speaker, had two daughters who were kidnapped. She had great difficulty in talking about what happened the night they were kidnapped without falling to the floor and weeping bitterly. Their pastor over here on the far right is a devout Christian leader and is doing all he can to help the victims' families.

This is that mother, Mr. Speaker, and the pastor. The counselor said just having someone come from the United States, put an arm around them, hug, and hold a hand has changed the outlook. Imagine what would happen if the authority of our administration did something besides Twitter.

The pastor is a sweetheart of a man. He seemed so grateful. He said he knew what it meant that someone came all the way from America to show he cared.

The face is blurred, but this is one of the children. They said she has had trouble doing a whole lot of anything but weeping and is in a deep, deep depression for her friends.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe it is true—to whom much is given, of them much will be required. We have been blessed like no nation in the history of the world. Now, in one of the ways you provide hope—and it is throughout the Book of Proverbs, throughout the Bible, itself—government is supposed to show impartiality and take care of those within its country.

Some wonder, Well, gee. Aren't we supposed to help our neighbors? Neighbors could be from other countries. That is absolutely correct. As individuals, we are supposed to help our neighbors, and our neighbors can be from other countries, but there is a sworn obligation of government to help protect and keep the people safe within the country's borders.

One of the reasons that it is helpful in a government role to reach out to people and give them hope to defeat their enemies and to stand up to their enemies is that, as President Bush used to say, I would much rather fight our enemies somewhere else instead of around our own homes. I would think that, as has been done in different places around the world, we can go to war, but you send a little help. For heaven's sake, in Libya, when we knew there were rebels who were supported by al Qaeda, we ended up having some kind of operation to send weapons in—getting weapons to people we knew included al Qaeda.

I have been wondering: How many of those weapons were being bandied about the night Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Ty Woods, and Glen Doherty were killed?

Yet we have nations that are friendly nations, that we know are not evil, are not possessed by evil, but are wanting to fight evil—radical Islam—that is a threat to people in this country. Anywhere radical Islam exists, it exists with the belief that there should be a worldwide caliphate and that everyone, particularly in the Great Satan of America, should be destroyed or subjugated or, at the very best, made to pay a tax for the right to exist in another religion within Muslim country—if not killed or wiped out altogether.

□ 1930

I certainly won't forget those families in Nigeria. It is startling to think how much could be helped by doing something more than Twitter. That is no substitute for a foreign policy.

Our moderate Muslim friends, our international atheist friends, our Christian friends, they feel like we ought to stand up against evil that ultimately would be a threat to us.

I think people should not forget that the Taliban was defeated within a matter of short months in Afghanistan,

without a single American loss of life, up to and including that famous ride uphill led by the Northern Alliance leader, General Dostum, whom I have met a number of times. The Taliban was routed and defeated. No American blood was shed to that point.

There are ways to fight evil without going to war. But if you are not going to fight, for our soldiers, for our military members' sake, don't leave them stranded telling them to hold what they got when it may include IEDs.

The lesson from Vietnam should have been, we are not going to send our military anywhere that we don't give them all of the weapons they need to fight, to win, and come home.

We are not, never have been empire builders. Never have been. That is why the people in France still speak French. In Germany they speak German. In Italy they speak Italian, because we have never been about building an empire. We have been about liberty, freedom.

We want to be left alone, but when evil raises its head, it is time to speak up.

But the only way a nation can remain a nation very long and be effective, without giving way to complete corruption or chaos, is if the rule of law is observed impartially, across the board.

And you can't have a law-abiding, effective nation where there are immigration laws that say, here is the process you must go through in order to get into our country. Over a million people a year go through that legal process, and more millions are standing in line to go through that process.

All they see and hear is that America is no longer a nation of laws. America now just lets anybody come in who comes. And we ignore the law. We become as a temporary Third World nation, saying we are going to ignore the laws that have helped make us the greatest nation in the world.

I still haven't heard from this administration any explanation as to why they might think that unaccompanied minors under 18 are flocking to our border like never before.

As I have explained, Mr. Speaker, before, when the word spreads through Central America, South America that if you just come to America, we are not sending anybody home, and story after story says that people come and they get word back home, we came, and sure enough, they are not sending people home.

For those in the administration who are not stupid, but are ignorant of what is going on, here is an article, translated from an El Salvadoran newspaper dated June 7. The headline, Mr. Speaker, is: ''USA Will Give Legal Assistance to Children Migrating Alone.''

Well, that is incentive. Wow. It is really true. The newspaper said if you can just get your kids to the United States, the U.S. Government will give them legal assistance.

The story is going back. It is not comfortable. Some people are lying in large rooms together, but food is being provided. Now they are going to provide legal assistance. Medical care, medical needs are provided because that is who we are.

The problem is, you have to stop the humanitarian crisis by continuing to lure people into the United States by saying the United States law is United States law.

Each of us in the Federal Government, Congress, and the administration, we have taken an oath to support and defend our Constitution, which means we follow our Federal laws, which means you have got to come into the United States legally.

Some estimate that maybe a billion, billion and a half people want to come into the United States. That would overwhelm, destroy the United States. We have an obligation to make sure we bring people in in a rational, methodical way so that we don't destroy this great nation.

So it seems to be a bit hypocritical for countries that don't allow near as many people in to their countries as we do, percentagewise or otherwise, to complain about unfair U.S. immigration laws.

Well, there are some things that certainly need to be reformed, and we could get that done immediately once the President ever gets around to securing the border.

But we have got to get back to following the law, to enforcing the law, or we are going to lose the country. With what is happening on our southern border, with what it is happening with the lawlessness in this city, people not only refusing to follow the law and follow their oath, but actually coming up with ways to encourage people to come violate our law even more by the thousands.

Here's another article from an El Salvador newspaper from June 5: ''Extension of Suspension of Student Deportation.'' So, the article here is making clear, yes, some came into the United States illegally, but the President is suspending enforcement of the laws he is sworn to uphold.

He just did it by fiat. He announced it. So is it spoken, so is it written, so shall it be.

That is what happens in a monarchy. That is not supposed to happen here. And if our friends down the other end of the hall in the Senate would stand with us, we could get back to observing the Constitution and protect the constitutional powers that are afforded to Congress and not to the other end here of Pennsylvania Avenue.

It is time to stand up. And perhaps, if people in this administration were not so busy luring people in by their words and actions, luring them to violating U.S. law, then maybe they would have more time to send more than a Twitter to evil radical Islamists wreaking havoc around the world that will ultimately end up on our doorstep because they still consider us the Great Satan.

Here is from a Honduran newspaper: ''U.S. Military Base in California Used to House Children.'' The article is translated from June 7. Going through and explaining how these kids came up unaccompanied. We didn't turn them back. We brought them in. We are taking care of them.

Here is another article, though, from Houston. ''Breitbart Announces Border Security and Public Corruption Tip Line'':

> The U.S. Border Patrol has been overwhelmed. The Federal Government is releasing thousands of illegal immigrants per week.
>
> The information Washington, D.C., shares about the border with the American people is often at odds with reality in the region, and scores of foreign children were found to be packed into holding cells on U.S. soil.
>
> Breitbart News has reported a near-steady stream of Mexican cartel activity and criminal efforts across the United States, reported on a plethora of corrupted U.S. officials and law enforcement along or near the U.S.-Mexico border, and reported countless tales of human suffering due to an often wide open and unsecured border.
>
> Breitbart Texas is introducing a new tip line for Border Patrol agents, Customs and Border Protection officers, other law enforcement, and other citizens to expose the reality of conditions along the U.S. Mexico border.
>
> ''The new tip line is for law enforcement or anyone who wants to speak out on discrepancies between what Washington, D.C., is saying and what is actually occurring on the ground.''
>
> Breitbart Texas Managing Director Brandon Darby said: ''Whether you know of Mexican cartel-related corruption occurring on U.S. soil, people or government officials helping human trafficking, foreign children being kept in horrible conditions or exploited, or simply feel the moral obligation to tell Americans what is really occurring in the region, this tip line is for you.''
>
> ''We are competent and able to handle and research these matters,'' Darby said. ''Anyone can call in and email with information, and we will do all we can to investigate and get the word out.''

The tip line number, the article says, is 877–204–2033. Breitbart Texas Managing Director Brandon Darby can be reached. Somebody is trying to make a difference.

So then here is a story from The Washington Times by Cheryl Chumley: ''Border Agents Warn of Chicken Pox, MRSA, Staph From Illegal Child Crossings.'' Border patrol agents who have already experienced scabies infestation from illegal border crossers now fear that thousands of children who are sweeping into the United States are bringing a host of new diseases and ailments of even more serious nature.

''We are starting to see chicken pox, MRSA, staph infections. We are starting to see different viruses,'' said Rio Grande Valley Border Patrol Agent Chris Cabrera.

Meanwhile, agents are still fighting off the scabies, a highly contagious skin disease that causes massive itching due to burrowing mites.

The article goes on: ''We have an obligation to our oath to this country, to those we are supposed to provide a

common defense for, and it is pretty tragic what it happening now.''

Here is a situation report from Thursday, May 29, RGV Sector Unified Coordination Group, EOC, and it goes through numbers, UACs, unaccompanied children, running through numbers of kids coming into the country illegally.

Then as U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen has reported, the Department of Homeland Security has been engaging in human trafficking.

□ 1945

Come into the country, we will take you to your parents, even if they are illegally here. Leave your aunt, uncle, family. Come with human traffickers to the United States, and we will get you to wherever your parents will be. If you are coming and your parents are not with you, and they are not in the United States, hey, we will find somebody to take care of you.

That is not the message that is literally being sent out by this administration, but that is certainly the message that is being communicated by our actions. As a result, the number of what this human smuggling report says cause illegal alien apprehensions by southwest border sector shows to be skyrocketing, skyrocketing.

It is incredible the number of people that are now flooding into the United States because they have heard nobody is following their oath with this administration. They are not enforcing the law. They have become like our country, basically. They are ignoring the law. It is great. Come on now.

Here's a sitrep report from 9 June, 1600 hours, regarding unaccompanied children, the UC influx. It reports, Mr. Speaker, for the entire month of May, there were 5,595 children screened by the Border Patrol, but just in the first 8 days of June, there had been 6,956 children screened by the Border Patrol. As I understand it, May was far bigger than April, and April was bigger than March.

I mean, this is increasing because the administration has not gotten serious about abiding by its oath, by not providing a common defense, not enforcing our borders, not enforcing our immigration laws.

A Nation that refuses to enforce such important laws is going to find that, when it gets around to deciding the Nation is at risk, it will find that it is quite possibly too late.

Instead of being concerned about following an oath, enforcing immigration laws, making sure that people have filled out the proper documents, gotten a visa legally—properly—coming in the proper way, we had many officials who were brought in, made aware of this Bergdahl swap, except for the people the law required to be told—yes, the Members of Congress—the lawlessness goes on. We have got to stand up and say enough is enough.

This is an article under U.S. news titled, ''Officials Predicted Detainees in Bowe Bergdahl Swap Would Rejoin Taliban,'' from Julian Barnes, dated June 10, from Washington.

Before the U.S. transferred five Afghan Taliban detainees to secure the freedom of Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, American intelligence officials predicted that two of the men would return to senior positions with the militant group, according to U.S. officials.

The classified assessment, a consensus of spy agencies compiled during the prisoner-swap deliberations, said two others of the five were likely to assume active roles within the Taliban, while only one of the five released detainees was considered likely to end active participation in the group's effort to undermine the elected government of Afghanistan.

Make no mistake—it is not here in this article—but these people do not just believe in being hostile to the Government of Afghanistan. They consider the United States the Great Satan.

While this is going on and we are releasing terrorists, who will ultimately kill Americans—and mark my words, there will be Americans who die unnecessarily because of the release of these murderous thugs.

For anyone who says, well, you know, they didn't technically stab anybody or actually cut off their heads—they believe, they are complicit, they support, they assist, and under every State's law, I am aware of—and every Federal law—that makes them a principal. That makes them guilty of the crime, itself.

I would think, under the logic of those who say, well, we don't think they actually murdered somebody, themselves—well, under that scenario, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed's admission that he planned 9/11/2001 and that he glorifies Allah if he has terrorized Americans, he is not really a murderer because he didn't actually fly the plane in that killed them himself. He just planned it and made sure that it was carried out. That is some pretty weak reasoning.

This is going to cost American lives, letting these five Taliban go.

There was a bill that my friend from California, DANA ROHRABACHER, filed—some of us signed onto—that would have prevented the executive branch from taking any action to release four of these five that were released. That is how serious we took it, but the administration seems to think: hey, it was a good deal, we made a good deal.

Well, it wasn't a good deal. You can't release people who have engaged in evil this serious, who have not recanted their evil, who want to go back and commit atrocities against nonradical Islamists—whether moderate Muslims, but especially Christians and Jews—and not expect that to come back on you and hurt you.

This is an article from FOX News, published June 11, today, ''Hagel admits administration mishandled aspects of Taliban swap.'' You think?

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel arrives on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, June 11, 2014, to testify before the House Armed Services Committee.

Defense Secretary Hagel, on Wednesday, sought to ease concerns about the controversial swap of five hardened Taliban leaders for Sergeant Bowe Bergdahl, but under pressure from lawmakers, acknowledged that the administration mishandled the announcement.

''We didn't handle some of this right,'' Hagel admitted to the House Armed Services Committee, toward the end of the first public hearing on the prisoner exchange.

The hearing lasted more than 5 hours, as lawmakers from both sides of the aisle voiced concerns about the trade—while some also accused Republicans of exaggerating the security threats.

It is unfortunate that names aren't mentioned as to who said Republicans were exaggerating the security threats because, Mr. Speaker, when Americans are killed because of this ill-advised swap, we need to be able to come back to the floor and say: these are the people that thought it was exaggerated to say that releasing murderous, evil thugs who hate America was not going to come back to bite us and cost American lives.

This other article, all of this going on at the same time, ''U.S. Watches As Iraq Speeds Toward Disaster.''

Fighters for the al Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq and Syria took Mosul today, giving the militant group control of Iraq's second largest city and setting the country on a path toward chaos.

ISIS militants already control Fallujah, a city that American Marines took in 2004 in what was the bloodiest battle of the Iraq war. Now, with both Mosul and Fallujah under their control, nearly half of Iraq is in the grips of a group that is a formal affiliate of a terrorist group.

Equally troubling are the circumstances under which the city fell. Iraqi security personnel simply abandoned their posts, according to reports.

It sounded like the Bush administration had teed up a security forces agreement—sometimes called SFA—with Iraq, could have gone ahead and signed it, but thought—because this is the way George W. Bush thinks—even though he is a Republican and a Democrat was coming in, like his father, he feels like: I will do something nice. I will leave this teed up. He can come in, sign it, get a lot of credit. It will help him start off a good Presidency.

Well, guess what, it didn't work out. It turns out Bush should have gone ahead and signed the agreement. Because of the mishandling by this administration, now all of those precious American lives and the blood that was shed at Mosul and Fallujah now has radical Islamists back standing on those spots where the blood was shed.

It is time for what in east Texas is called common sense and here in Washington is just sense because it isn't common. It is time for us to listen to the American people, to read the law and follow it, to keep our oaths to the American people because a failure to be vigilant costs liberty.

I still think, Mr. Speaker, because to whom much is given—which is the United States, given more than any nation in history—of them, much is required.

As we allow lawlessness to continue on our borders here in Washington

without encouraging law-abiding, decent activity in places where evil radical Islam is reigning supreme, we will be held accountable. This country will suffer for its negligent and intentional neglect in following the law that has made us so great.

To those who want to descend to Third World status, this is how you do it: you just stop following your own laws, you start ruling by how you feel about things, instead of what the law says.

We have an oath to do better. We have an obligation to the past generations who have sacrificed the last full measure of devotion, as Lincoln said, and our failure will cause future generations to rise up and curse our names if we don't start forcing people to follow the law.

Mr. Speaker, tonight, I yield back the balance of my time with a broken heart.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

A concurrent resolution of the Senate of the following title was taken from the Speaker's table and, under the rule, referred as follows:

S. Con. Res. 37. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the United States Capitol in commemoration of the Shimon Peres Congressional Gold medal ceremony; to the Committee on House Administration.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 7 o'clock and 58 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, June 12, 2014, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

5913. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; Kentucky; Stage II Requirements for Hertz Corporation facility at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport in Boone County [EPA-R04-OAR-203-0794; FRL-9911-24 Region-4] received May 21, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5914. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Revision to the Washington State Implementation Plan; Update to the Solid Fuel Burning Devices Regulations [EPA-R10-OAR-2013-0707; FRL-9910-54 Region-10] received May 8, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5915. A letter from the Director, Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting the Agency's final rule — Approval of States' Requests to Relax the Federal Reid Vapor Pressure Volatility Standard in Florida, and the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill and Greensboro/Winston-Salem/High Point Areas in North Carolina [EPA-HQ-OAR-2013-0787; FRL-9911-12-OAR] received May 21, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

5916. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-048, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5917. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-034, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5918. A letter from the Acting Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-012, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5919. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-037, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5920. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting Transmittal No. DDTC 14-016, pursuant to the reporting requirements of Section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5921. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting notification of the determination of a waiver under Subsection 402(d)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974 with respect to Belarus; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5922. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a determination and certification pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act of FY 2012; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5923. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting certification to Congress regarding the Incidental Capture of Sea Turtles in Commercial Shrimping Operations, pursuant to Public Law 101-162, section 609(b); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

5924. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Traverse City, MI [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0175; Airspace Docket No. 13-AGL-12] received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5925. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 30952; Amdt. No 3585] received May 21, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5926. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — IFR Altitudes; Miscellaneous Amendments [Docket No.: 30958; Amdt. No. 513] received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5927. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Extension of Effective Date for the Helicopter Air Ambulance, Commercial Helicopter, and Part 91 Helicopter Operations Final Rule [Docket No.: FAA-2010-0982; Amdt. Nos. 91-330, 120-2;135-129] (RIN 2120-AK47) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5928. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Prohibition Against Certain Flights in Simferopol (UKFV) Flight Information Region (FIR) [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0225; Amdt. No. 91-331] (RIN: 2120-AK50) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5929. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0829; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-085-AD; Amendment 39-17814; AD 2014-06-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5930. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0363; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-031-AD; Amendment 39-17769; AD 2014-04-10] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5931. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Alexander Schleicher, Segelflugzeugbau Gliders [Docket No.: FAA-2014-0019; Directorate Identifier 2013-CE-045-AD; Amendment 39-17811; AD 2014-06-07] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5932. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; ATR-GIE Avions de Transport Regional Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0975; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-082-AD; Amendment 39-17813; AD 2014-06-09] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5933. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-32013-0419; Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-129-AD; Amendment 39-17800; AD 2014-05-28] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5934. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2006-24777; Directorate Identifier 2006-NE-19-AD; Amendment 39-17809; AD 2014-06-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5935. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2012-1202; Directorate Identifier 2012-NE-38-AD; Amendment 39-17816; AD 2014-07-02] received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5

U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5936. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Services B.V. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0674; Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-217-AD; Amendment 39-17817; AD 2014-07-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5937. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Bombardier, Inc. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-1069; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-197-AD; Amendment 39-17827; AD 2014-08-03] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5938. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Turbomeca S.A. Turboshaft Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2007-27009; Directorate Identifier 2007-NE-02-AD; Amendment 39-17820; AD 2014-07-06] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5939. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Fokker Services B.V. Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0865; Directorate Identifier 2012-NM-199-AD; Amendment 39-17819; AD 2014-07-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5940. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Airplanes [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0668; Directorate Identifier 2013-NM-017-AD; Amendment 39-17826; AD 2014-08-02] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

5941. A letter from the Paralegal Specialist, Department of Transportation, transmitting the Department's final rule — Airworthiness Directives; Rolls-Royce Deutschland Ltd & Co KG Turbofan Engines [Docket No.: FAA-2013-0884; Directorate Identifier 2013-NE-31-AD; Amendment 39-17829; AD 2014-08-05] (RIN: 2120-AA64) received May 12, 2014, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. PETRI (for himself and Ms. NORTON) (both by request):

H.R. 4834. A bill to authorize highway infrastructure and safety, transit, motor carrier, rail, and other surface transportation programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Energy and Commerce, Ways and Means, Science, Space, and Technology, Natural Resources, Oversight and Government Reform, the Budget, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CONYERS (for himself, Mr. COHEN, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia):

H.R. 4835. A bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to stop abusive student loan collection practices in bankruptcy cases; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN (for herself and Mr. WOLF):

H.R. 4836. A bill to prohibit the transfer of unprivileged enemy belligerents to the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. REICHERT (for himself, Mr. KIND, Mr. TIBERI, Mr. BOUSTANY, Mr. PAULSEN, Mr. NEAL, Mr. PASCRELL, and Mr. BLUMENAUER):

H.R. 4837. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committees on Education and the Workforce, and Small Business, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. FATTAH (for himself, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. PERRY, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. GERLACH, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. MARINO, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. ROTHFUS, Ms. SCHWARTZ, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. DENT, Mr. PITTS, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, and Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania):

H.R. 4838. A bill to redesignate the railroad station located at 2955 Market Street in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, commonly known as ''30th Street Station'', as the ''William H. Gray III 30th Street Station''; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. AL GREEN of Texas (for himself, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. HONDA, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. NORTON, Ms. BASS, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CUMMINGS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. ELLISON, Ms. FUDGE, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. MOORE, Mr. PAYNE, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RUSH, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. WATERS, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. BROWN of Florida, and Mr. RICHMOND):

H.R. 4839. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act to provide for the calculation of the minimum wage based on the Federal poverty threshold for a family of 4, as determined by the Bureau of the Census; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. ISRAEL:

H.R. 4840. A bill to amend title II of the Social Security Act to preclude use of the social security account number on Government-issued identification cards issued in connection with Medicare, Medicaid, and SCHIP benefits, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. KIRKPATRICK (for herself, Mr. MICHAUD, Mr. BARBER, Mr. GRIJALVA, and Mr. PASTOR of Arizona):

H.R. 4841. A bill to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committees on Oversight and Government Reform, and the Budget, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York (for herself and Mr. SMITH of New Jersey):

H.R. 4842. A bill to amend the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 to require certain companies to disclose information describing any measures the company has taken to identify and address conditions of forced labor, slavery, human trafficking, and the worst forms of child labor within the company's supply chains; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Ms. MCCOLLUM (for herself, Mr. COLE, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. ISSA, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. KLINE, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. HUFFMAN, and Mr. KIND):

H.R. 4843. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a limitation under the Medicare program on charges for contract health services provided to Indians by Medicare providers of services and suppliers; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. MULLIN:

H.R. 4844. A bill to take certain property in McIntosh County, Oklahoma, into trust for the benefit of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. NUNES (for himself and Mr. CROWLEY):

H.R. 4845. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the deduction for mortgage insurance premiums; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. POLIS:

H.R. 4846. A bill to adjust the boundary of the Arapaho National Forest, Colorado, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. SALMON, and Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia):

H.R. 4847. A bill to facilitate effective research on and treatment of neglected tropical diseases through coordinated domestic and international efforts; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. DEFAZIO:

H.R. 4848. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the gas tax and rebuild our roads and bridges; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. DELANEY:

H. Con. Res. 101. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of Congress that Warren Weinstein should be returned home to his family; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Ms. EDWARDS, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. FUDGE,

Ms. HERRERA BEUTLER, Ms. MATSUI, and Mrs. NOEM):

H. Res. 619. A resolution recognizing that cardiovascular disease continues to be an overwhelming threat to women's health and the importance of providing basic, preventive heart screenings to women wherever they seek primary care; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

By Mr. POE of Texas (for himself, Mr. SALMON, and Mr. SIRES):

H. Res. 620. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Mexico should immediately release United States Marine Sgt. Andrew Tahmooressi and provide for his swift return to the United States so Sgt. Tahmooressi can receive the appropriate medical assistance for his medical condition; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Mr. SCALISE (for himself and Mr. POE of Texas):

H. Res. 621. A resolution reaffirming the commitment of the House of Representatives to the First Amendment to the Constitution and the vital freedom of speech protections it provides for Americans; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. PETRI

H.R. 4834

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically Clause 1, Clause 3, Clause 7 and Clause 18.

By Mr. CONYERS

H.R. 4835

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 4.

By Mrs. BLACKBURN

H.R. 4836

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8 permits Congress to make all laws ''which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States.''

By Mr. REICHERT

H.R. 4837

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the United States Constitution and Amendment XVI of the United States Constitution

By Mr. FATTAH

H.R. 4838

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I Section 8 Clause 3 of the United States Constitution, which states the United States Congress shall have power ''To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes''.

By Mr. AL GREEN of Texas

H.R. 4839

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The Constitutional authority to enact this legislation can be found in:

Commerce Clause (Art. 1 sec. 8 cl. 3)

Necessary and Proper Clause (Art. 1 sec. 8 cl. 18)

By Mr. ISRAEL

H.R. 4840

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution

By Mrs. KIRKPATRICK

H.R. 4841

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, ''The Congress shall have Power To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by the Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof''

By Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York

H.R. 4842

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Amendment 13 to the U.S. Constitution—Abolition of Slavery ''Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.''

By Ms. McCOLLUM

H.R. 4843

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18, which gives Congress the power ''To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing powers.''

By Mr. MULLIN

H.R. 4844

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: The Congress shall have Power to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes.

By Mr. NUNES

H.R. 4845

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of section 8 of article I of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. POLIS

H.R. 4846

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 (relating to the power of Congress to provide for the general welfare of the United States) and Clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress)

Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2, (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting territory or other property belonging to the United States).

By Mr. SMITH of New Jersey

H.R. 4847

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8, Clause 3: Commercial Activity Regulation

By Mr. DeFAZIO

H.R. 4848

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 499: Mr. HORSFORD.

H.R. 621: Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. HALL, and Mr. SESSIONS.

H.R. 713: Mr. KENNEDY.

H.R. 778: Mr. JONES.

H.R. 920: Mr. GIBSON.

H.R. 1030: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 1084: Ms. KAPTUR.

H.R. 1252: Mr. JOYCE and Mr. PETERS of California.

H.R. 1309: Mrs. BLACK.

H.R. 1362: Mr. TAKANO.

H.R. 1462: Mr. LOWENTHAL.

H.R. 1507: Mr. MCNERNEY and Mr. COBLE.

H.R. 1563: Ms. KAPTUR and Mr. GRIFFITH of Virginia.

H.R. 1728: Ms. SCHWARTZ.

H.R. 1750: Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico and Mr. JOYCE.

H.R. 1755: Mr. LOBIONDO.

H.R. 1771: Mr. MULLIN.

H.R. 1830: Mr. QUIGLEY and Mr. TIPTON.

H.R. 1851: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 1920: Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 1979: Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia and Ms. SCHWARTZ.

H.R. 2084: Mr. SMITH of Missouri and Mr. GARDNER.

H.R. 2130: Ms. BASS.

H.R. 2146: Mr. PETERS of California.

H.R. 2283: Mr. COBLE, Mr. GRIFFIN of Arkansas, Mr. LOEBSACK, Mr. SALMON, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. HANABUSA, Mr. DOGGETT, and Mr. GIBSON.

H.R. 2415: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 2595: Mr. TONKO.

H.R. 2619: Mr. FOSTER.

H.R. 2663: Mr. PAULSEN.

H.R. 3086: Mr. FARR.

H.R. 3112: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 3369: Mr. MORAN.

H.R. 3377: Mrs. WALORSKI.

H.R. 3419: Mr. BROOKS of Alabama.

H.R. 3426: Mr. LANCE, Mr. BURGESS, and Mr. MATHESON.

H.R. 3531: Mr. POSEY.

H.R. 3665: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 3698: Ms. DUCKWORTH.

H.R. 3707: Mr. STOCKMAN.

H.R. 3708: Mr. SCALISE and Mr. VALADAO.

H.R. 3717: Mr. BLUMENAUER.

H.R. 3723: Mr. ISRAEL, MS. SPEIER, Mrs. KIRKPATRICK, and Mr. FLORES.

H.R. 3899: Mr. TURNER.

H.R. 3991: Mr. ENYART, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 3992: Mrs. KIRKPATRICK and Mr. SALMON.

H.R. 3997: Mr. KILMER.

H.R. 4060: Mr. ROTHFUS.

H.R. 4079: Mr. ROONEY.

H.R. 4090: Ms. PINGREE of Maine.

H.R. 4092: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 4162: Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 4178: Mr. DENT and Mr. GALLEGO.

H.R. 4188: Ms. SHEA-PORTER.

H.R. 4190: Mr. ROGERS of Michigan and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 4208: Mr. HECK of Nevada.

H.R. 4221: Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 4290: Ms. SHEA-PORTER, Mr. AMODEI, and Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 4320: Mr. KING of Iowa.

H.R. 4351: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio, Mr. LANGEVIN, and Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 4357: Mr. PALAZZO.

H.R. 4365: Mr. NOLAN.

H.R. 4383: Ms. SINEMA and Mr. MURPHY of Florida.

H.R. 4385: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 4423: Mr. JONES.

H.R. 4446: Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 4447: Mr. TERRY.

H.R. 4450: Mr. POSEY and Mr. JOHNSON of Ohio.

H.R. 4510: Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. WELCH, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. SALMON, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. RUNYAN, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, and Mr. PASCRELL.

H.R. 4524: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 4541: Ms. CHU.

H.R. 4577: Mrs. NOEM.

H.R. 4578: Mr. LEVIN, Ms. LOFGREN, MR. QUIGLEY, Mr. PALLONE, Ms. BROWNLEY of California, and Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 4582: Mr. DINGELL, Mr. HIGGINS, Mr. HUFFMAN, Mr. HECK of Washington, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. DEUTCH, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. SERRANO, and Mr. CARTWRIGHT.

H.R. 4612: Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, and Mr. FRANKS of Arizona.

H.R. 4622: Mr. LOWENTHAL and Mr. CÁRDENAS.

H.R. 4629: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 4630: Mr. CRENSHAW and Mr. RUNYAN.

H.R. 4631: Mr. KENNEDY and Mr. SENSENBRENNER.

H.R. 4646: Mr. THOMPSON of California.

H.R. 4679: Ms. SLAUGHTER.

H.R. 4717: Mr. SCHNEIDER, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. TURNER, and Mr. COFFMAN.

H.R. 4723: Mr. POLIS.

H.R. 4732: Ms. DELBENE, Ms. BONAMICI, Ms. PINGREE of Maine, and Mr. HONDA.

H.R. 4741: Mr. BARROW of Georgia.

H.R. 4743: Mr. WELCH.

H.R. 4749: Mr. ROGERS of Alabama and Mr. YOUNG of Alaska.

H.R. 4756: Mr. HONDA and Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 4783: Mr. COHEN, Mr. FARR, and Ms. SCHWARTZ.

H.R. 4784: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H.R. 4790: Mr. WELCH.

H.R. 4792: Mr. LONG, Mr. ROONEY, and Mr. ROHRABACHER.

H.R. 4805: Mr. STIVERS and Mr. YOUNG of Indiana.

H.R. 4808: Mr. NUNNELEE, Mr. LATTA, Mr. GUTHRIE, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BRADY of Texas, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. BARLETTA, Mr. MARINO, Mr. ROONEY, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. PERRY, and Mr. KING of Iowa.

H.R. 4813: Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. POSEY.

H.R. 4832: Mr. LANGEVIN and Mr. VARGAS.

H.J. Res. 34: Mr. PALLONE.

H. Con. Res. 16: Mrs. BUSTOS and Mr. DEFAZIO.

H. Con. Res. 78: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H. Con. Res. 84: Mr. COHEN.

H. Con. Res. 85: Ms. WILSON of Florida.

H. Res. 416: Ms. ESTY.

H. Res. 538: Mr. LANCE.

H. Res. 562: Mr. MILLER of Florida.

H. Res. 606: Ms. CHU, Ms. WILSON of Florida, and Mr. LEWIS.

H. Res. 607: Mr. OLSON, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. COLLINS of New York, Mr. GRIMM, and Mr. POE of Texas.

AMENDMENTS

Under clause 8 of rule XVIII, proposed amendments were submitted as follows:

H.R. 4800

OFFERED BY: MS. FUDGE

AMENDMENT NO. 9: At the end of the bill, before the short title, insert the following:

SEC. ____. For the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out section 243 of the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 6951 et seq.) relating to the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, as authorized by the amendment made by section 4206 of Public Law 113–79 (128 Stat. 824), there is hereby appropriated, and the aggregate amount otherwise provided by this Act for ''AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS—Production, Processing, and Marketing—Office of the Secretary'' is hereby reduced, by $13,000,000.

H.R. 4800

OFFERED BY: MR. KIND

AMENDMENT NO. 10: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following new section:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to provide payments (or to pay the salaries and expenses of personnel to provide payments) to the Brazil Cotton Institute.

H.R. 4800

OFFERED BY: MR. KIND

AMENDMENT NO. 11: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to pay the salaries of any officers or employees of the Department of Agriculture to implement, enforce, or otherwise carry out section 502(c)(1) of the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1502(c)(1)).

H.R. 4800

OFFERED BY MR. GRAYSON

AMENDMENT NO. 12:

Page 19, line 8, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $5,500,000)''.

Page 20, line 10, after the dollar amount, insert ''(decreased by $5,500,000)''.

H.R. 4800

OFFERED BY MR. GOODLATTE

AMENDMENT NO. 13: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following new section:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to construct, fund, install, or operate an ethanol blender pump or to pay the salaries and expenses of personnel of the Department of Agriculture to award a grant for the installation of an ethanol blender pump.

H.R. 4800

OFFERED BY MR. DUNCAN OF TENNESSEE

AMENDMENT NO. 14: Page 26, line 18, after the dollar amount, insert ''(reduced by $10,000,000)''.

Page 82, line 2, after the dollar amount, insert ''(increased by $10,000,000)''.

H.R. 4800

OFFERED BY MR. ELLISON

AMENDMENT NO. 15: At the end of the bill (before the short title), insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available in this Act may be used to enter into a contract with any person whose disclosures of a proceeding with a disposition listed in section 2313(c)(1) of title 41, United States Code, in the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System include the term ''Fair Labor Standards Act.''.

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PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

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Senate

The Senate met at 9:15 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Immortal and invisible God only wise, we cannot escape You, nor do we desire to do so. This morning we thank You for sending the rain from Heaven, watering the Earth and making it bud and flourish. Thank You for providing seeds for the sower and a harvest for the laborers.

Lord, thank You as well for our lawmakers. As they serve You today on Capitol Hill, give them courage, power, and wisdom. May You bless and keep them from stumbling or slipping, so that one day they will stand in Your presence with great joy. Today, Lord, lift the light of Your countenance upon them and give them Your peace.

We pray in Your powerful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

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

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 11, 2014.

To the Senate:

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

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, if any, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2432, the college affordability bill.

The time until 10 a.m. this morning will be divided as follows—and there is an order outstanding that dictates this: Senator ALEXANDER will control 15 minutes, and the remaining time will be equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees.

At 10 a.m. there will be a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the college affordability bill.

VETERANS AFFAIRS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, all over America today there are newspaper articles of hope—for example, in the Washington Post today, ''Veterans Affairs bills progressing quickly in Congress.'' It quotes me as saying it is something that needs to be done. ''It's urgent that we get this done to resolve some of the outstanding issues within the VA.''

My friend the Republican leader, the senior Senator from Kentucky, ''predicted that GOP senators will overwhelmingly support the bill.''

This is what the article says about Mr. MILLER from Florida, the House chairman:

Miller signaled support for the Sanders-McCain bill, noting that it largely mirrors a series of similar stand-alone proposals the House approved in recent months.

Each side has run what are called hotlines—meaning permission from Senators to move forward on this legislation—and we have been able to do that. It was my understanding late last evening that the junior Senator from Oklahoma has an amendment he feels should be offered. Fine. Let's bring that up, vote on it, and move on.

This is a bill that needs to get done. Not only are the veterans elated to hear language like what I have just read but also people all over America because we support the veterans community.

We have issues that are so deep and complex that we need to get to. Will this solve all the issues? Of course not. But because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we have 2 million new veterans who have a multitude of problems we have never had in other wars. So I certainly hope we can quickly arrange an opportunity to move forward on this legislation. I stand ready to work with my Democratic allies here and those in the minority to do everything we can to move forward on this legislation as quickly as possible.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

BANK ON STUDENT EMERGENCY LOAN REFINANCING ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2432, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 409, S. 2432, a bill to amend the

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

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Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senator from Tennessee, Mr. ALEXANDER, will control 15 minutes, and the remaining time until 10 a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Who yields time? If no one yields time, then the time will be charged equally to both sides.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, could the Chair please let me know when I have 3 minutes remaining on my time.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Chair will do so.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I heard the majority leader's comments about the importance of moving on to the veterans bill, so I have a suggestion: Why don't we send this political stunt on student loans to the Senate education committee, where the Senator from Iowa, Mr. HARKIN, and I are busy working in a bipartisan way to reauthorize higher education, and let's move on to the veterans bill immediately. Why should the Senate take a week on a political stunt that everybody here knows won't pass when veterans are standing in line at clinics, waiting for us to act on a bipartisan solution to their problems?

It actually goes further in giving veterans more choices in health care than anything Congress has ever done. It actually begins to give veterans more choice in health care in the same way Congress gave them choices in higher education with the passage of the GI bill for veterans in 1944. Back then, Congress said to the veterans: Here is the money. Go choose your college.

Moving to and passing the veterans bill, Congress would be saying: If you have to stand in line too long or if you live too far away from a veterans facility, here is the money—go choose your medical care.

That is a very important step for millions of veterans. It deals directly with the problems all Senators on both sides of the aisle are chagrined about—veterans standing in line waiting for health care.

So I have one question: Why should the Senate spend a week on a political stunt? Why should we go all the way to next Monday before disposing of it? Let's dispose of it today. Let's send it to the committee that is already considering these issues, and let's move on to the veterans bill before noon. We could do that, and the veterans and the people of this country would respect us for it.

I thought we had stopped the political stunts on student loans last year when the President, to his credit, worked with the Republican House and a bipartisan group in the Senate, and came to a result—a big result. It affects $100 billion of loans every year.

Half the students in America have a grant or loan to help pay for college. Congress stopped this type of political stunt last year. Instead of every election year where someone comes forward offering some preposterous proposal about what we can do in the hope that students might vote for them—Congress stopped that by saying: Let's put a market-based pricing system on new student loans. The effect of that was to stop semi-annual political stunts, while lowering the interest rate on loans for undergraduates nearly in half. Undergraduate students are 85 percent of the students receiving federal loans. So a 19-year-old student can get a loan to go to college at 3.86 percent without any credit rating and in some cases can get a grant of up to $5,645 to go to college. Congress did that last year.

This year the Senate education committee has held 10 bipartisan hearings on higher education. This is a committee that knows how to work. Senator HARKIN, the Senator from Iowa, and I have big ideological differences in our committee, but that doesn't stop us from working, from doing our job. We passed 19 bills out of our committee, and 10 of them have gone through the Senate and became law. No other committee in the Senate can say that. Right now we are working on this very subject of the political stunt.

So why not stop the political stunt and put this where it belongs—back in the committee that is already working on it in a bipartisan way. Let's focus on the veterans who are standing in line and do what the majority leader said, which is let's deal with that issue.

Why do I say this student loan idea is not a serious proposal? It is not out of lack of respect to the sponsor. Of course I have great respect for her and for other Senators who are offering this proposal. But let me outline why I say this is not a serious proposal. And everybody in the Senate knows that. They know it is not going to pass. So why would the Senate waste time on it?

No. 1, it does nothing—not one thing—for current or future students. For students who are in college today or will be tomorrow, this does nothing for them. So don't let the rhetoric fool you.

No. 2, what does it do for people who used to be in college paying off a student loan? According to data supplied by the Congressional Research Service: It will give them $1 a day. For the typical former student who has old loans, this bill will give them a taxpayer subsidy of $1 a day to help pay their student loans.

How big is that loan? For undergraduates—which are 85 percent of all students with loans—it is $21,600. For graduates with a 4-year degree, it is $27,000. So $27,000—probably the best investment a person will ever make. The College Board says that if you have a 4-year degree, your lifetime earnings will be $1 million more. So $27,000 for a student with no credit rating and has a right to borrow that earns you $1 million? I think that is a pretty good deal. In fact, this $27,000, is about the exact amount of the average car loan.

So what are we going to do next week? Instead of dealing with lines of veterans at clinics, is somebody going to come on the floor and say: Well, people have a $27,000 car loan, so let's raise taxes and raise the debt and give them $1 a day to pay off their car loan or the mortgage loan or the credit card.

This is not a serious proposal. It is not going to help people. College graduates don't need a dollar-a-day tax subsidy to pay off their loan. They need a job. They need a job, and right now they are experiencing the worst situation for finding a job that they have seen in a long time.

Now Republicans have plans that would help create more jobs. We would like to do what the President said, which was give the President more trade authority so companies in the nation can sell more things in Europe and Asia, but, no, we cannot bring that up. We would like to approve the Keystone Pipeline, but, no, we cannot bring that up. We would like to repeal ObamaCare and particularly the parts that make it harder to create jobs, but, no, we don't want to talk about that. We would like to at least change the provision about part-time jobs from 30 to 40 hours which affects millions of American workers, but, no, we cannot bring that up either.

If the Senate wants to talk about students paying back loans, they don't need a dollar a day, they need a job. But my point is why should the Senate waste a week on this bill when veterans are standing in line waiting for us to take up and deal with a bipartisan proposal that the majority leader just described? What else is wrong with this student loan proposal? It could add up to $420 billion to the Federal debt. It does bring the money with it to eventually pay it off, we hope, but it adds to the debt. The Congressional Budget Office says national debt is rising at such a rate that interest payments will go from around $200 billion up to around $800 billion in 10 years. Taxpayers will be spending more on interest in 10 years than on national defense. It increases individual income taxes $72 billion with what I call a class warfare tax. That tax has been rejected eight times by the United States Senate, seven times on a motion to proceed.

There already is a way to lower your payments if you are a student with a loan and your monthly payments are too high. It is in the law. The President talked about it this week. It is called the income based repayment plan. It could lower monthly payments $60 more a month than the Democrat proposal if you are a typical undergraduate and $300 more a month if you are a typical graduate student. Former students can do that today. That is a bigger savings on monthly payments than in the proposal we are debating.

In addition to that, if this proposal were to pass the Senate. It could not be

sent to the House. It is unconstitutional. We cannot originate a tax in the Senate, according to the Constitution. So why would the Senate pass this if it cannot be sent to the House? Next, it violates the Budget Control Act. We passed a law that said we couldn't spend any more than X. This measure violates that act.

So if it gives a dollar a day to pay off a $27,000 loan at a time when a college degree will earn people more than $1 million, if the loans for undergraduates are about the same as a car loan, if it raises the debt by $420 billion, if it raises taxes by $72 billion, if there already is a way in the law to lower monthly payments more than this proposal without raising taxes, without raising the debt, without passing the law that is unconstitutional—so even if it did pass, it cannot be sent to the House—if it violates the Budget Control Act, why would the Senate waste time on it when veterans are standing in line waiting for a bipartisan proposal to give them more choices for medical care? Why would we do that?

Right behind the veterans bill are Senator MIKULSKI from Maryland and Senator SHELBY from Alabama with a series of appropriations bills that have bipartisan support. They have been through committee too. We haven't passed appropriations bills in the last 4 years—two of those years we passed zero, one of those years we passed one. They are ready to do the job on both sides of the aisle.

Why would we spend time on this if it doesn't deal with the real issue? Students with loans don't need a dollar a day to pay off the loan. They need a job. We have proposals for jobs. The real problems with student loans are complexities and overborrowing. Ninety percent of the loans we read about in the paper that are over $100,000 are loans held by graduate students. But these are only 2 percent of the loans for all students.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. May I inform the Senator from Tennessee he has 3 minutes remaining.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Chair. I will reserve 1 minute and I will do it in this way:

Vote no. A ''no'' vote means no to a week-long political stunt, no to debt and taxes, and yes to moving today to a bipartisan solution to the problem of veterans standing in line at clinics; yes to appropriations bills that deal with cancer research and national defense and the other urgent needs of our country, also in a bipartisan way; yes to the way the Senate ought to run. It would mean no to the practice of pulling a bill out of your pocket, putting it on the floor, and wasting 1 week with a political stunt while veterans are standing in line at a clinic waiting for us to act.

So I would suggest the right thing to do is to vote no, send the bill and the discussion about student loans to the education committee. We can work with the President on a solution just like last year, and let's move on to dealing with a bipartisan solution to veterans who are standing in line waiting for the Senate to act.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. The senior Senator from Tennessee has summed it up quite accurately. I have been calling on the majority leader to press pause on his party's nonstop campaign so we can take up bipartisan legislation for a change, because there is a real crisis in the country. It is a scandal that demands the Senate's full attention.

According to the Obama administration's own internal audit, its veterans scandal has now spread to more than three-quarters—three-quarters—of the VA facilities that were surveyed. Nearly 100,000 veterans continue to wait for care at VA centers and many of our veterans have been forced to wait 3 months or longer. Eighteen veterans have already died in Phoenix alone waiting for care that never came. This is a national disgrace.

The President needs to nominate a capable leader and manager who possesses the skills, leadership ability, and determination to correct the failings of the VA, support thousands of VA workers who are committed to serving our veterans, and provide all of those who have served bravely with the timely care they have earned. He also needs to use the tools he already has to address the systemic failures of management in his administration, and he needs to use the new tools we can provide him with the legislation as well. We in this body have a responsibility to act and to do so with a sense of urgency.

Yesterday the House passed bipartisan legislation unanimously—unanimously—to help deal with this crisis. It is similar to the bipartisan Sanders-McCain bill right here in the Senate. It would increase patient choice, it would introduce some much needed accountability into the VA system, and it is past time to take up that kind of legislation in the Senate. Veterans have been made to wait long enough. Senate Democrats shouldn't be keeping them in the waiting room even longer.

I know the majority leader and his Democratic colleagues would rather stick to their campaign playbook. We know they would rather talk about a bill they claim is about student loans, but the Senate Democrats' bill isn't about students at all. It is all about Senate Democrats because Senate Democrats don't actually want a solution for their students, they want an issue to campaign on to save their own hides this November.

Recall that around this same time last year Republicans had to swoop in with a bipartisan piece of legislation to save students from a rate increase after Senate Democrats blew past the deadline, and Senator ALEXANDER was right in the middle of that incredible and effective solution. Now Senate Democrats are pushing yet another—yet another—student loan bill, one they actually hope will fail.

I think Senate Democrats are in for a surprise. Americans are not going to fall for this spin because students can understand this bill will not make college more affordable, they understand it will not reduce the amount of money they have to borrow, and students know it will not do a thing—not a thing—to fix the economy that is depriving so many young Americans of the jobs they seek.

Of course Senate Democrats understand all of these things too. Here is what the majority leader's lieutenant, the senior Senator from New York, said when he was asked a couple of years ago about student loans. He said that if Democrats had wanted to be ''political about this'' issue, they ''would have paid for it with'' the very same gimmick being used to pay for the bill before us today.

I give the Senator from New York points for honesty. His words show without equivocation that Senate Democrats are now playing politics with the futures of young Americans instead of doing something about the VA crisis.

So let's just accept the Senator's admission that his party's bill is truly about helping Democrats, not students, and let's move on to fixing the VA scandal instead. The time is now to turn away from designed-to-fail politicking and toward actual bipartisan solutions. Our constituents demand it and our veterans deserve it.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Minnesota.

Mr. FRANKEN. Thank you very much. We can do both the Sanders-McCain bill, the veterans bill, and we can do this, and there is a need for this.

I was proud to join Senator WARREN of Massachusetts in presenting the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. I come from a State where we have the distinction of being fourth in the Nation in terms of level of debt that our students have when they graduate from college, over $30,000. Then we see people who come to graduate school with a lot more.

I do college roundtables all the time. Kids are working 20, 30, 40 hours a week while going to school. I have kids telling me they are giving blood while they are in school. We need to address this. This is only a part of what we need to do when talking about the costs of college, but why is it possible to refinance a home loan in this country, people are able to refinance their car loans, they are able to refinance a business loan, but they cannot refinance their student debt? That makes no sense.

This has become a macroeconomic issue. Economists agree that because of the level of student debt—and if someone is paying 10 percent interest on it, it makes a huge difference—they are

not able to save enough to put a downpayment on a house or they are not able to buy a car, they are not able to move out of their parents' house. This would help 550,000 Minnesotans—550,000 Minnesotans. That is 1 out of every 10 Minnesotans.

What pays for it is saying that people who make over $1 million a year would pay in income taxes what people making $60,000 a year pay. This is about fairness. We all know that in the last number of decades, and especially in the last number of years, virtually all new income has flowed to those at the top. The top 40 hedge fund managers make as much as 300,000 teachers. Why shouldn't they pay 30 percent on their income? Why not benefit the millions of Americans who have student debt and let them refinance their debt as we can with home loans, car loans, business loans?

It just seems that this is a matter of fairness, and it is smart economics because economists agree that the $1.2 trillion in student debt has hurt this economy. It seems to make common sense.

This is not political. It is not political if the other side votes for it. If the other side votes for it, then we can help millions and millions of Americans refinance debt just like other Americans can refinance their credit card debt or home debt. This makes too much sense, and it should not be political. It should be bipartisan.

We should get to this, and then move on to the Sanders-McCain bill, which I cosponsored. I want to get on that. I want to be able to get on a lot of legislation. In this Congress we have sometimes seen—and in the last several Congresses—the minority do what it can to slow down the process and gum up the works here. I would love to get to the veterans bill immediately after passing this.

I thank the Presiding Officer and suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Massachusetts.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act, which is currently pending before the Senate. This legislation would reduce student loan debt for millions of Americans and provide relief for those who are struggling to keep up with their payments.

Student loan debt is exploding, and it threatens the stability of our young people and the future of our economy. The debt now totals $1.2 trillion and it is growing bigger every single day. In 8 years the average student loan balance increased by 70 percent, and now 7 out of every 10 college seniors are dealing with student loan debt.

This debt is crushing our young people and dragging down our economy by keeping borrowers from being able to buy homes, cars, and open small businesses. It is keeping them from making the purchases that get their economic lives started and help our economy grow.

We must act now to provide relief for existing borrowers, and the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act will do exactly that. The legislation is straightforward. It allows existing borrowers to reduce their debt by refinancing their high-interest loans to much lower—and much more manageable—levels.

Depending on when they took out their student loans, millions of Americans are stuck in loans at 6 percent, 8 percent, 10 percent, and even higher. While interest rates are low, we propose to refinance those loans so that the old debt is at the same rates currently being offered to new student loan borrowers. These new rates are exactly the same rates that nearly every Republican in the House and Senate voted for just last summer as the fair rate for new student loans issued in 2013 through 2014—3.6 percent for undergraduate loans and a little higher for graduate and parent loans. These new rates are still higher than what it costs the government to run its student loan program. But if these lower rates are good enough for new borrowers, they should be good enough for older borrowers too.

Later today Senators will have a choice. They can move forward and debate this bill or they can filibuster it and prevent any consideration of this refinancing plan. Some Republicans have pointed out that the legislation doesn't solve every problem that we have in higher education. Well, that is true; refinancing will not fix everything that is broken in our higher education system.

We need to bring down the cost of college, and we need more accountability for how schools spend their Federal dollars. Senator REID, Senator DURBIN, and I have a bill to do just that, and we welcome our Republican friends to join us on that bill. But we have another problem right now—student loan debt. Refinancing that debt is a straightforward way to ease that problem right now. We should do it right now. If Senators want to do more, they should offer amendments to that bill, but they should not block it from being considered.

Some Republicans have expressed concern about the effect of student loan refinancing on the deficit. In fact, the bill is fully paid for and—according to official estimates from the Congressional Budget Office—it actually reduces the deficit, and that is because it is funded by stitching up the loophole in our Tax Code that allows some millionaires to pay lower tax rates than middle-class families. Investing in students and asking billionaires to pay their taxes seems pretty fair to me. If Senators want to pay for this in a different way, they should offer amendments to this bill, but they should not block it from being considered.

Finally, some have argued that the financial benefit for our young people here is small. If Republicans would like to lower the interest rates even more, then count me in. That is what I would like to do. But let's be clear: 40 million borrowers in this country have student loan debt—40 million—and many of those individuals could save hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year under this proposal. That is real money back in the pockets of people who invested in their education. If Senators want to change those rates, they should offer amendments to the bill, but they should not block it from being considered.

This should not be a partisan issue. Locking old borrowers into high interest rates just doesn't make any sense. The Federal Government should offer refinancing just like any other lender.

This is not only about economics, it is also about our values. These young people saddled with student loan debt didn't go to the mall and run up charges on a credit card. They worked hard and learned new skills that will benefit this country and help us build a stronger America. They deserve a fair shot at an affordable education.

Unfortunately, people struggling with student loans don't have the money to hire armies of lobbyists to argue their case on Capitol Hill, they don't have a super PAC, and they can't fund super secret political machines. But they have their voices, and they are making themselves heard. Over 700,000 people have signed petitions urging Congress to refinance student loans. Dozens of organizations have endorsed the bill—including student groups, colleges, and mortgage bankers.

Senators have a choice to make today. They can move forward and debate this bill, they can acknowledge that the debt is crushing our families and do what we were sent here to do—address an economic emergency that threatens the financial futures of Americans and the stability of our economy—or they can block this bill from being considered. They can refuse even to debate this idea in order to protect tax loopholes for millionaires and billionaires. That is it—billionaires or students, people who have already made it big or people who are working to build their futures.

With this vote, we show the American people whom we work for in the Senate—billionaires or students. A vote on this legislation is a vote to give millions of young people a fair shot at building their future. Forty million students and their families are counting on us.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, how much time do we have remaining?

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator has 2 minutes remaining.

Mr. ALEXANDER. The question before the Senate is, Shall we spend the next week on a political stunt that gives some students $1 a day to pay off a student loan or shall we move to a bipartisan solution for veterans who are lined up at clinics and hospitals across the country in a way that shocks Senators on both sides of the aisle? That is the issue.

The proposal before the Senate is not a serious proposal. There is nothing in it for current or future students. It is a $1 a day subsidy to pay off a $27,000 loan. What are we going to do next week—raise taxes and raise the debt to pay off a $27,000 car loan, which is similar to the average loan debt of a graduate with a 4-year degree?

In addition, this could not even be sent to the House if it passed because it is unconstitutional. You can't start a tax in the Senate, and this has a big tax in it.

The way we deal with these issues is the way we did it last year. We worked with the President in a bipartisan way and reduced rates for students.

What we need to do today is vote no—no to the political stunt, and move immediately to the deal to help veterans standing in line at clinics and hospitals across the country.

I urge the Senate to send this to the committee that is already working on it in a bipartisan way, and let's move to help the veterans in a bipartisan way.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

CLOTURE MOTION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 409, S. 2432, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans.

Harry Reid, Ron Wyden, Elizabeth Warren, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Barbara Boxer, Jeanne Shaheen, Patty Murray, Richard J. Durbin, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Bill Nelson, Robert Menendez, Tammy Baldwin.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to Calendar No. 409, S. 2432, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) is necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) would have voted ''nay.''

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 56, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 185 Leg.]

YEAS—56

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

NAYS—38

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hatch	Reid
Boozman	Heller	Risch
Burr	Hoeven	Roberts
Chambliss	Inhofe	Rubio
Coats	Isakson	Sessions
Coburn	Johanns	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Crapo	Kirk	Toomey
Cruz	Lee	Vitter
Enzi	McCain	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—6

Ayotte	Graham	Moran
Cochran	McCaskill	Scott

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. On this vote the yeas are 56, the nays are 38.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on S. 2432.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The motion is entered.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I see no one seeking the floor at this time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The bill 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 (Ms. HEITKAMP). Without objection, it is so ordered.

AUTHORIZING USE OF THE ROTUNDA

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Con. Res. 37.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Con. Res. 37) authorizing the use of the rotunda of the United States Capitol in commemoration of the Shimon Peres Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the 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 resolution (S. Con. Res. 37) was agreed to.

(The resolution is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

Mr. REID. Madam President, this is a request to use the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol to give to Shimon Peres the Congressional Gold Medal. He is really a fine human being. I feel so fortunate to have had conversations with him over the years. I have such respect for this man who has been a leader in Israel for decade after decade. This is a man who always stood for peace, a man who has been so futuristic about what should be done in that part of the world. I look forward to this ceremony that will take place. He is now 90 years old. This is just my estimation: Very few people in the world have dedicated such valiant service to their country as this man has to the State of Israel.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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. I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor today to talk about some of the side effects we have been seeing from the health care law.

When President Obama and Democrats in Congress were selling their health care law, they made a lot of promises. One of the big ones was that the health care law would save money. They said it was going to save money because people would be going to see physicians in offices for routine care instead of going to the emergency room.

President Obama said:

If everybody's got coverage, then they're not going to the emergency room for treatment.

Well, just like promises about keeping your doctor if you like your doctor or keeping your insurance if you like your insurance—promises the President made—it turns out the President's claims about emergency room care weren't true either. That is what the Louisville Courier Journal says they have seen in the State of Kentucky. This was the headline on Monday, just a couple days ago: ''More patients flocking to ERs under ObamaCare.'' That is not what the President said, but that was the headline.

The article says:

It wasn't supposed to work this way, but since the Affordable Care Act took effect in January, Norton Hospital has seen its packed emergency room become even more crowded, with about 100 more patients a month.

That is a 12-percent spike in the number of patients at the emergency room of that hospital in Louisville. As the article said, it wasn't supposed to happen that way, and that is why I come to the floor to talk about the side effects of the President's health care law.

There are many side effects. They are harmful. They are expensive. Some are irreversible. But they are all related to promises made to the American people by a President who I don't believe fully understands his law. And I know there are many people in this body who voted for it who, I understand, never read it in the first place. Those are the concerns I have. Those are the concerns I hear at home in Wyoming every week, and I heard them this past weekend all around the Cowboy State.

For the President, this emergency room situation may be just another surprising side effect of the health care law. And they are not seeing this just in Kentucky. According to a survey by the American College of Emergency Physicians, it is happening all across the country. Their survey found that 58 percent of emergency room doctors say they are seeing more patients since the beginning of the year. A doctor in Virginia told the Wall Street Journal that the health care law ''is going to stretch emergency doctors further, and that has implications on how quickly we can get people through.'' When the emergency rooms have more patients, it involves longer wait times for those patients.

It seems the Democrats who voted for this health care law—many without reading it—were so focused on getting people insurance coverage that they came up with a system that actually makes it harder for people to get care. It was interesting listening to the President continuing to give speeches about coverage and ignoring the fact that people were worried about actually getting health care.

That is a very dangerous side effect, but it is not the only side effect of the law. There are also incredibly expensive side effects of the health care law.

There is an expensive side effect that a lot of people are starting to hear more about as States release information on insurance premiums for next year.

Late last Friday the State of Maryland released their rates. We could tell it was going to be bad news for people in Maryland because they snuck the numbers out late Friday afternoon. It seems that is what happens when bad news comes out—they get it out late Friday afternoon. According to the Washington Post, the biggest insurance company in Maryland is CareFirst. This was in the Washington Post Metro section on Saturday, June 7: ''CareFirst seeks hefty premium increases.''

The article says:

Maryland's dominant insurance company, CareFirst, is proposing hefty premium increases of 23 to 30 percent for consumers buying individual plans next year under the federal health care law.

The President of the United States said the health care law was going to save families $2,500 a year by the end of his first term. But what we are seeing here—Metro section, Washington Post, Saturday: ''CareFirst seeks hefty premium increases.''

Maryland's dominant insurance company, CareFirst, is proposing hefty premium increases of 23 to 30 percent for consumers buying individual plans next year under the federal health care law.

That is a very costly side effect of the health care law.

Remember, the health exchange—where people are supposed to buy this insurance in Maryland—was so broken that they had to start over again. State officials spent $118 million to set up their own exchange. Now they are going to use software from Connecticut's exchange. Nobody got care for that money. That is wasted taxpayer dollars. Nobody got care.

Connecticut may have gotten the software right, but people there are going to have to pay more for insurance too. The Washington Post says that two insurance carriers in Connecticut have proposed rate increases averaging about 12 percent. That is the average. Some people will have smaller increases, but many people will pay much more.

President Obama said Democrats in Congress should forcefully defend the law and be proud of it. That is what he said they should do—forcefully defend and be proud. Are there any Democrats who are ready to come down to the floor and forcefully defend these dangerous side effects of more people going to the emergency room, stretching overworked emergency room doctors even thinner, making for longer wait times in emergency rooms? Are Democrats going to come to the floor and forcefully defend and be proud of the law when they see expensive side effects such as the hefty premium increases in Maryland of 23 to 30 percent, 12 percent in Connecticut?

It didn't have to be this way. Republicans offered ways to reform America's health care system back when we were debating the law, but President Obama and Democrats in Congress didn't want to hear it. We warned about some of these brutal side effects of the health care law that were going to hurt people, and we talked about bipartisan ideas that could have helped to maintain the access people had for the doctor they liked. That is what people want. They want the doctor they liked, and at the same time they want care to be more affordable. They want access to care, quality care, affordable care, not empty coverage, expensive coverage, which is what the President has provided.

We are going to keep talking about measures that would expand access to health savings accounts to save money for families as well as for employers. I talked about that when some of us met with the President in 2010. The President didn't want to listen. It is too bad, but it is not too late.

The Republicans are going to keep talking about letting consumers buy health insurance across State lines to increase competition, to let them shop for options they actually need, want, and will work for their family. That could actually help bring down prices, not drive them up as the Democrats' health care laws do. These are ideas Republicans have offered from the beginning, ways to give the American people care they need, from a doctor they choose, at lower costs. That is all people wanted in the beginning. Instead they got these harmful, hurtful, expensive side effects.

We know what the American people have asked for. We know what they wanted, and that is what Republicans are going to continue to try to give them, not the empty promises from President Obama and Democrats who told the American people that the President and Democrats knew better what they needed or wanted than what the American people knew worked best for them and their families.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I wish to say a few words as to where we are right now and my strong hope that we can move forward as rapidly as we can—hopefully today—in addressing some of the very serious problems that exist within the Veterans' Administration.

What I have learned since I have been chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for the last year and a half is that the cost of war does not end when the last shots are fired and the last missiles are launched. The cost of war continues until the last veteran receives the care and the benefits he or she is entitled to and has earned on the battlefield. The cost of war is in fact extremely expensive in terms of human life and financially. That is something every American should know.

It is very easy to vote to send people to war, but we have to understand what the costs of those wars are in terms of

what happens to people who come home from them and in some cases do not come home. The cost of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is almost 7,000 dead. The cost of war from Iraq and Afghanistan alone is some 200,000 men and women coming home with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury. The cost of war is too many young men and women coming home without their legs or their arms or their hearing or their eyesight. The cost of war is manifested by tragic suicides that are taking place all across this country. The cost of war is veterans coming home and finding it difficult to get reintegrated into their communities and get jobs and get their feet on the ground financially. The cost of war is high divorce rates and the impact that has on children. The cost of war is widows suddenly having to begin their lives anew. Those are some of the real costs of war.

Last week Senator MCCAIN and I hammered together a proposal to deal with the immediate crisis facing the VA. I thank him very much for coming forward, for working with me, and for understanding the need for us to move forward expeditiously. There are serious problems at the VA now and they must be addressed now—not next week, not next month but now.

I thank the 27 bipartisan cosponsors who have agreed to sign on to this bill. There are 21 Democrats and 6 Republicans, and I think in fact the support is broader than that. I thank Senators BEGICH, BLUMENTHAL, BOOKER, BURR, CASEY, COLLINS, COONS, HAGAN, HIRONO, ISAKSON, JOHANNS, KAINE, MANCHIN, MCCAIN, MERKLEY, MURPHY, PRYOR, RUBIO, SCHATZ, UDALL, WALSH, and WHITEHOUSE for cosponsoring this legislation.

Clearly, the bill Senator MCCAIN and I introduced, which now has 27 cosponsors from both parties, is not the bill he would have written alone, and it certainly is not the bill I would have written alone. It is a compromise. What this bill does is address the immediate crisis facing the VA of veterans having to wait too long a period of time—long waiting lists—in order to get the quality care they need in a timely manner.

What our veterans deserve is to be able to get into the system in a timely manner and get quality care. What this legislation does is move us forward strongly in that direction. Let me very briefly describe some of the major features in this legislation.

There has been on the drawing boards for many years in some cases the need to build or expand VA medical and research facilities. This bill provides for 26 major medical facility leases in 26 States and Puerto Rico. That is something that is supported in a bipartisan way and has already passed the House in virtually a unanimous vote.

This bill provides for the expedited hiring of VA doctors, nurses, and other health care providers and $500 million targeted to hire those providers with unobligated funds. The simple truth is that no medical program—not in the private sector, not in the VA, not anywhere—can provide quality care in a timely manner if that program does not have an adequate number of doctors, nurses, and other medical providers. It is unclear exactly how many more providers are needed, but there is no question there are many needed. I have heard—I will not swear to this, but I have heard estimates that in Phoenix alone there is a need for up to 500 new providers. While the Phoenix situation may be worse than other parts of the country, there is no doubt in my mind that many hundreds, if not thousands, of doctors and nurses are needed, and we need to expedite the hiring process.

Importantly, what our legislation also does is say to veterans around the country that if they cannot get into a VA facility in a timely manner, they will be able to get the care they need outside of the VA from a private provider in their community. They will be able to go to a federally qualified health center in their community, an Indian Health Service or if there is a Department of Defense military base and they can get care there, they will be able to do that. This gives the veteran himself or herself the opportunity if that person cannot get timely care within the VA to go outside of the VA.

What this bill also does is say to veterans who live 40 miles or more away from a VA facility if they choose—and it is clear there are some veterans that live hundreds of miles away in our rural areas from a VA facility—they will also be able to get care outside of the VA. For those veterans in rural areas this is an important provision.

This legislation also addresses a major crisis that we have seen tragically in recent years within the DOD, within the military, and that is the issue of sexual assault. Far too many women and men have been sexually assaulted, and this legislation provides funding for the VA to provide improved care for those suffering from sexual assault.

This bill also deals with an issue where I believe there is widespread support among Republicans, Democrats, and Independents, and that is the need to address instate tuition for all veterans at public colleges and universities. This legislation also provides that surviving spouses of those who die in the line of duty will be eligible for the post-9/11 GI bill. This bill also establishes commissions to provide help to the VA in terms of improving scheduling capabilities and also their capital planning, two areas clearly where the VA needs to improve.

Lastly, and it is very important, this bill gives the Secretary of the VA the authority to immediately fire incompetent employees and, even worse, those who have falsified or manipulated data in terms of waiting periods or in other instances. So what we say is if somebody has lied, has manipulated data, they are out tomorrow, after the bill is signed, but we also provide a very expedited appeals process in order to allow some due process.

I worry very much about the politicalization of the VA if a Secretary comes in with a new President and says, I am going to get rid of 400 top people and 4 years later another Secretary comes in and says, I am going to get rid of another 400 people. What we want in the VA, which is the largest integrated health care system in America, taking care of 6.5 million veterans—one shouldn't care if those folks are Republicans, Democrats, progressives or conservatives—what we want are competent, able supervisors. I also want to make sure if people get fired that it has nothing to do with the color of their skin or sexual orientation.

So we have an abbreviated appeals process, but within that appeals process somebody can be removed from their position immediately.

The House of Representatives, as you know, passed legislation yesterday which covers a lot of the same ground the Sanders-McCain bill covers, and I applaud the House for moving forward in a very rapid fashion. I am absolutely confident that working with House Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD, we can in fact bridge the differences that exist in the two bills and send to the President legislation he can sign as soon as possible.

Finally, I wish to say a word to the some 300,000 employees who work at the VA. The overwhelming majority of these people are hardworking, honest, serious employees. In fact, many of them are veterans. My experience is that for many of these employees what they do is less of a job than a mission. They understand the sacrifices veterans have made, and they in the vast majority of cases are doing excellent work to support our veterans. Let us never forget that some 230,000 veterans today and tomorrow and the next day are going into the VA for health care and that the vast majority of those people—and that is 6.5 million people a year—are receiving high-quality care.

I have talked to veterans all over the State of Vermont, and what they tell me is that they get very good care. I obviously cannot speak for every veteran, but in Vermont—and I expect in most areas around this country—veterans feel good about the health care they get.

A few weeks ago I held a hearing and asked all of the major veterans organizations point blank about their view on VA health care. What they said—this is not what BERNIE SANDERS said; it is what they said—was that once people get into the system, the care is good. That is not just their view. There are independent studies out there that rate VA health care with private sector care, and oftentimes VA health care comes out better. Right now our job is to address the crisis of long waiting periods and making sure that veterans all

over this country can get the care they need in a timely manner.

In my State of Vermont—according to information that just came out the other day—some 98 percent of veterans get appointments in the system within 30 days. I suspect the numbers are similar in certain other parts of the country, although clearly not in all parts of the country. That is the issue we are addressing right now.

It seems to me that our job now is to defend the veterans of this country who have defended us. It is time to move the Sanders-McCain legislation as quickly as we can—hopefully today. I know the majority leader, Senator REID, feels strongly about this issue. He wants this legislation moved as quickly as possible, as do I, and I believe Senator MCCAIN does as well.

Once we get that legislation passed, I am confident we can set up a quick conference committee and resolve the differences between the House and Senate bills and get a bill to the President as early as next week.

It is one thing to give great speeches on Memorial Day and Veterans Day about how much we love and respect veterans, but it is another for us to act expeditiously and effectively on behalf of veterans. Now is the time for action, and I hope very much we will have virtually unanimous support to move this important legislation forward.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I rise today to discuss a topic of great importance to our country's security, economy, and social fabric, and that is our broken immigration system.

No one can dispute that our system is broken. We do not yet have sufficient resources on our border or in our interior to prevent illegal immigration. And our legal immigration system takes far too long, has far too much bureaucratic redtape, and does not sufficiently serve our economic needs. In the meantime, our broken system has created millions of broken families. Many of these families are separated simply because of immigration status.

All of these problems can be solved by passing immigration reform legislation. Immigration reform will jump-start our economy, reduce our national debt, secure our country, and heal these broken families. The truth is, we have heard excuse after excuse after excuse from House Republicans about why they have not put immigration reform legislation on the floor.

First, it was that the Senate had to act first with broad bipartisan support. Well, that was taken away when the Senate passed bipartisan comprehensive reform legislation with 68 votes—a vote total which is virtually unprecedented for such important legislation.

Then it was that the House could only pass measures under the Hastert rule, which meant that a majority of the Republicans in the House had to support a bill in order to get a vote. This excuse was also taken away when the House showed it could pass other legislation, such as the debt ceiling, Sandy relief, and the Violence Against Women Act, without needing to fulfill the Hastert rule.

Then it was that the House could not pass one bill; it needed to break up the bill into component pieces. They thought this would be a deal killer. We said: Fine, we will work with you on the smaller pieces of immigration reform as long as all of the important pieces are addressed at or around the same time.

Then it was lack of trust of the President. That too was a phony excuse given that the President has deported more individuals than any other President. But even here we said: If that is really your problem, let's pass a bill now and delay implementation until 2017. We will get the President out of this equation so he is not used as an excuse. The House had no answers for that suggestion.

Now we have a new excuse. The excuse is that we supposedly cannot pass immigration reform because ERIC CANTOR lost his primary election. Well, just like all of the other excuses that have proven to be illusory, the idea that they cannot do immigration reform because ERIC CANTOR lost his election is another phony excuse for not passing immigration reform put together by those who willingly and unashamedly hand the leadership gavel on immigration to far-right extremists like STEVE KING.

I want to be very clear about two things today. First, ERIC CANTOR was never the solution on immigration. He was always the problem. Every time I talked to Republican Members, business leaders, growers, and faith leaders about immigration reform in the last several months, I consistently heard that the House leadership wanted to move forward but they did not have CANTOR's support. CANTOR was the chokepoint for immigration reform for these past few months. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, CANTOR's loss makes it easier—not harder—for House leadership to pass immigration reform.

Secondly, the polling is clear. ERIC CANTOR did not lose his primary because of support for immigration reform. It has been widely reported that 72 percent of registered voters in CANTOR's district polled on Tuesday said they either strongly or somewhat support immigration reform that would secure the borders, block employers from hiring those illegally, and allow undocumented residents without criminal backgrounds to gain legal status. And this is the case in one of the most conservative districts in Virginia and the country. The polling is consistent with other recent polling which shows support for immigration reform among a majority of Republicans and a plurality of tea party supporters across the country. Even 70 percent of Republicans in CANTOR's district support reform. Again, to be clear, not even the majority of the farthest right segment of the Republican Party supports deportations and the current broken system. But that is what we still have in place today.

So to repeat, ERIC CANTOR did not lose his primary yesterday because of immigration. He lost it because he had lost touch with the people in his district.

The election shows the Republican Party has two paths it can take on immigration: the Graham path of showing leadership and solving a problem in a mainstream way, which leads to victory, or the Cantor path of trying to play both sides, which is a path to defeat.

The lesson Republicans should take from last night is that embracing and showing leadership on immigration reform is a far better path to victory than running from it, particularly for Republicans who are not tea party members but mainstream conservatives. The example shown by Senator GRAHAM is dispositive. Rather than trying to be all things to all people, he defended immigration reform strongly in his State and was rewarded by the people of South Carolina, the Republicans of South Carolina, which is an extremely Republican and conservative State.

Senator GRAHAM sat with us from day one and crafted an immigration reform bill that he could sell to the mainstream conservatives in South Carolina, and he was rewarded last night by his State for being a man of principle.

One final thing about last night's election. David Brat won by receiving 36,000 votes in a Republican primary in rural Virginia in an election where 65,000 people showed up. The total population of the Cantor district is over 750,000 people, and there are 11 percent more Republicans in the district than Democrats. For some context, in the 2012 election, ERIC CANTOR received 220,000 votes and his Democratic challenger 160,000 votes. The point here is that it would be a monumentally lame excuse for Republicans to say that our Nation's immigration policy should be dictated by the whims of less than 20 percent of the Republican voters in a rural Virginia Republican district.

So the time for excuses is over. The time for action is now. It has been nearly 1 year since the Senate passed bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform legislation that would secure the border, turbo charge America's economic growth, and provide a chance to heal America's broken families who are being separated by our dysfunctional immigration system.

For far too long, Republican House leaders have yielded the leadership gavel on immigration to the xenophobic leaders of the extreme far right of the party such as STEVE KING, who has previously described immigration as a ''slow-motion holocaust.''

The question is whether House leadership will side with the STEVE KINGs and David Brats of the world or if they will side with the opinions of the vast majority of Republican voters and even the vast majority of voters in the Seventh Congressional District in Virginia.

Time is running out. The window is now open for passing immigration reform legislation, and the clock is furiously ticking. We have less than 7 weeks to go to get something passed, and the time is now for Republicans to give us their proposals on fixing the broken system. I say 7 weeks because it is highly unlikely that immigration reform could pass during a Republican Presidential primary season, where the party leaders will have to move to the extreme right to try and capture the Presidential nomination.

Therefore, it is time for the House leadership to declare unequivocally that immigration reform will be placed on the floor for a vote before the August recess. Without this declaration and the pressure to act, we will not be able to get immigration reform drafted and passed during this window.

Make no mistake about it. If the House fails to act during this window—a clear indication that they have no inclination in solving the problem—the President would be more than justified in acting anytime after the summer is over to take whatever changes he feels are necessary to make our immigration system work better for those unfairly burdened by our broken immigration laws.

But administrative relief is not what anyone wants to resort to. Those measures will be far too limited to fix all of the problems that currently plague our broken system. What we need right now is true leadership. Let's work together to get this done. A true leader will say: I will do what is good for my country—and for my party—even if it means that an extreme wing of my party will be unhappy. That is leadership. That is necessary.

We stand ready to work with any of our Republican colleagues who want to achieve solutions in good faith. But for now, I will conclude by saying that immigration reform is both necessary and inevitable. It is necessary because it will secure our country, grow our economy, reduce our deficit, create new jobs, and provide us with the best and the brightest. It is inevitable because the population of voters who believe this is an important issue continues to grow and become more politically active day by day.

So to my Republican friends, the choice is yours: Work with us on immigration reform this year and help the country now or do nothing and watch as immigration reform eventually passes without your support or your input. I hope we can act this year, but we will ultimately act. Let's hope we can finally do what is right before every other option has been tried.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, are we still in morning business?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is considering the motion to proceed to S. 2432, the student loan refinancing bill.

Mr. WARNER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mr. WARNER. I come to the floor disappointed that the Senate did not move to full consideration of the legislation that I know the Presiding Officer and others have worked on to take on the challenge that I believe will be the next great financial crisis our country will face—student debt.

Student debt, which is $1.2 trillion, now exceeds credit card debt, and that has been a PolitiFact out there and now validated. Increasingly, this crushing amount of student debt is slowing economic growth. It is not allowing young workers to go into the marketplace and buy a house or start a business.

While I am disappointed that we were not able to move to full consideration of the legislation that would provide a more comprehensive ability for students to refinance at a lower rate, I would point out that there are a number of other tools we can use.

I know I am going to be joined in a few moments—our paths may not completely cross here—by Senator RUBIO. There are two pieces of legislation around this issue that Senator RUBIO and I are working on together, and I want to speak briefly about both of those.

The first is legislation we have actually been joined by Senator WYDEN on as well called the Know Before You Go Act—a relatively simple concept using data that the U.S. Department of Education already collects. It says we ought to put together in a user-friendly Web site information for every parent and young student before they go off to college—whether it is a 4-year college, a 2-year college, or a community college—so they know, if they attend that university, what their chance of graduation is, how long it will take; if they choose to major in art history, the way my daughter did, what the chances are of getting a job and what that job would actually pay, so that we can make these people—young and not so young—better informed consumers. The cost of higher education—perhaps next to the purchase of a home—is the single largest investment most families will make.

This legislation I have with Senator RUBIO, the Know Before You Go Act—and Senator WYDEN—would say that making these families and parents more informed will add value and make a more-informed consumer. It is simple, very little cost. We already collect this data, but we don't present this data in a format that is easily obtainable by families all across America.

I know Senator RUBIO is going to speak about the second piece of legislation, and I think Senator RUBIO and I share a common background on this issue. I believe we are both first in our generation to have graduated from college. I was able to get through college and law school—being quite a bit older than Senator RUBIO—through direct aid, through work during college and law school, but also through student loans, but I came out of that with only $15,000 in student debt.

My personal story is that after working a bit in politics, I decided I would become an entrepreneur and proceeded to go off and start my own business, which within 6 weeks failed miserably. I then started a second enterprise that lasted a little longer; it lasted 6 months. My third enterprise was in the very early days of cell phones, and it managed to do pretty well, going on to cofound the company that became Nextel.

But as I reflect upon that period, particularly when I was literally living out of my car and sleeping on friends' couches, I am not sure I would have had the courage to try once, twice, or three times if I was looking at the kind of student debt that many—perhaps even some of these young pages here as they go on to college—might face if we don't take on this problem. It is not uncommon now for students—particularly if they complete graduate school—to see $70, $80, $100,000 in debt. The average student in Virginia comes out with about $30,000 in debt. We have to recognize that there should be a variety of tools available to them.

Again, I wish we had proceeded with the full debate on the bill on having the comprehensive ability to refinance.

One other piece of legislation, one other solution set—and I will be coming to the floor on a regular basis because I think there are a variety of ideas we need to lay out—a piece of legislation that Senator RUBIO and I are working on together that we will be introducing is on simplifying into a single form a tool that already exists on student debt in terms of income-based repayment.

Income-based repayment is a pretty simple idea. It says that if you get out of college or get out of graduate school—too many young people now are perhaps forced into careers that

may not have been their initial choice, but because of the crushing amount of debt payments they have to make, they don't have the kind of freedom I had to go out, candidly, and fail a couple of times before I managed to be successful. Income-based repayment says we will graduate the amount of money you will pay back on your student debt based upon the income you make. So if at first you need to take that job that might pay a little lower because there is a chance you can pursue your dream or actually become an entrepreneur, we will allow you to tailor your repayment schedule based upon the income, and as your income goes up, your payments will go up.

Rather than making income-based repayment kind of at the end of the line and very complicated to sort through, we simplify this approach, do it in a way that I believe is financially responsible, and do it in a way that gives that potential entrepreneur—the way I was—the chance to go out and take those risks, and if you are not successful at first—and can't leave out that 90 percent of entrepreneurs are not successful the first time they try a business—to make sure that you can maybe get that second shot, get that fair shot every American ought to have and not allow that student debt to be able to crush your dreams.

Clearly in America in 2014, in a world that is a global economy that is based upon our knowledge skills to stay competitive, you shouldn't go broke in America if you choose to go to college or get a higher education.

I believe these two pieces of legislation I am working on with Senator RUBIO—the Know Before You Go Act, so you are more informed about your options going forward, and this income-based repayment—are two of the possible solutions that could be added to make sure everyone gets the same kind of fair shot that I know the Presiding Officer and my good friend the Senator from Maryland had and that we want to make sure all the future Americans have as well.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Let me thank Senator WARNER for his leadership on this issue.

The bills Senator WARNER is bringing forward will help deal with the incredible burden American families are confronting today in order to get quality education. His story is a story told about the opportunities of America. Education is the great equalizer in this country.

My grandparents came to America for a better life for their children. My parents benefited from education. They are products of the Baltimore City public school system and the public colleges and universities in the State of Maryland. As a result of the educational tools given to them, the grandson of those immigrants now serves in the Senate. That is the story of America. Education is the great equalizer.

That is why we were so disappointed that we couldn't proceed with an important tool to make education more available to families; that is, the bill we just recently voted on to try to at least break the filibuster so that we could help those who currently have student loans.

Education has been the great equalizer in a growing middle class, which has led to the strength of America. It has been key to global competition. We all talk about the fact that other countries are doing a better job in STEM education or catching up to America—in some cases surpassing America. Well, education is a great equalizer.

We should make it easier for families to be able to afford a college education.

The truth is that it is more expensive here than it is in other countries. Yet we expect our country to be able to compete globally.

We are hurting ourselves. It is important for a growing economy, a growing middle class. Trained workers will strengthen America's economy, creating more jobs and more opportunity. So it is in our collective interests, not just that one family who is debating whether they are going to send their child to college or which college because of costs. It is in all of our interests to make it easier for Americans to afford a higher education.

The cost of higher education today is just plain too expensive. It is just too costly. It is the single most important investment a family can make. Yet today college debt is around $1.2 trillion—greater than all of the credit card debt held by American families. Is that putting a priority on education? I don't think so. We can do a much better job.

In Maryland, 776,000 students have Federal student loan debt totaling over $21 million. Over 50 percent of those graduating students are borrowing money in order to attend college, but here is the problem. For too many families it is a decision of whether they are going to college or not going to college—the cost. For too many families it is going to a school of their second, third, or fourth choice rather than the school they want to go to, and they are making that choice not because they couldn't get into the school they wanted but because they can't afford the school they want, their first choice.

The debt they have when they leave college, it is clearly affecting their career choice. We may have a brilliant future researcher or a brilliant future teacher. What is more important than being a teacher? But they choose to go into a different profession because they have student loans, and they choose for immediate pay considerations for their jobs rather than the career they really want because they know it is not fair to their families to continue these large student debts with which they are graduating.

That is the situation we confront. We know the numbers. I will tell you some real stories about real Marylanders.

Last year I visited one of our 4-year colleges and had a roundtable discussion with students. There was a second-year student there. She told me she was going to drop out of school after her second year. This is, by the way, in a very challenged community.

I said to her: I guess you are not doing well. She said: I am a straight-A student. I love the opportunities I am being given here. I love the knowledge I am getting, but I can't do it to my family to incur more debt. I look at my classmates from high school who have graduated and they are making money for their family and here I am a burden to my family by incurring more debt. I can't do it. I don't know where I am going to be 2 years from now, but I know I can't do this to my family. So I have to go out and work. I can't incur more debt.

That is a loss for that student and for our community.

I met another student named Becky last week at one of our Southern Maryland colleges. She told me the story about wanting to become a pediatric dentist. She is brilliant. She is doing great. But Becky is working full time and going to college. She is not going to be able to go to her first choice. She has her first choice, but she is not going to be able to do that because she is working full time and incurring debt in order to go to college. So it is going to take her a lot longer. She is not going to get through undergraduate in 4 years. It is going to take her 5 years or 6 years to get through, and whether she will ever become the pediatric dentist she wants to be, I don't know.

That is what is happening in America today, and millions of others can tell you similar stories of career decisions they have made, giving up the most important investment in their life because of the financial considerations. The bill we have on the floor right now can do something about it.

I would be the first to acknowledge there is a lot we could do to help in this regard, but I thank Senator WARREN for her leadership in bringing forward a bill that will make a difference for millions of students who hold debt. It will make it less costly for them to take out the loans they have taken out. It would affect millions of students.

I think Americans would be upset, disappointed, and outraged to learn the Federal Government is making money off of student loans. The interest rates are higher than what the cost of the student loan is. Taking into consideration defaults, taking into consideration administrative costs, taking into consideration the cost of borrowing, between 2007 and 2012 $66 billion was made off the backs of students who can't afford the loans they currently have.

What Senator WARREN's bill does is allow those who hold student debt to refinance and take advantage of lower interest rates. It is not going to be subsidized loans. There will be no cost to

the taxpayers to do this. This seems like a no-brainer, quite frankly. It would make it easier for them. We let homeowners refinance their mortgages and we passed special legislation to allow that. We allow businesses to refinance their loans to the lowest competitive rate. Why can't students do this? That is what the bill before us does. It lets us move forward at no cost because we are not subsidizing the loans.

Just because of our unusual scoring reasons here, she provides an offset, which I don't think is necessary, but I certainly support the bill, and the offset is certainly one that has millionaires paying their fair share and it makes sense. So this will save thousands of dollars for those who currently holds loans. That is important.

Some say: Don't we need more accountability from higher education? Yes, we do. Don't we need more transparency from higher education? Yes, we do. Don't we need to have better consumer information? Yes. I agree with all of the above, but today we can do something about the interest costs and correct an injustice of government, making money off of student loans, and do this in a way that makes it more affordable for families. We can do something that truly helps. It will provide help to families.

President Obama has acted. I thank him for doing that. Five million families will benefit from his Executive order or clarification which says no more than 10 percent of your income will be used to pay student loans and caps the number of years. That is going to help. He is also doing more to promote awareness of repayment options. That is good, but we in Congress have an opportunity to act and act today.

I hope we get bipartisan support to help middle-income families and to help our country. I urge my colleagues to allow us to get on the bill and to pay to help the middle class of America.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, in a few moments I will yield the floor to my colleagues who will have an announcement about the progress which has been made on the veterans bill, an important issue.

I wish to take this moment to talk about a tale of two bills—a tale of two very critical issues that confront our country, both deserving of the time and attention of the Senate but how they have been treated very differently from one another.

The first issue is one which has been talked about here; that is, the issue of student loans in America. This is an issue I care about deeply for two reasons.

The first is, when I arrived on the floor of the Senate in January of 2011, I owed over $100,000 in student loans. For years we struggled with the cost of those loans. My parents never made enough money to save for our education, but I was able to pay for it through a combination of Pell grants and loans for my undergraduate and graduate studies. The undergraduate-level loans were manageable. The graduate-level loans for law school were quite a strain. At one point in our lives it was the single highest expenditure in our monthly budget. So I know the cost of this.

The other reason is because I have the honor of serving as an adjunct professor at Florida International University, where once or twice a week I interact with young men and women in South Florida who are facing not just the cost of undergraduate education but starting to think about how they are going to pay to go to law school or get a master's degree or any other profession they choose. This is a very significant issue, and there are two aspects of it that we are going to talk about in a moment.

The second issue that is critically important for our country is the well-documented problems of the Veterans' Administration. I don't need to go into a long dissertation about how our men and women who have served us so honorably and so bravely in uniform deserve the very best care possible.

Well documented are the long waiting lists and, even more tragically, efforts among some at the VA to cover up all of this, to cover their tracks and to cover up their incompetence. The vast majority of the men and women who work at the VA work hard and do a good job, but there are too many who do not, and there is not enough accountability with regard to that. As I said a couple of weeks ago when I came to the floor and tried to pass a measure, a companion of the issue that passed in the House: You are more likely to get a promotion or bonus than you are to get demoted or fired for not doing your job at the VA.

Two very important issues: a tale of two bills because they have been handled so differently.

I anticipate in a moment a number of Senators will come to the floor—Senators whom I thank for allowing me to work with them to make this possible—and will have an announcement to make with regard to votes on the veterans bill. That is great news. The men and women who have served us deserve this progress.

There is no claim that this is going to solve every problem in the world, but it is an important first step. I thank Senators MCCAIN, SANDERS, BURR, COBURN, and others for all the work they have done on this issue. We are excited to hear about their announcement in a few moments. If they arrive, I will gladly yield the floor for them to do that at the appropriate moment. I thank them, our men and women who have served us thank them, and the people of Florida thank them. We are a State with an enormous number of veterans.

This is an important issue, and I wish people could have seen the effort and how people worked across party lines to get this done. Everyone has great ideas about things they want to see added to it, about things they would like to see in addition to what has been included, but we all understand a sense of urgency about addressing this issue. We all had ideas we wanted to pursue, but we were all willing to put those aside for another debate and another day in order to get this done.

We need more of that in the Senate, we need more of that in the U.S. Government, and I thank the Senators who have worked so hard to make this happen and my colleague in the House, JEFF MILLER, for the work he has done in terms of bringing this forward as well. He has done a fantastic job.

Compare that to the way this issue on student loans has been handled, however. This is a legitimate issue that needs to be addressed, but the bill that was brought before the Senate included something the proponents knew was deeply political and controversial—the so-called Buffett rule. We have had debate on that issue before. We can have debate in the future.

They knew the simple utilization of that rule as part of this measure—as admitted, by the way, by Members of the majority who have talked about this measure in the past—they knew that by putting that in there, it politicized it and, quite frankly, doomed it to failure.

Let me lift the veil for those who are watching at home or in the gallery or anywhere, watching or listening now or in the future. They knew what the outcome would be when they included that, but it was put in there for the purposes of saying Republicans blocked this because they knew that issue in and of itself served as a sort of poison pill that held this up. It is unfortunate because the issue of student loans is a very valid issue in America.

Look, there was a time not long ago when higher education was an important option for millions of Americans, but, for example, even if someone didn't have a college education, they could still find a middle-income job that allowed them to make it to the middle class.

That is how my parents did it. Neither one of my parents had advanced formal education. Neither one finished the equivalent of high school. Yet we lived in the middle class. We achieved the American dream, because working as a bartender and as a maid, my parents were able to make enough money to achieve that.

The world has changed. Today, if someone doesn't have some form of advanced education, they are going to struggle to find a job that pays enough to keep up with the cost of living, much less to get ahead. This has made

higher education no longer an option. It is now a necessity. This is an issue that needs to be looked at in multiple ways, not simply the loan issue, by the way.

Take, for example, the story of a 41-year-old head of household who has worked their entire life to provide for their family and now has lost their job or their business, the only way they are going to be able to get a job that makes it to the middle class in the 21st century—because the job they used to have has been automated or outsourced or the industry is no longer around. The only way they are going to be able to make it back into the middle class and stay there is to acquire skills and education necessary for 21st century middle-class and above jobs.

But if someone is 41 years old and they have to work full time to provide for their family, and they have to raise that family, they can't just drop everything and go back to college for 4 years, and they probably can't afford it either. So we need to revolutionize what higher education means in America so people living those circumstances can access it in a cost-effective way.

When I worked in the State legislature, I had an employee who was the equivalent of my executive assistant. She made less than $30,000 a year because that is what the State pay grade called for. But she went to school at night and became a paralegal and doubled her pay on the day after her graduation because she was able to acquire advanced skills and a degree that allowed her to improve not just her lifestyle and her quality of life but that of her daughter's as well—a young, single mother struggling to provide and move ahead in life.

The problem is that our existing higher education system is one we had in the 20th century. It is largely designed for a student who graduates from high school and goes to college for 4 years, but it is inaccessible and unaffordable for Americans who are later in their lives, who have to work full time and raise a family, for people who in the middle of a career have found their job outsourced or automated and need to be retrained. That in and of itself calls for higher education to be revolutionized. The second point I would make is there is some innovation in higher education. For example, there are degrees and degree-type programs you can now get online. But you will often find that the cost of those programs is as much and more than a brick and mortar institution would charge. It costs as much and in many instances more to get your degree on line than it would by sitting in a classroom and taking lectures every day. For many people that is not realistic.

So we need to revolutionize what higher education means. The traditional 4-year college will always be an important part of it, but we also have to provide programs that allow people to graduate from high school with skills that allow them to immediately be employed such as more welders and more electricians. There is nothing wrong with that. These are important jobs that we have shortages in, by the way.

We need to create more innovation so that people can acquire learning in the most effective way possible. For example, why can't we allow people to package learning in any way they acquire it, online, work experience, life experience, to be able to package all of your learning and acquire the equivalent of a degree that allows you to go to work?

There are real answers to these problems. I am involved in at least three of them. One is a program called ''Right to Know Before You Go'' that I sponsored with Senator WYDEN. It is a bipartisan proposal. It is very simple. It says that when you go to school before you take out a loan you have to be told: ''This is how much people that graduate from our school with a degree that you are seeking make.'' So you can decide whether it is worth taking out thousands of dollars in loans for a degree that doesn't lead to jobs.

The other proposal is changing the way we accredit higher education in America. Accrediting basically means you have permission to get a college degree. But the institutions who control that process are the existing status quo schools. They will always have an important job in our educational portfolio but they cannot be the only ones anymore. We need to change that so there are alternative programs available that allow you to package learning no matter how you acquire it so that you can get credit for that as well. So the changing of accrediting is a big part of this.

I believe that income-based repayments should be a part of this. There is a more responsible way to do it. Thankfully, Senator WARNER and I are working on such a proposal. I wish issues such as that were debated as a part of this solution, as opposed to simply a political stunt brought to the floor designed to get enough ''no'' votes by Republicans so it can be used in November on the campaign trail.

Student loans—a trillion dollars' worth—are owed by both Republicans and Democrats. We need to get this issue solved if we are going to move forward. On the Veterans' Administration issue—I see a number of Senators have arrived and potentially have an announcement for us—we have made great progress. The bill is important, but the one part I have been working on personally is accountability, giving the Secretary the power to hire and to fire those mid-level bureaucrats that are not doing their job. That is an important measure. I am glad that is included in this. I am glad the Senate will be moving forward on this in a few moments.

It is the tale of two bills. One is an example of how we can get things done to address the real needs in our country, and the other is a missed opportunity to address one of the single greatest impediments to upward mobility and the American dream in the 21st Century—and that is the accessibility and affordability of higher education, because today higher education is no longer just an option. In some way, shape or form acquiring higher education has become a necessity for all Americans, and we need to make that more accessible and more affordable.

It is my hope that in the weeks and months to come we will be able to put aside the desire to turn this issue into a political tool and come together to solve this problem because there is a trillion dollars of student loan debt sitting out there, and there are hundreds of thousands of Americans who desperately need to acquire some sort of higher education and they cannot afford it or they cannot access it or both. They need us to address this issue because this cannot be an issue we do not resolve. The American dream will continue to slip out of reach for millions of people in this new century unless we make the acquisition of higher education more accessible and more affordable to people from all walks of life: the 18-year-old who graduates from high school, the 25-year-old single mother, the 41-year-old father who heads a household, and everyone in between.

This is an enormous challenge for our country but one for which there are solutions. All we need now is a willingness to proceed to do it, and I hope that in the weeks to come, once we pass this moment, we can get back on this issue and solve it in a real and responsible way.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on these issues. I look forward to working to pass the veterans bill hopefully today and to move forward and work together in a serious and meaningful way to make higher education more affordable for every American who needs it in order to achieve their American dream.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. 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.

Mr. REID. Madam President, before I say anything, I really and deeply appreciate the ability of the Democrats and Republicans to work together on an extremely important issue, and I need not editorialize more than that.

MAKING CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS DURING A GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 206, H.R. 3230; that all after

the enacting clause be stricken and the text of S. 2450 be inserted in lieu thereof, which is the Sanders-McCain veterans bill; that there be no other amendments, motions or points of order in order other than a budget point of order against the bill and the applicable motion to waive; that the time until 4 p.m. be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees; that if a budget point of order is made and the applicable motion to waive the point of order is made, then at 4 p.m. today, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to waive; if the motion to waive is agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3230) making continuing appropriations during a government shutdown to provide pay and allowances to members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who perform inactive-duty training during such period.

The amendment is as follows:

H.R. 3230

Resolved, That the bill from the House of Representatives (H.R. 3230) entitled ''An Act making continuing appropriations during a Government shutdown to provide pay and allowances to members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who perform inactive-duty training during such period.'', do pass with the following amendments:

Strike all after the enacting clause, and insert in lieu thereof:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF SCHEDULING SYSTEM FOR HEALTH CARE APPOINTMENTS

Sec. 101. Independent assessment of the scheduling of appointments and other health care management processes of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 102. Technology task force on review of scheduling system and software of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE II—TRAINING AND HIRING OF HEALTH CARE STAFF

Sec. 201. Treatment of staffing shortage and biannual report on staffing of medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 202. Clinic management training for managers and health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 203. Use of unobligated amounts to hire additional health care providers for the Veterans Health Administration.

TITLE III—IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS TO CARE FROM NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVIDERS

Sec. 301. Expanded availability of hospital care and medical services for veterans through the use of contracts.

Sec. 302. Transfer of authority for payments for hospital care, medical services, and other health care from non-Department providers to the Chief Business Office of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department.

Sec. 303. Enhancement of collaboration between Department of Veterans Affairs and Indian Health Service.

Sec. 304. Enhancement of collaboration between Department of Veterans Affairs and Native Hawaiian health care systems.

Sec. 305. Sense of Congress on prompt payment by Department of Veterans Affairs.

TITLE IV—HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

Sec. 401. Improvement of access of veterans to mobile vet centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 402. Commission on construction projects of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 403. Commission on Access to Care.

Sec. 404. Improved performance metrics for health care provided by Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 405. Improved transparency concerning health care provided by Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 406. Information for veterans on the credentials of Department of Veterans Affairs physicians.

Sec. 407. Information in annual budget of the President on hospital care and medical services furnished through expanded use of contracts for such care.

Sec. 408. Prohibition on falsification of data concerning wait times and quality measures at Department of Veterans Affairs.

Sec. 409. Removal of Senior Executive Service employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs for performance.

TITLE V—HEALTH CARE RELATED TO SEXUAL TRAUMA

Sec. 501. Expansion of eligibility for sexual trauma counseling and treatment to veterans on inactive duty training.

Sec. 502. Provision of counseling and treatment for sexual trauma by the Department of Veterans Affairs to members of the Armed Forces.

Sec. 503. Reports on military sexual trauma.

TITLE VI—MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES

Sec. 601. Authorization of major medical facility leases.

Sec. 602. Budgetary treatment of Department of Veterans Affairs major medical facilities leases.

TITLE VII—VETERANS BENEFITS MATTERS

Sec. 701. Expansion of Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship.

Sec. 702. Approval of courses of education provided by public institutions of higher learning for purposes of All-Volunteer Force Educational Assistance Program and Post-9/11 Educational Assistance conditional on in-State tuition rate for veterans.

TITLE VIII—APPROPRIATION AND EMERGENCY DESIGNATIONS

Sec. 801. Appropriation of emergency amounts.

Sec. 802. Emergency designations.

TITLE I—IMPROVEMENT OF SCHEDULING SYSTEM FOR HEALTH CARE APPOINTMENTS

SEC. 101. INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF THE SCHEDULING OF APPOINTMENTS AND OTHER HEALTH CARE MANAGEMENT PROCESSES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT.—

(1) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into a contract with an independent third party to assess the following:

(A) The process at each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs for scheduling appointments for veterans to receive hospital care, medical services, or other health care from the Department.

(B) The staffing level and productivity of each medical facility of the Department, including the following:

(i) The case load of each health care provider of the Department.

(ii) The time spent by each health care provider of the Department on matters other than the case load of such health care provider, including time spent by such health care provider as follows:

(I) At a medical facility that is affiliated with the Department.

(II) Conducting research.

(III) Training or overseeing other health care professionals of the Department.

(C) The organization, processes, and tools used by the Department to support clinical documentation and the subsequent coding of inpatient services.

(D) The purchasing, distribution, and use of pharmaceuticals, medical and surgical supplies, and medical devices by the Department, including the following:

(i) The prices paid for, standardization of, and use by the Department of the following:

(I) High-cost pharmaceuticals.

(II) Medical and surgical supplies.

(III) Medical devices.

(ii) The use by the Department of group purchasing arrangements to purchase pharmaceuticals, medical and surgical supplies, medical devices, and health care related services.

(iii) The strategy used by the Department to distribute pharmaceuticals, medical and surgical supplies, and medical devices to Veterans Integrated Service Networks and medical facilities of the Department.

(E) The performance of the Department in paying amounts owed to third parties and collecting amounts owed to the Department with respect to hospital care, medical services, and other health care, including any recommendations of the independent third party as follows:

(i) To avoid the payment of penalties to vendors.

(ii) To increase the collection of amounts owed to the Department for hospital care, medical services, or other health care provided by the Department for which reimbursement from a third party is authorized.

(iii) To increase the collection of any other amounts owed to the Department.

(2) ELEMENTS OF SCHEDULING ASSESSMENT.—In carrying out the assessment required by paragraph (1)(A), the independent third party shall do the following:

(A) Review all training materials pertaining to scheduling of appointments at each medical facility of the Department.

(B) Assess whether all employees of the Department conducting tasks related to scheduling are properly trained for conducting such tasks.

(C) Assess whether changes in the technology or system used in scheduling appointments are necessary to limit access to the system to only those employees that have been properly trained in conducting such tasks.

(D) Assess whether health care providers of the Department are making changes to their

schedules that hinder the ability of employees conducting such tasks to perform such tasks.

(E) Assess whether the establishment of a centralized call center throughout the Department for scheduling appointments at medical facilities of the Department would improve the process of scheduling such appointments.

(F) Assess whether booking templates for each medical facility or clinic of the Department would improve the process of scheduling such appointments.

(G) Recommend any actions to be taken by the Department to improve the process for scheduling such appointments, including the following:

(i) Changes in training materials provided to employees of the Department with respect to conducting tasks related to scheduling such appointments.

(ii) Changes in monitoring and assessment conducted by the Department of wait times of veterans for such appointments.

(iii) Changes in the system used to schedule such appointments, including changes to improve how the Department—

(I) measures wait times of veterans for such appointments;

(II) monitors the availability of health care providers of the Department; and

(III) provides veterans the ability to schedule such appointments.

(iv) Such other actions as the independent third party considers appropriate.

(3) TIMING.—The independent third party carrying out the assessment required by paragraph (1) shall complete such assessment not later than 180 days after entering into the contract described in such paragraph.

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the independent third party completes the assessment under this section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the results of such assessment.

(2) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 30 days after submitting the report under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall publish such report in the Federal Register and on an Internet website of the Department accessible to the public.

SEC. 102. TECHNOLOGY TASK FORCE ON REVIEW OF SCHEDULING SYSTEM AND SOFTWARE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) TASK FORCE REVIEW.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, through the use of a technology task force, conduct a review of the needs of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to the scheduling system and scheduling software of the Department of Veterans Affairs that is used by the Department to schedule appointments for veterans for hospital care, medical services, and other health care from the Department.

(2) AGREEMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall seek to enter into an agreement with a technology organization or technology organizations to carry out the review required by paragraph (1).

(B) PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.—No Federal funds may be used to assist the technology organization or technology organizations under subparagraph (A) in carrying out the review required by paragraph (1).

(b) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 45 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the technology task force required under subsection (a)(1) shall submit to the Secretary, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth the findings and recommendations of the technology task force regarding the needs of the Department with respect to the scheduling system and scheduling software of the Department described in such subsection.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) Proposals for specific actions to be taken by the Department to improve the scheduling system and scheduling software of the Department described in subsection (a)(1).

(B) A determination as to whether an existing off-the-shelf system would—

(i) meet the needs of the Department to schedule appointments for veterans for hospital care, medical services, and other health care from the Department; and

(ii) improve the access of veterans to such care and services.

(3) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 30 days after the receipt of the report required by paragraph (1), the Secretary shall publish such report in the Federal Register and on an Internet website of the Department accessible to the public.

(c) IMPLEMENTATION OF TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than one year after the receipt of the report required by subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall implement the recommendations set forth in such report that the Secretary considers are feasible, advisable, and cost-effective.

TITLE II—TRAINING AND HIRING OF HEALTH CARE STAFF

SEC. 201. TREATMENT OF STAFFING SHORTAGE AND BIANNUAL REPORT ON STAFFING OF MEDICAL FACILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) STAFFING SHORTAGE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than September 30 each year thereafter, the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs shall determine, and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register, the five occupations of health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs for which there is the largest staffing shortage throughout the Department.

(2) RECRUITMENT AND APPOINTMENT.—Notwithstanding sections 3304 and 3309 through 3318 of title 5, United States Code, the Secretary may, upon a determination by the Inspector General under paragraph (1) that there is a staffing shortage throughout the Department with respect to a particular occupation of health care provider, recruit and directly appoint highly qualified health care providers to serve as health care providers in that particular occupation for the Department.

(3) PRIORITY IN HEALTH PROFESSIONALS EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO CERTAIN PROVIDERS.—Section 7612(b)(5) of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

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

(B) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (C); and

(C) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following new subparagraph (B):

''(B) shall give priority to applicants pursuing a course of education or training towards a career in an occupation for which the Secretary has, in the most current determination published in the Federal Register pursuant to section 201(a)(1) of the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014, determined that there is one of the largest staffing shortages throughout the Department with respect to such occupation; and''.

(b) REPORTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than December 31 of each even numbered year thereafter until 2024, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report assessing the staffing of each medical facility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The results of a system-wide assessment of all medical facilities of the Department to ensure the following:

(i) Appropriate staffing levels for health care providers to meet the goals of the Secretary for timely access to care for veterans.

(ii) Appropriate staffing levels for support personnel, including clerks.

(iii) Appropriate sizes for clinical panels.

(iv) Appropriate numbers of full-time staff, or full-time equivalents, dedicated to direct care of patients.

(v) Appropriate physical plant space to meet the capacity needs of the Department in that area.

(vi) Such other factors as the Secretary considers necessary.

(B) A plan for addressing any issues identified in the assessment described in subparagraph (A), including a timeline for addressing such issues.

(C) A list of the current wait times and workload levels for the following clinics in each medical facility:

(i) Mental health.

(ii) Primary care.

(iii) Gastroenterology.

(iv) Women's health.

(v) Such other clinics as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(D) A description of the results of the most current determination of the Inspector General under paragraph (1) of subsection (a) and a plan to use direct appointment authority under paragraph (2) of such subsection to fill staffing shortages, including recommendations for improving the speed at which the credentialing and privileging process can be conducted.

(E) The current staffing models of the Department for the following clinics, including recommendations for changes to such models:

(i) Mental health.

(ii) Primary care.

(iii) Gastroenterology.

(iv) Women's health.

(v) Such other clinics as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(F) A detailed analysis of succession planning at medical facilities of the Department, including the following:

(i) The number of positions in medical facilities throughout the Department that are not filled by a permanent employee.

(ii) The length of time each position described in clause (i) remained vacant or filled by a temporary or acting employee.

(iii) A description of any barriers to filling the positions described in clause (i).

(iv) A plan for filling any positions that are vacant or filled by a temporary or acting employee for more than 180 days.

(v) A plan for handling emergency circumstances, such as administrative leave or sudden medical leave for senior officials.

(G) The number of health care providers of the Department who have been removed from their positions, have retired, or have left their positions for another reason, disaggregated by provider type, during the two-year period preceding the submittal of the report.

(H) Of the health care providers specified in subparagraph (G) who have been removed from their positions, the following:

(i) The number of such health care providers who were reassigned to other positions in the Department.

(ii) The number of such health care providers who left the Department.

(iii) The number of such health care providers who left the Department and were subsequently rehired by the Department.

SEC. 202. CLINIC MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR MANAGERS AND HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) CLINIC MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall commence a clinic management training program to provide in-person, standardized education on health care management to all managers of, and health care providers at, medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The clinic management training program required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) Training on how to manage the schedules of health care providers of the Department, including the following:

(i) Maintaining such schedules in a manner that allows appointments to be booked at least eight weeks in advance.

(ii) Proper planning procedures for vacation, leave, and graduate medical education training schedules.

(B) Training on the appropriate number of appointments that a health care provider should conduct on a daily basis, based on specialty.

(C) Training on how to determine whether there are enough available appointment slots to manage demand for different appointment types and mechanisms for alerting management of insufficient slots.

(D) Training on how to properly use the appointment scheduling system of the Department, including any new scheduling system implemented by the Department.

(E) Training on how to optimize the use of technology, including the following:

(i) Telemedicine.

(ii) Electronic mail.

(iii) Text messaging.

(iv) Such other technologies as specified by the Secretary.

(F) Training on how to properly use physical plant space at medical facilities of the Department to ensure efficient flow and privacy for patients and staff.

(3) SUNSET.—The clinic management training program required by paragraph (1) shall terminate on the date that is two years after the date on which the Secretary commences such program.

(b) TRAINING MATERIALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—After the termination of the clinic management training program required by subsection (a), the Secretary shall provide training materials on health care management to each of the following employees of the Department upon the commencement of employment of such employee:

(A) Any manager of a medical facility of the Department.

(B) Any health care provider at a medical facility of the Department.

(C) Such other employees of the Department as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(2) UPDATE.—The Secretary shall regularly update the training materials required under paragraph (1).

SEC. 203. USE OF UNOBLIGATED AMOUNTS TO HIRE ADDITIONAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS FOR THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—At the end of each of fiscal years 2014 and 2015, all covered amounts shall be made available to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to hire additional health care providers for the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or to carry out any provision of this Act or the amendments made by this Act, and shall remain available until expended.

(b) PRIORITY IN HIRING.—The Secretary shall prioritize hiring additional health care providers under subsection (a) at medical facilities of the Department and in geographic areas in which the Secretary identifies the greatest shortage of health care providers.

(c) COVERED AMOUNTS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered amounts'' means amounts—

(1) that are made available to the Veterans Health Administration of the Department for an appropriations account—

(A) under the heading ''MEDICAL SERVICES'';

(B) under the heading ''MEDICAL SUPPORT AND COMPLIANCE''; or

(C) under the heading ''MEDICAL FACILITIES''; and

(2) that are unobligated at the end of the applicable fiscal year.

TITLE III—IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS TO CARE FROM NON-DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PROVIDERS

SEC. 301. EXPANDED AVAILABILITY OF HOSPITAL CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES FOR VETERANS THROUGH THE USE OF CONTRACTS.

(a) EXPANSION OF AVAILABLE CARE AND SERVICES.—

(1) FURNISHING OF CARE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Hospital care and medical services under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, shall be furnished to an eligible veteran described in subsection (b), at the election of such veteran, through contracts authorized under subsection (d), or any other law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, with entities specified in subparagraph (B) for the furnishing of such care and services to veterans.

(B) ENTITIES SPECIFIED.—The entities specified in this subparagraph are the following:

(i) Any health care provider that is participating in the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.).

(ii) Any Federally-qualified health center (as defined in section 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(l)(2)(B))).

(iii) The Department of Defense.

(iv) The Indian Health Service.

(2) CHOICE OF PROVIDER.—An eligible veteran who elects to receive care and services under this section may select the provider of such care and services from among any source of provider of such care and services through an entity specified in paragraph (1)(B) that is accessible to the veteran.

(3) COORDINATION OF CARE AND SERVICES.—The Secretary shall coordinate, through the Non-VA Care Coordination Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the furnishing of care and services under this section to eligible veterans, including by ensuring that an eligible veteran receives an appointment for such care and services within the current wait-time goals of the Veterans Health Administration for the furnishing of hospital care and medical services.

(b) ELIGIBLE VETERANS.—A veteran is an eligible veteran for purposes of this section if—

(1)(A) the veteran is enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs established and operated under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code; or

(B) the veteran is enrolled in such system, has not received hospital care or medical services from the Department, and has contacted the Department seeking an initial appointment from the Department for the receipt of such care or services; and

(2) the veteran—

(A)(i) attempts, or has attempted under paragraph (1)(B), to schedule an appointment for the receipt of hospital care or medical services under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, but is unable to schedule an appointment within the current wait-time goals of the Veterans Health Administration for the furnishing of such care or services; and

(ii) elects, and is authorized, to be furnished such care or services pursuant to subsection (c)(2);

(B) resides more than 40 miles from the nearest medical facility of the Department, including a community-based outpatient clinic, that is closest to the residence of the veteran; or

(C) resides—

(i) in a State without a medical facility of the Department that provides—

(I) hospital care;

(II) emergency medical services; and

(III) surgical care rated by the Secretary as having a surgical complexity of standard; and

(ii) more than 20 miles from a medical facility of the Department described in clause (i).

(c) ELECTION AND AUTHORIZATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary confirms that an appointment for an eligible veteran described in subsection (b)(2)(A) for the receipt of hospital care or medical services under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, is unavailable within the current wait-time goals of the Department for the furnishing of such care or services, the Secretary shall, at the election of the eligible veteran—

(A) place such eligible veteran on an electronic waiting list described in paragraph (2) for such an appointment; or

(B)(i) authorize that such care and services be furnished to the eligible veteran under this section for a period of time specified by the Secretary; and

(ii) send a letter to the eligible veteran describing the care and services the eligible veteran is eligible to receive under this section.

(2) ELECTRONIC WAITING LIST.—The electronic waiting list described in this paragraph shall be maintained by the Department and allow access by each eligible veteran via www.myhealth.va.gov or any successor website for the following purposes:

(A) To determine the place of such eligible veteran on the waiting list.

(B) To determine the average length of time an individual spends on the waiting list, disaggregated by medical facility of the Department and type of care or service needed, for purposes of allowing such eligible veteran to make an informed election under paragraph (1).

(d) CARE AND SERVICES THROUGH CONTRACTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall enter into contracts with health care providers that are participating in the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) to furnish care and services to eligible veterans under this section.

(2) RATES AND REIMBURSEMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In entering into a contract under this subsection, the Secretary shall—

(i) negotiate rates for the furnishing of care and services under this section; and

(ii) reimburse the health care provider for such care and services at the rates negotiated pursuant to clause (i) as provided in such contract.

(B) LIMIT ON RATES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in clause (ii), rates negotiated under subparagraph (A)(i) shall not be more than the rates paid by the United States to a provider of services (as defined in section 1861(u) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(u))) or a supplier (as defined in section 1861(d) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395x(d))) under the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) for the same care and services.

(ii) EXCEPTION.—The Secretary may negotiate a rate that is more than the rate paid by the United States as described in clause (i) with respect to the furnishing of care or services under this section to an eligible veteran if the Secretary determines that there is no health care provider that will provide such care or services to such eligible veteran at the rate required under such clause—

(I) within the current wait-time goals of the Veterans Health Administration for the furnishing of such care or services; and

(II) at a location not more than 40 miles from the residence of such eligible veteran.

(C) LIMIT ON COLLECTION.—For the furnishing of care and services pursuant to a contract under this section, a health care provider may not collect any amount that is greater than the rate negotiated pursuant to subparagraph (A)(i).

(3) INFORMATION ON POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall provide to any

health care provider with which the Secretary has entered into a contract under paragraph (1) the following:

(A) Information on applicable policies and procedures for submitting bills or claims for authorized care and services furnished to eligible veterans under this section.

(B) Access to a telephone hotline maintained by the Department that such health care provider may call for information on the following:

(i) Procedures for furnishing care and services under this section.

(ii) Procedures for submitting bills or claims for authorized care and services furnished to eligible veterans under this section and being reimbursed for furnishing such care and services.

(iii) Whether particular care or services under this section are authorized, and the procedures for authorization of such care or services.

(e) CHOICE CARD.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of receiving care and services under this section, the Secretary shall issue to each eligible veteran a card that the eligible veteran shall present to a health care provider that is eligible to furnish care and services under this section before receiving such care and services.

(2) NAME OF CARD.—Each card issued under paragraph (1) shall be known as a ''Choice Card''.

(3) DETAILS OF CARD.—Each Choice Card issued to an eligible veteran under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The name of the eligible veteran.

(B) An identification number for the eligible veteran that is not the social security number of the eligible veteran.

(C) The contact information of an appropriate office of the Department for health care providers to confirm that care and services under this section are authorized for the eligible veteran.

(D) Contact information and other relevant information for the submittal of claims or bills for the furnishing of care and services under this section.

(E) The following statement: ''This card is for qualifying medical care outside the Department of Veterans Affairs. Please call the Department of Veterans Affairs phone number specified on this card to ensure that treatment has been authorized.''.

(4) INFORMATION ON USE OF CARD.—Upon issuing a Choice Card to an eligible veteran, the Secretary shall provide the eligible veteran with information clearly stating the circumstances under which the veteran may be eligible for care and services under this section.

(f) INFORMATION ON AVAILABILITY OF CARE.—The Secretary shall provide information to a veteran about the availability of care and services under this section in the following circumstances:

(1) When the veteran enrolls in the patient enrollment system of the Department under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code.

(2) When the veteran attempts to schedule an appointment for the receipt of hospital care or medical services from the Department but is unable to schedule an appointment within the current wait-time goals of the Veterans Health Administration for delivery of such care or services.

(g) PROVIDERS.—To be eligible to furnish care and services under this section, a health care provider must—

(1) maintain at least the same or similar credentials and licenses as those credentials and licenses that are required of health care providers of the Department, as determined by the Secretary for purposes of this section; and

(2) submit, not less frequently than once each year, verification of such licenses and credentials maintained by such health care provider.

(h) COST-SHARING.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall require an eligible veteran to pay a copayment to the Department for the receipt of care and services under this section only if such eligible veteran would be required to pay such copayment for the receipt of such care and services at a medical facility of the Department.

(2) LIMITATION.—The copayment required under paragraph (1) shall not be greater than the copayment required of such eligible veteran by the Department for the receipt of such care and services at a medical facility of the Department.

(i) CLAIMS PROCESSING SYSTEM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide for an efficient nationwide system for processing and paying bills or claims for authorized care and services furnished to eligible veterans under this section.

(2) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall prescribe regulations for the implementation of such system.

(3) OVERSIGHT.—The Chief Business Office of the Veterans Health Administration shall oversee the implementation and maintenance of such system.

(4) ACCURACY OF PAYMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall ensure that such system meets such goals for accuracy of payment as the Secretary shall specify for purposes of this section.

(B) ANNUAL REPORT.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter until the termination date specified in subsection (n), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the goals for accuracy of such system.

(ii) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by clause (i) shall include the following:

(I) A description of the goals for accuracy for such system specified by the Secretary under subparagraph (A).

(II) An assessment of the success of the Department in meeting such goals during the year preceding the submittal of the report.

(j) MEDICAL RECORDS.—The Secretary shall ensure that any health care provider that furnishes care and services under this section to an eligible veteran submits to the Department any medical record related to the care and services provided to such eligible veteran by such health care provider for inclusion in the electronic medical record of such eligible veteran maintained by the Department upon the completion of the provision of such care and services to such eligible veteran.

(k) TRACKING OF MISSED APPOINTMENTS.—The Secretary shall implement a mechanism to track any missed appointments for care and services under this section by eligible veterans to ensure that the Department does not pay for such care and services that were not furnished to an eligible veteran.

(l) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prescribe interim final regulations on the implementation of this section and publish such regulations in the Federal Register.

(m) INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT.—Not later than 540 days after the publication of the interim final regulations under subsection (l), the Inspector General of the Department shall submit to the Secretary a report on the results of an audit of the care and services furnished under this section to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of payments by the Department for the cost of such care and services, including any findings and recommendations of the Inspector General.

(n) TERMINATION.—The requirement of the Secretary to furnish care and services under this section terminates on the date that is two years after the date on which the Secretary publishes the interim final regulations under subsection (l).

(o) REPORTS.—

(1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the publication of the interim final regulations under subsection (l), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the furnishing of care and services under this section that includes the following:

(A) The number of eligible veterans who have received care and services under this section.

(B) A description of the type of care and services furnished to eligible veterans under this section.

(2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 540 days after the publication of the interim final regulations under subsection (l), the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the furnishing of care and services under this section that includes the following:

(A) The total number of eligible veterans who have received care and services under this section, disaggregated by—

(i) eligible veterans described in subsection (b)(2)(A); and

(ii) eligible veterans described in subsection (b)(2)(B).

(B) A description of the type of care and services furnished to eligible veterans under this section.

(C) An accounting of the total cost of furnishing care and services to eligible veterans under this section.

(D) The results of a survey of eligible veterans who have received care or services under this section on the satisfaction of such eligible veterans with the care or services received by such eligible veterans under this section.

(E) An assessment of the effect of furnishing care and services under this section on wait times for an appointment for the receipt of hospital care and medical services from the Department.

(F) An assessment of the feasibility and advisability of continuing furnishing care and services under this section after the termination date specified in subsection (n).

(p) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

(1) NO MODIFICATION OF CONTRACTS.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the Secretary to renegotiate contracts for the furnishing of hospital care or medical services to veterans entered into by the Department before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) FILLING AND PAYING FOR PRESCRIPTION MEDICATIONS.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter the process of the Department for filling and paying for prescription medications.

SEC. 302. TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY FOR PAYMENTS FOR HOSPITAL CARE, MEDICAL SERVICES, AND OTHER HEALTH CARE FROM NON-DEPARTMENT PROVIDERS TO THE CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICE OF THE VETERANS HEALTH ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(a) TRANSFER OF AUTHORITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Effective on October 1, 2014, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall transfer the authority to pay for hospital care, medical services, and other health care through non-Department providers to the Chief Business Office of the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs from the Veterans Integrated Service Networks and medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) MANNER OF CARE.—The Chief Business Office shall work in consultation with the Office of Clinical Operations and Management of the Department of Veterans Affairs to ensure that care and services described in paragraph (1) are provided in a manner that is clinically appropriate and effective.

(3) NO DELAY IN PAYMENT.—The transfer of authority under paragraph (1) shall be carried out in a manner that does not delay or impede

any payment by the Department for hospital care, medical services, or other health care provided through a non-Department provider under the laws administered by the Secretary.

(b) BUDGETARY EFFECT.—The Secretary shall, for each fiscal year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act—

(1) include in the budget for the Chief Business Office of the Veterans Health Administration amounts to pay for hospital care, medical services, and other health care provided through non-Department providers, including any amounts necessary to carry out the transfer of authority to pay for such care and services under subsection (a), including any increase in staff; and

(2) not include in the budget of each Veterans Integrated Service Network and medical center of the Department amounts to pay for such care and services.

SEC. 303. ENHANCEMENT OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE.

(a) OUTREACH TO TRIBAL-RUN MEDICAL FACILITIES.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, in consultation with the Director of the Indian Health Service, conduct outreach to each medical facility operated by an Indian tribe or tribal organization through a contract or compact with the Indian Health Service under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.) to raise awareness of the ability of such facilities, Indian tribes, and tribal organizations to enter into agreements with the Department of Veterans Affairs under which the Secretary reimburses such facilities, Indian tribes, or tribal organizations, as the case may be, for health care provided to veterans eligible for health care at such facilities.

(b) METRICS FOR MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING PERFORMANCE.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall implement performance metrics for assessing the performance by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Indian Health Service under the memorandum of understanding entitled ''Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS)'' in increasing access to health care, improving quality and coordination of health care, promoting effective patient-centered collaboration and partnerships between the Department and the Service, and ensuring health-promotion and disease-prevention services are appropriately funded and available for beneficiaries under both health care systems.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Director of the Indian Health Service shall jointly submit to Congress a report on the feasibility and advisability of the following:

(1) Entering into agreements for the reimbursement by the Secretary of the costs of direct care services provided through organizations receiving amounts pursuant to grants made or contracts entered into under section 503 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1653) to veterans who are otherwise eligible to receive health care from such organizations.

(2) Including the reimbursement of the costs of direct care services provided to veterans who are not Indians in agreements between the Department and the following:

(A) The Indian Health Service.

(B) An Indian tribe or tribal organization operating a medical facility through a contract or compact with the Indian Health Service under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.).

(C) A medical facility of the Indian Health Service.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) INDIAN.—The terms ''Indian'' and ''Indian tribe'' have the meanings given those terms in section 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act (25 U.S.C. 1603).

(2) MEDICAL FACILITY OF THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE.—The term ''medical facility of the Indian Health Service'' includes a facility operated by an Indian tribe or tribal organization through a contract or compact with the Indian Health Service under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.).

(3) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term ''tribal organization'' has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b).

SEC. 304. ENHANCEMENT OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall, in consultation with Papa Ola Lokahi and such other organizations involved in the delivery of health care to Native Hawaiians as the Secretary considers appropriate, enter into contracts or agreements with Native Hawaiian health care systems that are in receipt of funds from the Secretary of Health and Human Services pursuant to grants awarded or contracts entered into under section 6(a) of the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (42 U.S.C. 11705(a)) for the reimbursement of direct care services provided to eligible veterans as specified in such contracts or agreements.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ''Native Hawaiian'', ''Native Hawaiian health care system'', and ''Papa Ola Lokahi'' have the meanings given those terms in section 12 of the Native Hawaiian Health Care Improvement Act (42 U.S.C. 11711).

SEC. 305. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON PROMPT PAYMENT BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

It is the sense of Congress that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall comply with section 1315 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations (commonly known as the ''prompt payment rule''), or any corresponding similar regulation or ruling, in paying for health care pursuant to contracts entered into with non-Department of Veterans Affairs providers to provide health care under the laws administered by the Secretary.

TITLE IV—HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

SEC. 401. IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS OF VETERANS TO MOBILE VET CENTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IMPROVEMENT OF ACCESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall improve the access of veterans to telemedicine and other health care through the use of mobile vet centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs by providing standardized requirements for the operation of such centers.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The standardized requirements required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) The number of days each mobile vet center of the Department is expected to travel per year.

(B) The number of locations each center is expected to visit per year.

(C) The number of appointments each center is expected to conduct per year.

(D) The method and timing of notifications given by each center to individuals in the area to which such center is traveling, including notifications informing veterans of the availability to schedule appointments at the center.

(3) USE OF TELEMEDICINE.—The Secretary shall ensure that each mobile vet center of the Department has the capability to provide telemedicine services.

(b) REPORTS.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and not later than September 30 each year thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the following:

(1) The use of mobile vet centers to provide telemedicine services to veterans during the year preceding the submittal of the report, including the following:

(A) The number of days each mobile vet center was open to provide such services.

(B) The number of days each mobile vet center traveled to a location other than the headquarters of the mobile vet center to provide such services.

(C) The number of appointments each center conducted to provide such services on average per month and in total during such year.

(2) An analysis of the effectiveness of using mobile vet centers to provide health care services to veterans through the use of telemedicine.

(3) Any recommendations for an increase in the number of mobile vet centers of the Department.

(4) Any recommendations for an increase in the telemedicine capabilities of each mobile vet center.

(5) The feasibility and advisability of using temporary health care providers, including locum tenens, to provide direct health care services to veterans at mobile vet centers.

(6) Such other recommendations on improvement of the use of mobile vet centers by the Department as the Secretary considers appropriate.

SEC. 402. COMMISSION ON CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established an Independent Commission on Department of Veterans Affairs Construction Projects (in this section referred to as the ''Commission'').

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—

(A) VOTING MEMBERS.—The Commission shall be composed of 10 voting members as follows:

(i) Three members to be appointed by the President from among members of the National Academy of Engineering who are nominated under subparagraph (B).

(ii) Three members to be appointed by the President from among members of the National Institute of Building Sciences who are nominated under subparagraph (B).

(iii) Four members to be appointed by the President from among veterans enrolled in the patient enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code, who are nominated under subparagraph (B).

(B) NOMINATION OF VOTING MEMBERS.—The majority leader of the Senate, the minority leader of the Senate, the speaker of the House of Representatives, and the minority leader of the House of Representatives shall jointly nominate not less than 24 individuals to be considered by the President for appointment under subparagraph (A).

(C) NONVOTING MEMBERS.—The Commission shall be composed of the following nonvoting members:

(i) The Comptroller General of the United States, or designee.

(ii) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs, or designee.

(iii) The Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or designee.

(D) DATE OF APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.—The appointments of the members of the Commission under subparagraph (A) shall be made not later than 14 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—Members shall be appointed for the life of the Commission. Any vacancy in the Commission shall not affect its powers, but shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(4) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than five days after the date on which all members of the Commission have been appointed, the Commission shall hold its first meeting.

(5) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chairperson.

(6) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

(7) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The Commission shall select a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from among its members.

(b) DUTIES OF COMMISSION.—

(1) REVIEW.—The Commission shall review current construction and maintenance projects and the medical facility leasing program of the Department of Veterans Affairs to identify any problems experienced by the Department in carrying out such projects and program.

(2) REPORTS.—

(A) COMMISSION REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall submit to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth recommendations, if any, for improving the manner in which the Secretary carries out the projects and program specified in paragraph (1).

(B) DEPARTMENT REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the submittal of the report under subparagraph (A), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the feasibility and advisability of implementing the recommendations of the Commission, if any, included in the report submitted under such subparagraph, including a timeline for the implementation of such recommendations.

(c) POWERS OF COMMISSION.—

(1) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission considers advisable to carry out this section.

(2) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Commission may secure directly from any Federal agency such information as the Commission considers necessary to carry out this section. Upon request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of such agency shall furnish such information to the Commission.

(d) COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.—

(1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Each member of the Commission who is not an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which such member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Commission. All members of the Commission who are officers or employees of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for their services as officers or employees of the United States.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Commission.

(3) STAFF.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the Commission may, without regard to the civil service laws and regulations, appoint and terminate an executive director and such other additional personnel as may be necessary to enable the Commission to perform its duties. The employment of an executive director shall be subject to confirmation by the Commission.

(B) COMPENSATION.—The Chairperson of the Commission may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(4) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Any Federal Government employee may be detailed to the Commission without reimbursement, and such detail shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

(5) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(e) TERMINATION OF COMMISSION.—The Commission shall terminate 30 days after the date on which the Commission submits its report under subsection (b)(2)(A).

SEC. 403. COMMISSION ON ACCESS TO CARE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established the Commission on Access to Care (in this section referred to as the ''Commission'') to examine the access of veterans to health care from the Department of Veterans Affairs and strategically examine how best to organize the Veterans Health Administration, locate health care resources, and deliver health care to veterans during the 10- to 20-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—

(A) VOTING MEMBERS.—The Commission shall be composed of 10 voting members who are appointed by the President as follows:

(i) At least two members who represent an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(ii) At least one member from among persons who have experience as senior management for a private integrated health care system with an annual gross revenue of more than $50,000,000.

(iii) At least one member from among persons who are familiar with government health care systems, including those systems of the Department of Defense, the Indian Health Service, and Federally-qualified health centers (as defined in section 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(l)(2)(B))).

(iv) At least two members from among persons who are familiar with the Veterans Health Administration but are not current employees of the Veterans Health Administration.

(v) At least two members from among persons who are veterans or eligible for hospital care, medical services, or other health care under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(B) NONVOTING MEMBERS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—In addition to members appointed under subparagraph (A), the Commission shall be composed of 10 nonvoting members who are appointed by the President as follows:

(I) At least two members who represent an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(II) At least one member from among persons who have experience as senior management for a private integrated health care system with an annual gross revenue of more than $50,000,000.

(III) At least one member from among persons who are familiar with government health care systems, including those systems of the Department of Defense, the Indian Health Service, and Federally-qualified health centers (as defined in section 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(l)(2)(B))).

(IV) At least two members from among persons who are familiar with the Veterans Health Administration but are not current employees of the Veterans Health Administration.

(V) At least two members from among persons who are veterans or eligible for hospital care, medical services, or other health care under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

(ii) ADDITIONAL NONVOTING MEMBERS.—In addition to members appointed under subparagraph (A) and clause (i), the Commission shall be composed of the following nonvoting members:

(I) The Comptroller General of the United States, or designee.

(II) The Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or designee.

(C) DATE.—The appointments of members of the Commission shall be made not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—Members shall be appointed for the life of the Commission. Any vacancy in the Commission shall not affect its powers, but shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(4) INITIAL MEETING.—Not later than 15 days after the date on which seven voting members of the Commission have been appointed, the Commission shall hold its first meeting.

(5) MEETINGS.—The Commission shall meet at the call of the Chairperson.

(6) QUORUM.—A majority of the members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum, but a lesser number of members may hold hearings.

(7) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The Commission shall select a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson from among its members.

(b) DUTIES OF COMMISSION.—

(1) EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT.—The Commission shall undertake a comprehensive evaluation and assessment of access to health care at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) MATTERS EVALUATED AND ASSESSED.—The matters evaluated and assessed by the Commission shall include the following:

(A) The appropriateness of current standards of the Department of Veterans Affairs concerning access to health care.

(B) The measurement of such standards.

(C) The appropriateness of performance standards and incentives in relation to standards described in subparagraph (A).

(D) Staffing levels throughout the Veterans Health Administration and whether they are sufficient to meet current demand for health care from the Administration.

(E) The results of the assessment conducted by an independent third party under section 101(a), including any data or recommendations included in such assessment.

(3) REPORTS.—The Commission shall submit to the President, through the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, reports as follows:

(A) Not later than 90 days after the date of the initial meeting of the Commission, an interim report on—

(i) the findings of the Commission with respect to the evaluation and assessment required by this subsection; and

(ii) such recommendations as the Commission may have for legislative or administrative action to improve access to health care through the Veterans Health Administration.

(B) Not later than 180 days after the date of the initial meeting of the Commission, a final report on—

(i) the findings of the Commission with respect to the evaluation and assessment required by this subsection; and

(ii) such recommendations as the Commission may have for legislative or administrative action to improve access to health care through the Veterans Health Administration.

(c) POWERS OF THE COMMISSION.—

(1) HEARINGS.—The Commission may hold such hearings, sit and act at such times and places, take such testimony, and receive such evidence as the Commission considers advisable to carry out this section.

(2) INFORMATION FROM FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Commission may secure directly from any Federal department or agency such information as the Commission considers necessary to carry

out this section. Upon request of the Chairperson of the Commission, the head of such department or agency shall furnish such information to the Commission.

(d) COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.—

(1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—Each member of the Commission who is not an officer or employee of the Federal Government shall be compensated at a rate equal to the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level IV of the Executive Schedule under section 5315 of title 5, United States Code, for each day (including travel time) during which such member is engaged in the performance of the duties of the Commission. All members of the Commission who are officers or employees of the United States shall serve without compensation in addition to that received for their services as officers or employees of the United States.

(2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—The members of the Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for employees of agencies under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from their homes or regular places of business in the performance of services for the Commission.

(3) STAFF.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson of the Commission may, without regard to the civil service laws and regulations, appoint and terminate an executive director and such other additional personnel as may be necessary to enable the Commission to perform its duties. The employment of an executive director shall be subject to confirmation by the Commission.

(B) COMPENSATION.—The Chairperson of the Commission may fix the compensation of the executive director and other personnel without regard to chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code, relating to classification of positions and General Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of pay for the executive director and other personnel may not exceed the rate payable for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(4) DETAIL OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.—Any Federal Government employee may be detailed to the Commission without reimbursement, and such detail shall be without interruption or loss of civil service status or privilege.

(5) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of the Commission may procure temporary and intermittent services under section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code, at rates for individuals that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of such title.

(e) TERMINATION OF THE COMMISSION.—The Commission shall terminate 30 days after the date on which the Commission submits its report under subsection (b)(3)(B).

(f) FUNDING.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall make available to the Commission from amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to the Secretary such amounts as the Secretary and the Chairperson of the Commission jointly consider appropriate for the Commission to perform its duties under this section.

(g) EXECUTIVE ACTION.—

(1) ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS.—The President shall require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and such other heads of relevant Federal departments and agencies to implement each recommendation set forth in a report submitted under subsection (b)(3) that the President—

(A) considers feasible and advisable; and

(B) determines can be implemented without further legislative action.

(2) REPORTS.—Not later than 60 days after the date on which the President receives a report under subsection (b)(3), the President shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and such other committees of Congress as the President considers appropriate a report setting forth the following:

(A) An assessment of the feasibility and advisability of each recommendation contained in the report received by the President.

(B) For each recommendation assessed as feasible and advisable under subparagraph (A) the following:

(i) Whether such recommendation requires legislative action.

(ii) If such recommendation requires legislative action, a recommendation concerning such legislative action.

(iii) A description of any administrative action already taken to carry out such recommendation.

(iv) A description of any administrative action the President intends to be taken to carry out such recommendation and by whom.

SEC. 404. IMPROVED PERFORMANCE METRICS FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PROHIBITION ON USE OF SCHEDULING AND WAIT-TIME METRICS IN DETERMINATION OF PERFORMANCE AWARDS.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall ensure that scheduling and wait-time metrics or goals are not used as factors in determining the performance of the following employees for purposes of determining whether to pay performance awards to such employees:

(1) Directors, associate directors, assistant directors, deputy directors, chiefs of staff, and clinical leads of medical centers of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) Directors, assistant directors, and quality management officers of Veterans Integrated Service Networks of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(b) MODIFICATION OF PERFORMANCE PLANS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall modify the performance plans of the directors of the medical centers of the Department and the directors of the Veterans Integrated Service Networks to ensure that such plans are based on the quality of care received by veterans at the health care facilities under the jurisdictions of such directors.

(2) FACTORS.—In modifying performance plans under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure that assessment of the quality of care provided at health care facilities under the jurisdiction of a director described in paragraph (1) includes consideration of the following:

(A) Recent reviews by the Joint Commission (formerly known as the ''Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations'') of such facilities.

(B) The number and nature of recommendations concerning such facilities by the Inspector General of the Department in reviews conducted through the Combined Assessment Program (CAP), in the reviews by the Inspector General of community based outpatient clinics and primary care clinics, and in reviews conducted through the Office of Healthcare Inspections during the two most recently completed fiscal years.

(C) The number of recommendations described in subparagraph (B) that the Inspector General of the Department determines have not been carried out satisfactorily with respect to such facilities.

(D) Reviews of such facilities by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

(E) The number and outcomes of administrative investigation boards, root cause analysis, and peer reviews conducted at such facilities during the fiscal year for which the assessment is being conducted.

(F) The effectiveness of any remedial actions or plans resulting from any Inspector General recommendations in the reviews and analyses described in subparagraphs (A) through (E).

(3) ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP POSITIONS.—To the degree practicable, the Secretary shall assess the performance of other employees of the Department in leadership positions at Department medical centers, including associate directors, assistant directors, deputy directors, chiefs of staff, and clinical leads, and in Veterans Integrated Service Networks, including assistant directors and quality management officers, using factors and criteria similar to those used in the performance plans modified under paragraph (1).

(c) REMOVAL OF CERTAIN PERFORMANCE GOALS.—For each fiscal year that begins after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall not include in the performance goals of any employee of a Veterans Integrated Service Network or medical center of the Department any performance goal that might disincentivize the payment of Department amounts to provide hospital care, medical services, or other health care through a non-Department provider.

SEC. 405. IMPROVED TRANSPARENCY CONCERNING HEALTH CARE PROVIDED BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) PUBLICATION OF WAIT TIMES.—

(1) GOALS.—

(A) INITIAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish in the Federal Register, and on an Internet website accessible to the public of each medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, the wait-time goals of the Department for the scheduling of an appointment by a veteran for the receipt of health care from the Department.

(B) SUBSEQUENT CHANGES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary modifies the wait-time goals described in subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall publish the new wait-times goals—

(I) on an Internet website accessible to the public of each medical center of the Department not later than 30 days after such modification; and

(II) in the Federal Register not later than 90 days after such modification.

(ii) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Any modification under clause (i) shall take effect on the date of publication in the Federal Register.

(C) GOALS DESCRIBED.—Wait-time goals published under this paragraph shall include goals for primary care appointments, specialty care appointments, and appointments based on the general severity of the condition of the veteran.

(2) WAIT TIMES AT MEDICAL CENTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish on an Internet website accessible to the public of each medical center of the Department the current wait time for an appointment for primary care and specialty care at the medical center.

(b) PUBLICLY AVAILABLE DATABASE OF PATIENT SAFETY, QUALITY OF CARE, AND OUTCOME MEASURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall develop and make available to the public a comprehensive database containing all applicable patient safety, quality of care, and outcome measures for health care provided by the Department that are tracked by the Secretary.

(2) UPDATE FREQUENCY.—The Secretary shall update the database required by paragraph (1) not less frequently than once each year.

(3) UNAVAILABLE MEASURES.—For all measures that the Secretary would otherwise publish in the database required by paragraph (1) but has not done so because such measures are not available, the Secretary shall publish notice in the database of the reason for such unavailability and a timeline for making such measures available in the database.

(4) ACCESSIBILITY.—The Secretary shall ensure that the database required by paragraph (1) is accessible to the public through the primary Internet website of the Department and

through each primary Internet website of a Department medical center.

(c) HOSPITAL COMPARE WEBSITE OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES.—

(1) AGREEMENT REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agreement with the Secretary of Health and Human Services for the provision by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs of such information as the Secretary of Health and Human Services may require to report and make publicly available patient quality and outcome information concerning Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers through the Hospital Compare Internet website of the Department of Health and Human Services or any successor Internet website.

(2) INFORMATION PROVIDED.—The information provided by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Secretary of Health and Human Services under paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) Measures of timely and effective health care.

(B) Measures of readmissions, complications of death, including with respect to 30-day mortality rates and 30-day readmission rates, surgical complication measures, and health care related infection measures.

(C) Survey data of patient experiences, including the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems or any similar successor survey developed by the Department of Health and Human Services.

(D) Any other measures required of or reported with respect to hospitals participating in the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.).

(3) UNAVAILABLE INFORMATION.—For any applicable metric collected by the Department of Veterans Affairs or required to be provided under paragraph (2) and withheld from or unavailable in the Hospital Compare Internet website, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall publish a notice in the Federal Register stating the reason why such metric was withheld from public disclosure and a timeline for making such metric available, if applicable.

(d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REVIEW OF PUBLICLY AVAILABLE SAFETY AND QUALITY METRICS.—Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a review of the safety and quality metrics made publicly available by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs under this section to assess the degree to which the Secretary is complying with the provisions of this section.

SEC. 406. INFORMATION FOR VETERANS ON THE CREDENTIALS OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PHYSICIANS.

(a) IMPROVEMENT OF ''OUR PROVIDERS'' INTERNET WEBSITE LINKS.—

(1) AVAILABILITY THROUGH DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HOMEPAGE.—A link to the ''Our Providers'' health care providers database of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or any successor database, shall be available on and through the homepage of the Internet website of the Department that is accessible to the public.

(2) INFORMATION ON LOCATION OF RESIDENCY TRAINING.—The Internet website of the Department that is accessible to the public shall include under the link to the ''Our Providers'' health care providers database of the Department, or any successor database, the location of residency training of each licensed physician of the Department.

(3) INFORMATION ON PHYSICIANS AT PARTICULAR FACILITIES.—The ''Our Providers'' health care providers database of the Department, or any successor database, shall identify whether each licensed physician of the Department is a physician in residency.

(b) INFORMATION ON CREDENTIALS OF PHYSICIANS FOR VETERANS UNDERGOING SURGICAL PROCEDURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Each veteran who is undergoing a surgical procedure by or through the Department shall be provided information on the credentials of the surgeon to be performing such procedure at such time in advance of the procedure as is appropriate to permit such veteran to evaluate such information.

(2) OTHER INDIVIDUALS.—If a veteran is unable to evaluate the information provided under paragraph (1) due to the health or mental competence of the veteran, such information shall be provided to an individual acting on behalf of the veteran.

(c) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT AND PLAN.—

(1) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report setting forth an assessment by the Comptroller General of the following:

(A) The manner in which contractors under the Patient-Centered Community Care initiative of the Department perform oversight of the credentials of physicians within the networks of such contractors under the initiative.

(B) The oversight by the Department of the contracts under the Patient-Centered Community Care initiative.

(C) The verification by the Department of the credentials and licenses of health care providers furnishing hospital care and medical services under section 301.

(2) PLAN.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the submittal of the report under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

(i) submit to the Comptroller General, the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a plan to address any findings and recommendations of the Comptroller General included in such report; and

(ii) submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a request for additional amounts, if any, that may be necessary to carry out such plan.

(B) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 90 days after the submittal of the report under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall carry out such plan.

SEC. 407. INFORMATION IN ANNUAL BUDGET OF THE PRESIDENT ON HOSPITAL CARE AND MEDICAL SERVICES FURNISHED THROUGH EXPANDED USE OF CONTRACTS FOR SUCH CARE.

The materials on the Department of Veterans Affairs in the budget of the President for a fiscal year, as submitted to Congress pursuant to section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, shall set forth the following:

(1) The number of veterans who received hospital care and medical services under section 301 during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which such budget is submitted.

(2) The amount expended by the Department on furnishing care and services under such section during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which such budget is submitted.

(3) The amount requested in such budget for the costs of furnishing care and services under such section during the fiscal year covered by such budget, set forth in aggregate and by amounts for each account for which amounts are so requested.

(4) The number of veterans that the Department estimates will receive hospital care and medical services under such section during the fiscal years covered by the budget submission.

(5) The number of employees of the Department on paid administrative leave at any point during the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year in which such budget is submitted.

SEC. 408. PROHIBITION ON FALSIFICATION OF DATA CONCERNING WAIT TIMES AND QUALITY MEASURES AT DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and in accordance with title 5, United States Code, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall establish policies whereby any employee of the Department of Veterans Affairs who knowingly submits false data concerning wait times for health care or quality measures with respect to health care to another employee of the Department or knowingly requires another employee of the Department to submit false data concerning such wait times or quality measures to another employee of the Department is subject to a penalty the Secretary considers appropriate after notice and an opportunity for a hearing, including civil penalties, unpaid suspensions, or termination.

SEC. 409. REMOVAL OF SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FOR PERFORMANCE.

(a) REMOVAL OR TRANSFER.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 7 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''§ 713. Senior Executive Service: removal based on performance

''(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may remove any individual from the Senior Executive Service if the Secretary determines the performance of the individual warrants such removal. If the Secretary so removes such an individual, the Secretary may—

''(1) remove the individual from the civil service (as defined in section 2101 of title 5); or

''(2) transfer the individual to a General Schedule position at any grade of the General Schedule for which the individual is qualified and that the Secretary determines is appropriate.

''(b) NOTICE TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 days after removing or transferring an individual from the Senior Executive Service under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and House of Representatives notice in writing of such removal or transfer and the reason for such removal or transfer.

''(c) PROCEDURE.—(1) The procedures under section 7543 of title 5 shall not apply to a removal or transfer under this section.

''(2)(A) Subject to subparagraph (B), any removal or transfer under subsection (a) may be appealed to the Merit Systems Protection Board under section 7701 of title 5.

''(B) An appeal under subparagraph (A) of a removal or transfer may only be made if such appeal is made not later than 7 days after the date of such removal or transfer.

''(d) EXPEDITED REVIEW BY MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD.—(1) The Merit Systems Protection Board shall expedite any appeal under section 7701 of title 5 of a removal or transfer under subsection (a) and, in any such case, shall issue a decision not later than 21 days after the date of the appeal.

''(2) In any case in which the Merit Systems Protection Board determines that it cannot issue a decision in accordance with the 21-day requirement under paragraph (1), the Merit Systems Protection Board shall submit to Congress a report that explains the reason why the Merit Systems Protection Board is unable to issue a decision in accordance with such requirement in such case.

''(3) There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary for the Merit Systems Protection Board to expedite appeals under paragraph (1).

''(4) The Merit Systems Protection Board may not stay any personnel action taken under this section.

''(5) A person who appeals under section 7701 of title 5 a removal under subsection (a)(1) may not receive any pay, awards, bonuses, incentives, allowances, differentials, student loan repayments, special payments, or benefits from the Secretary until the Merit Systems Protection Board has made a final decision on such appeal.

''(6) A decision made by the Merit Systems Protection Board with respect to a removal or

transfer under subsection (a) shall not be subject to any further appeal.''.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''713. Senior Executive Service: removal based on performance.''.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF EXPEDITED REVIEW PROCESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Merit Systems Protection Board shall establish and put into effect a process to conduct expedited reviews in accordance with section 713(d) of title 38, United States Code.

(2) INAPPLICABILITY OF CERTAIN REGULATIONS.—Section 1201.22 of title 5, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act, shall not apply to expedited reviews carried out under section 713(d) of title 38, United States Code.

(3) REPORT BY MERIT SYSTEMS PROTECTION BOARD.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Merit Systems Protection Board shall submit to Congress a report on the actions the Board plans to take to conduct expedited reviews under section 713(d) of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a). Such report shall include a description of the resources the Board determines will be necessary to conduct such reviews and a description of whether any resources will be necessary to conduct such reviews that were not available to the Board on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) TEMPORARY EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN LIMITATION ON INITIATION OF REMOVAL FROM SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE.—During the 120-day period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, an action to remove an individual from the Senior Executive Service at the Department of Veterans Affairs pursuant to section 713 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), or section 7543 of title 5, United States Code, may be initiated, notwithstanding section 3592(b) of title 5, United States Code, or any other provision of law.

(d) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section or section 713 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall be construed to apply to an appeal of a removal, transfer, or other personnel action that was pending before the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE V—HEALTH CARE RELATED TO SEXUAL TRAUMA

SEC. 501. EXPANSION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR SEXUAL TRAUMA COUNSELING AND TREATMENT TO VETERANS ON INACTIVE DUTY TRAINING.

Section 1720D(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by striking ''or active duty for training'' and inserting '', active duty for training, or inactive duty training''.

SEC. 502. PROVISION OF COUNSELING AND TREATMENT FOR SEXUAL TRAUMA BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) EXPANSION OF COVERAGE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.—Subsection (a) of section 1720D of title 38, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3);

(2) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph (2):

''(2)(A) In operating the program required by paragraph (1), the Secretary may, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense, provide counseling and care and services to members of the Armed Forces (including members of the National Guard and Reserves) on active duty to overcome psychological trauma described in that paragraph.

''(B) A member described in subparagraph (A) shall not be required to obtain a referral before receiving counseling and care and services under this paragraph.''; and

(3) in paragraph (3), as predesignated by paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''a veteran'' and inserting ''an individual''; and

(B) by striking ''that veteran'' each place it appears and inserting ''that individual''.

(b) INFORMATION TO MEMBERS ON AVAILABILITY OF COUNSELING AND SERVICES.—Subsection (c) of such section is amended—

(1) by striking ''to veterans'' each place it appears; and

(2) in paragraph (3), by inserting ''members of the Armed Forces and'' before ''individuals''.

(c) INCLUSION OF MEMBERS IN REPORTS ON COUNSELING AND SERVICES.—Subsection (e) of such section is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''to veterans'';

(2) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by striking ''women veterans'' and inserting ''individuals''; and

(B) by striking ''training under subsection (d).'' and inserting ''training under subsection (d), desegregated by—

''(A) veterans;

''(B) members of the Armed Forces (including members of the National Guard and Reserves) on active duty; and

''(C) for each of subparagraphs (A) and (B)—

''(i) men; and

''(ii) women.'';

(3) in paragraph (4), by striking ''veterans'' and inserting ''individuals''; and

(4) in paragraph (5)—

(A) by striking ''women veterans'' and inserting ''individuals'' ; and

(B) by inserting '', including specific recommendations for individuals specified in subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C) of paragraph (2)'' before the period at the end.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect on the date that is one year after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 503. REPORTS ON MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.

(a) REPORT ON SERVICES AVAILABLE FOR MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA IN THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Not later than 630 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives a report on the treatment and services available from the Department of Veterans Affairs for male veterans who experience military sexual trauma compared to such treatment and services available to female veterans who experience military sexual trauma.

(b) REPORTS ON TRANSITION OF MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA TREATMENT FROM DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.—Not later than 630 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for five years, the Department of Veterans Affairs-Department of Defense Joint Executive Committee established by section 320(a) of title 38, United States Code, shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on military sexual trauma that includes the following:

(1) The processes and procedures utilized by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to facilitate transition of treatment of individuals who have experienced military sexual trauma from treatment provided by the Department of Defense to treatment provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(2) A description and assessment of the collaboration between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense in assisting veterans in filing claims for disabilities related to military sexual trauma, including permitting veterans access to information and evidence necessary to develop or support such claims.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS.—The term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(A) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(2) MILITARY SEXUAL TRAUMA.—The term ''military sexual trauma'' means psychological trauma, which in the judgment of a mental health professional employed by the Department, resulted from a physical assault of a sexual nature, battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment which occurred while the veteran was serving on active duty or active duty for training.

(3) SEXUAL HARASSMENT.—The term ''sexual harassment'' means repeated, unsolicited verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature which is threatening in character.

(4) SEXUAL TRAUMA.—The term ''sexual trauma'' shall have the meaning given that term by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for purposes of this section.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on the date that is 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE VI—MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES

SEC. 601. AUTHORIZATION OF MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITY LEASES.

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs may carry out the following major medical facility leases at the locations specified, and in an amount for each lease not to exceed the amount shown for such location (not including any estimated cancellation costs):

(1) For a clinical research and pharmacy coordinating center, Albuquerque, New Mexico, an amount not to exceed $9,560,000.

(2) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Brick, New Jersey, an amount not to exceed $7,280,000.

(3) For a new primary care and dental clinic annex, Charleston, South Carolina, an amount not to exceed $7,070,250.

(4) For the Cobb County community-based Outpatient Clinic, Cobb County, Georgia, an amount not to exceed $6,409,000.

(5) For the Leeward Outpatient Healthcare Access Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, including a co-located clinic with the Department of Defense and the co-location of the Honolulu Regional Office of the Veterans Benefits Administration and the Capel Vet Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, an amount not to exceed $15,887,370.

(6) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Johnson County, Kansas, an amount not to exceed $2,263,000.

(7) For a replacement community-based outpatient clinic, Lafayette, Louisiana, an amount not to exceed $2,996,000.

(8) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Lake Charles, Louisiana, an amount not to exceed $2,626,000.

(9) For outpatient clinic consolidation, New Port Riche, Florida, an amount not to exceed $11,927,000.

(10) For an outpatient clinic, Pence, Puerto Rico, an amount not to exceed $11,535,000.

(11) For lease consolidation, San Antonio, Texas, an amount not to exceed $19,426,000.

(12) For a community-based outpatient clinic, San Diego, California, an amount not to exceed $11,946,100.

(13) For an outpatient clinic, Tyler, Texas, an amount not to exceed $4,327,000.

(14) For the Arere Community Care Center, West Haven, Connecticut, an amount not to exceed $4,883,000.

(15) For the Worcester community-based Outpatient Clinic, Worcester, Massachusetts, an amount not to exceed $4,855,000.

(16) For the expansion of a community-based outpatient clinic, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, an amount not to exceed $4,232,060.

(17) For a multi specialty clinic, Chattanooga, Tennessee, an amount not to exceed $7,069,000.

(18) For the expansion of a community-based outpatient clinic, Chico, California, an amount not to exceed $4,534,000.

(19) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Chula Vista, California, an amount not to exceed $3,714,000.

(20) For a new research lease, Haines, Illinois, an amount not to exceed $22,032,000.

(21) For a replacement research lease, Houston, Texas, an amount not to exceed $6,142,000.

(22) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Lincoln, Nebraska, an amount not to exceed $7,178,400.

(23) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Lubbock, Texas, an amount not to exceed $8,554,000.

(24) For a community-based outpatient clinic consolidation, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, an amount not to exceed $8,022,000.

(25) For a community-based outpatient clinic, Phoenix, Arizona, an amount not to exceed $20,757,000.

(26) For the expansion of a community-based outpatient clinic, Redding, California, an amount not to exceed $8,154,000.

SEC. 602. BUDGETARY TREATMENT OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS MAJOR MEDICAL FACILITIES LEASES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) Title 31, United States Code, requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to record the full cost of its contractual obligation against funds available at the time a contract is executed.

(2) Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11 provides guidance to agencies in meeting the statutory requirements under title 31, United States Code, with respect to leases.

(3) For operating leases, Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11 requires the Department of Veterans Affairs to record up-front budget authority in an ''amount equal to total payments under the full term of the lease or [an] amount sufficient to cover first year lease payments plus cancellation costs''.

(b) REQUIREMENT FOR OBLIGATION OF FULL COST.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations provided in advance, in exercising the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into leases provided in this Act, the Secretary shall record, pursuant to section 1501 of title 31, United States Code, as the full cost of the contractual obligation at the time a contract is executed either—

(A) an amount equal to total payments under the full term of the lease; or

(B) if the lease specifies payments to be made in the event the lease is terminated before its full term, an amount sufficient to cover the first year lease payments plus the specified cancellation costs.

(2) SELF-INSURING AUTHORITY.—The requirements of paragraph (1) may be satisfied through the use of a self-insuring authority consistent with Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11.

(c) TRANSPARENCY.—

(1) COMPLIANCE.—Subsection (b) of section 8104 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(7) In the case of a prospectus proposing funding for a major medical facility lease, a detailed analysis of how the lease is expected to comply with Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11 and section 1341 of title 31 (commonly referred to as the 'Anti-Deficiency Act'). Any such analysis shall include—

''(A) an analysis of the classification of the lease as a 'lease-purchase', 'capital lease', or 'operating lease' as those terms are defined in Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11;

''(B) an analysis of the obligation of budgetary resources associated with the lease; and

''(C) an analysis of the methodology used in determining the asset cost, fair market value, and cancellation costs of the lease.''.

(2) SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS.—Such section 8104 is further amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h)(1) Not less than 30 days before entering into a major medical facility lease, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representatives—

''(A) notice of the Secretary's intention to enter into the lease;

''(B) a detailed summary of the proposed lease;

''(C) a description and analysis of any differences between the prospectus submitted pursuant to subsection (b) and the proposed lease; and

''(D) a scoring analysis demonstrating that the proposed lease fully complies with Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11.

''(2) Each committee described in paragraph (1) shall ensure that any information submitted to the committee under such paragraph is treated by the committee with the same level of confidentiality as is required by law of the Secretary and subject to the same statutory penalties for unauthorized disclosure or use as the Secretary.

''(3) Not more than 30 days after entering into a major medical facility lease, the Secretary shall submit to each committee described in paragraph (1) a report on any material differences between the lease that was entered into and the proposed lease described under such paragraph, including how the lease that was entered into changes the previously submitted scoring analysis described in subparagraph (D) of such paragraph.''.

(d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section, or the amendments made by this section, shall be construed to in any way relieve the Department of Veterans Affairs from any statutory or regulatory obligations or requirements existing prior to the enactment of this section and such amendments.

TITLE VII—VETERANS BENEFITS MATTERS

SEC. 701. EXPANSION OF MARINE GUNNERY SERGEANT JOHN DAVID FRY SCHOLARSHIP.

(a) EXPANSION OF ENTITLEMENT.—Subsection (b)(9) of section 3311 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting ''or spouse'' after ''child''.

(b) LIMITATION AND ELECTION ON CERTAIN BENEFITS.—Subsection (f) of such section is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (4); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraphs:

''(2) LIMITATION.—The entitlement of an individual to assistance under subsection (a) pursuant to paragraph (9) of subsection (b) because the individual was a spouse of a person described in such paragraph shall expire on the earlier of—

''(A) the date that is 15 years after the date on which the person died; and

''(B) the date on which the individual remarries.

''(3) ELECTION ON RECEIPT OF CERTAIN BENEFITS.—A surviving spouse entitled to assistance under subsection (a) pursuant to paragraph (9) of subsection (b) who is also entitled to educational assistance under chapter 35 of this title may not receive assistance under both this section and such chapter, but shall make an irrevocable election (in such form and manner as the Secretary may prescribe) under which section or chapter to receive educational assistance.''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 3321(b)(4) of such title is amended—

(1) by striking ''an individual'' and inserting ''a child''; and

(2) by striking ''such individual's'' each time it appears and inserting ''such child's''.

SEC. 702. APPROVAL OF COURSES OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING FOR PURPOSES OF ALL-VOLUNTEER FORCE EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE CONDITIONAL ON IN-STATE TUITION RATE FOR VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3679 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(c)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter and subject to paragraphs (3) through (6), the Secretary shall disapprove a course of education provided by a public institution of higher learning to a covered individual pursuing a course of education with educational assistance under chapter 30 or 33 of this title while living in the State in which the public institution of higher learning is located if the institution charges tuition and fees for that course for the covered individual at a rate that is higher than the rate the institution charges for tuition and fees for that course for residents of the State in which the institution is located, regardless of the covered individual's State of residence.

''(2) For purposes of this subsection, a covered individual is any individual as follows:

''(A) A veteran who was discharged or released from a period of not fewer than 90 days of service in the active military, naval, or air service less than three years before the date of enrollment in the course concerned.

''(B) An individual who is entitled to assistance under section 3311(b)(9) or 3319 of this title by virtue of such individual's relationship to a veteran described in subparagraph (A).

''(3) If after enrollment in a course of education that is subject to disapproval under paragraph (1) by reason of paragraph (2)(A) or (2)(B) a covered individual pursues one or more courses of education at the same public institution of higher learning while remaining continuously enrolled (other than during regularly scheduled breaks between courses, semesters or terms) at that institution of higher learning, any course so pursued by the covered individual at that institution of higher learning while so continuously enrolled shall also be subject to disapproval under paragraph (1).

''(4) It shall not be grounds to disapprove a course of education under paragraph (1) if a public institution of higher learning requires a covered individual pursuing a course of education at the institution to demonstrate an intent, by means other than satisfying a physical presence requirement, to establish residency in the State in which the institution is located, or to satisfy other requirements not relating to the establishment of residency, in order to be charged tuition and fees for that course at a rate that is equal to or less than the rate the institution charges for tuition and fees for that course for residents of the State.

''(5) The Secretary may waive such requirements of paragraph (1) as the Secretary considers appropriate.

''(6) Disapproval under paragraph (1) shall apply only with respect to educational assistance under chapters 30 and 33 of this title.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Subsection (c) of section 3679 of title 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a) of this section), shall apply with respect to educational assistance provided for pursuit of programs of education during academic terms that begin after July 1, 2015, through courses of education that commence on or after that date.

TITLE VIII—APPROPRIATION AND EMERGENCY DESIGNATIONS

SEC. 801. APPROPRIATION OF EMERGENCY AMOUNTS.

There is authorized to be appropriated, and is appropriated, to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, out of any funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, for fiscal years 2014, 2015,

and 2016, such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

SEC. 802. EMERGENCY DESIGNATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—This Act is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 4(g) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010 (2 U.S.C. 933(g)).

(b) DESIGNATION IN SENATE.—In the Senate, this Act is designated as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 403(a) of S. Con. Res. 13 (111th Congress), the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2010.

Mr. REID. Madam President, we will have one or two rollcall votes starting at 4 p.m. this afternoon.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, we have not completed this legislation, and we may be subject to a budget point of order. It is not clear yet whether there will be one, but according to this unanimous consent agreement, there will be no amendments filed prior to a vote on final passage either with or without a budget point of order being considered by the body. We will have time between now and then to have an indepth discussion of the provisions of this legislation.

In the meantime, I thank the Senator from Vermont for his willingness to make very difficult compromises. I also thank many of my colleagues who have forgone the amending process in order that we may expedite this legislation, which if there is a definition for emergency, I would say this legislation fits that appellation. It is an emergency. What is happening to our veterans and the men and women who have served this country needs to be addressed, and we need to pass this legislation and get it to conference with the House as soon as possible.

I especially mention two people who are really responsible for this legislation, and I say—with not typical modesty—that they were the ones who were really responsible for the provisions of this bill; that is, Senator BURR, ranking member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and Senator COBURN, whom I view, in many respects, as the conscience of the Senate. Those two individuals were largely responsible for this legislation, and I am obviously very proud to be a part of it.

Again, we will have time to discuss this legislation, but I extend my appreciation to the Senator from Vermont whose chairmanship of the Veterans' Affairs Committee has been conducted with patriotism and with the needs of our veterans uppermost in his priorities.

I thank the Senator from Vermont, and I look forward to our passing this legislation and getting it to conference in as short a period of time as is possible so we can bring it back to this body and then to the President's desk for signature.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, the Senator from Arizona has been too modest. He deserves a great deal of credit for stepping to the plate when we needed him to step to the plate. He understands that we have an emergency, and it is imperative that the veterans of this country get quality care in a timely manner. He and I were both determined to make sure that something happened.

I thank Senator MCCAIN and his staff for their hard work on this bill. We will discuss this issue more on the floor. He was absolutely right when he said that we have an emergency. We have to pass this legislation today. We have to get it to conference as soon as possible, and we have to get a good bill on the President's desk next week.

Again, I thank Senator MCCAIN.

With that I yield the floor.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll. The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. COONS. Madam President, I come to the floor of the Senate to speak about an issue that is of urgent concern to me and should be of urgent concern to all of us. That issue is global warming or climate change.

This is a personal issue for me. As the father of three, along with any other parent, my kids are never far from my mind and my heart. This is true for me as a father as well as a Senator, where every day I have to ask the question: What kind of example am I setting? What kind of a world are my actions going to lead to? What sort of a world will I leave my children, and will it be better than the one my parents left to me?

Last summer I experienced one of the great joys of parenthood—a family trip. My wife Annie and I took our three children Maggie, Michael, and Jack on a visit to one of our Nation's most spectacular places: the mountains and glaciers of Glacier National Park in Montana. There was one hike in particular on our summer trip that I will never forget. It was our hike up to visit historic Grinnell Glacier. If we had taken this hike more than 60 years ago, here is what we would have seen, as this picture shows: mountains deep in glaciers, thick with ice and snow, covered in the glaciers that gave this national park its name. Yet last year as we took a long and winding hike up the trails, we came up and over the last rise, and what we saw was noticeably different—strikingly so—because most of what is left of the iconic Grinnell Glacier in the summer is a chilly pool of water in a largely empty valley pool. We can see the difference in these two pictures, and this is just in one lifetime.

Since 1966, Grinnell Glacier has lost half its total acreage, and as we continue to warm our planet, these changes will only accelerate. My children—our children—will not just lose the chance to see beautiful glaciers and an iconic national park but the chance to live in a world as robust and safe and healthy and vibrant as the one their parents were born into. As our global population keeps growing toward 9 billion and developing nations keep seeking higher living standards and climate change accelerates, this is the foundational challenge of the 21st century.

Climate change impacts everything: human health, agriculture, national security, migration patterns for animals and fish and birds. As parents and as a nation, I think it is our responsibility, our challenge, and our opportunity to lead the way, to show that prosperity does not need to mean doom for our future.

I also think in my view that, simply put, there is no alternative to action. The world where we don't act isn't a world of vibrant economic growth, it is a world with more frequent and extreme natural disasters, with increased droughts and famine, with displaced populations and cities—even regions and in a few cases even nations—plunged under water.

I represent the lowest mean elevation State in America, the State of Delaware. It has been documented in a broad study led by our Governor's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control that rising sea levels could put up to 11 percent of my home State of Delaware under water by the end of the century. We know these changes are coming. They are slow. They are gradual. They are cumulative. At times they are hard to perceive, but they have already started and will only get more extreme and more expensive the longer we wait to act. The cost of our inaction will be borne by our children and generations to come.

We are not the only ones seeing these impacts, and although the debate over science raged for many years, and I think is settled, I have also had an opportunity to hear from folks who live well outside the Western scientific world but have a profound insight into what these impacts are and how they are seen in the world.

Several years ago, along with the senior Senator, a friend of mine, our President pro tempore, Senator LEAHY, I visited the Kogi tribe in the remote Santa Marta Mountains of Colombia. These equatorial mountains have massive glaciers up at the very top of very high mountains but are also right at the edge of the Caribbean Sea. The folks who make up this pre-Colombian tribe, the Kogi tribe, don't have sophisticated technology that monitors and tracks climate change, but as they sat with us they shared with us what they see as starkly as our best weather-monitoring satellites. By observing changes in migratory patterns and weather and the snowpack on the glacial mountains they worship, they see,

more every year, that there is a fundamental change happening in our environment, in our climate. Their purpose in calling us to meet with them was to warn us that climate change is impacting the way of life that has passed down from generation to generation for centuries in their people, and it has moved them to speak out to the world, to tell their story, and to urge the rest of us not to hurt Mother Earth and to understand the consequences of the changes we are making.

Whether the voices we listen to come from our own children, from our science community or from remote corners of the world, all of them call us to act, to act in a way that prevents the worst from happening and to ensure that the benefits outweigh the costs.

This isn't just wild-eyed or rosy thinking. It is possible for us to make meaningful change in a bipartisan way. We have done it before. Back in 1990, when acid rain was a real and pressing challenge that was threatening the vitality and the vibrancy of many of the lakes and the mountain places in the American West, I remember well that under then-Republican President George H.W. Bush, Congress came together in a bipartisan way and passed the Clean Air Act amendments. These were designed to reduce the contributing elements to acid rain: powerplant emissions that produce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide that in combination caused acid rain, damaging historic property, monuments, injuring forests and lakes and ecosystems all over our country.

So Congress came together to create a novel, market-based, flexible cap-and-trade program that allowed powerplants to find cost-effective alternatives, solutions to limit pollution. Rather than tanking our economy, that cap-and-trade plan to fight acid rain ended up finding new ways to power our country and to improve energy efficiency without so much pollution. We adapted, we changed, and in some ways we thrived.

As a study done 13 years later shows, those standards adopted in 1990 have saved lives at a cost well worth it: $70 billion in health benefits every year, cumulatively, compared to $1.7 billion in costs—a 40-to-1 tradeoff that I think most Americans would take any day of the week as a return on their investment.

More recently, in my own State of Delaware and eight of our northeastern neighbors, we showed how we can act together to begin to curb climate change and grow our economies at the same time. In 2003, a bipartisan group of regional leaders, this time led by New York State's Republican Gov. George Pataki, built a regional cap-and-trade system, similar to the Acid Rain Prevention Program I just referenced. But the one in our region was called the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, or RGGI for short. It is flexible, market-based, and it has been effective. States choose to cut pollution in a number of ways, from closing older coal-fired powerplants or opening renewable energy projects to investing in important and valuable energy efficiency.

As the New York Times reported just last week, since that program started in 2009, our economies in these regional States have actually grown more than the 41 other States that are not part of RGGI—by several percentage points—while we have cut our emissions over four times more than the rest of the Nation.

We have created jobs, we have invested in innovation, we have cut pollution, and we saved millions of families money on their energy bills. That is why I think we should feel optimistic about the important steps the administration has just taken. The President's strong standards for vehicle fuel efficiency were a great start. At first many argued that pushing car companies to make cleaner, more efficient cars would end up costing a huge amount of money with little to show for it. But the opposite has happened.

We set more aggressive national standards. Engineers have gotten to work. They have innovated. They have invented. America's leading car companies have met the challenge, and the improvement in fuel efficiency has been dramatic. Although there is a cost in upfront research and development, it is well worth it, as drivers save money at the pump, America becomes less dependent on foreign oil, and we all get to breathe cleaner air.

Just last week the Obama administration took another step and proposed our Nation's first rules to limit carbon pollution from existing powerplants. Although they will not be finalized for another year, these limits represent the most significant action that any country has taken to halt the devastating warming of our planet.

They will have real and lasting health benefits. By cutting powerplant pollution over the next 15 years, we will be able to prevent 100,000 asthma attacks in children, 2,100 heart attacks, and thousands of premature deaths. That will mean nearly 500,000 fewer missed days of school and work and will save $7 in health costs for every $1 required of new investment.

Over the long term, curbing climate change will make large, lasting, and meaningful differences—from reduced hunger and heat waves, to reducing the spread of infectious diseases or conflicts over scarce resources.

Cynics will argue that even with these limits we will not stop climate change, and that is true. They will point out that renewable energy technology is not yet ready to fully replace fossil fuels. They will say that America acting alone cannot solve the problem, and that is true. We need global action, especially from large developing nations such as China and India that are on pace to pollute the most going forward.

As an exercise in cynicism, they get a lot of things wrong. These rules alone, yes, will not halt our rising seas. But, then again, no one is claiming they will alone. But they are a crucial step, and we owe it to posterity, to our country, to our future to take what action we can to send a powerful signal to America's entrepreneurs and engineers, our innovators and inventors, that this is a challenge we intend to take on. By acting now, we can begin to birth the innovations that will be at the heart of our planet's clean energy future.

Innovation in America has never stood still. We have done incredible things that even a few years before we might not have predicted. Remember, just a few years ago, natural gas prices were volatile, unreliable, and solar power was too expensive for most households. Yet in just the last few years new technologies have flipped those on their head and we are seeing remarkable changes. Solar prices have fallen 60 percent in just the last 3 years, and natural gas is today cheaper than coal. There are dramatic changes in our energy future going on because of a huge resurgence in natural gas production in this country. We have every reason to believe that by focusing our greatest minds on this challenge, American ingenuity can change and even save the world.

If the United States is going to lead the 21st century, we have to be at the forefront of combating climate change. Although we know meeting this challenge will take global action, the United States needs to lead the way. This is our responsibility. We cannot expect other poor nations to act if a leading, wealthy nation such as the United States is not willing to take even the most minimal responsible actions. We are the second largest polluter of greenhouse gases on the planet, only just eclipsed by the Chinese in the last decade.

For more than a century our economic growth and our strong middle class—built on American industry and innovation—made us the envy of the world, but they have also contributed to putting our planet in a dangerous position.

As developing nations work to lift hundreds of millions of people out of desperate poverty, they are looking at us to show that it is possible. Also, a great but urgent opportunity here lies before us. We have a moral obligation to lead because others are looking at competing examples and are not waiting around.

China, our greatest economic competitor, now and into the future, is itself choking on the byproducts of coal and investing heavily in cleaner air and cleaner energy. The country that figures out how to prosper without deadly pollution is the country that will dominate the technologies that our world uses and depends on in the decades to come. Are we really going to miss out on this chance to be the country that makes the clean cars, the

clean powerplants, the clean technologies of the future? I hope not.

We in Congress have the opportunity and the obligation to pull together and to act responsibly as well. We can pass the bipartisan Shaheen-Portman energy efficiency bill today, create great jobs, and make it easy for families to spend less on energy and save money while doing it. We can put clean energy on a level playing field by passing the bipartisan Master Limited Partnership Parity Act, of which I am a cosponsor, to stop giving coal, oil, and natural gas a leg up without an even playing field for renewables and energy efficiency. We can invest in the research that will unlock the energy innovations of the future.

These are actions we could take today. There will be costs. But if we act now, they will be far outweighed by the benefits today and into the future. If we wait, these costs will only grow.

I understand this is a difficult issue politically for us to take on. Many of the most dire consequences of global warming are still into the future. As I know, as a person who struggles to make long-term, delayed decisions—whether it is investing for retirement or losing the weight my doctor keeps suggesting would help improve my long-term health—humans are not really good at taking the small but powerful steps today that over time will lead to a healthier, more secure future. Even if the costs are low, when the benefits are farther out, it is so hard for us to take action.

What will we say—what will we say—when our children ask, what did we do, when the science was clear, when the options were before us, and when we had the chance? Just as we rightly worry in this Chamber about the financial debts we are going to leave to future generations, leaving this debt, leaving the burdens of unaddressed, unresolved global warming and climate change to our children and future generations is a debt too deep for us not to address.

We are in danger—if we do not act—of leaving behind not only a worse off world but of leaving ourselves a future where we cannot look our children in the eye and say that we stepped up to the greatest global challenge of this century.

What will it mean when my own daughter, at some point in the future, goes to Glacier National Park with her future family? Will it even have glaciers? How will she explain to them how that amazing national park has changed? And what will she say about what this Senate and her own father did to take action? It is my hope, my prayer, that on that future trip they will reflect on how we found the will, how we found the determination, to act together to change the trajectory of our future and to save it for everyone's future.

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

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

COLLEGE AFFORDABILITY

Mr. BOOKER. Madam President, I rise today to express my disappointment that earlier today this Chamber could not even proceed to the consideration of the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. This would have allowed those with outstanding student loan debt to refinance at the lower interest rates currently offered to new borrowers. This is deeply disappointing to me, and it should be to the American public—that we could not even get on to the bill to debate it.

This is why it is particularly disappointing: Our Nation's young people and their families are burdened with extraordinary debt—$1.2 trillion of student loan debt. This exceeds the aggregate—the total—auto loan, credit card, and home equity debt balances in America, making student loans the second largest debt of U.S. households, following mortgages.

Today, the average student graduates from college with around $29,000 in loans. In New Jersey, that is up from an average of $27,600 in 2011 and $23,792 in 2010. More than 16 percent of my constituents now have student debt. That is over 1 million New Jerseyans who are weighed down by a significant financial obligation that limits the amount of money they are able to put back into the economy—in buying homes and in investing in their futures, in pursuing their American dream.

Reduced purchasing power due to high student loan debts not only holds back a family's day-to-day spending but it keeps them from making those large investments.

I believe it is irresponsible and shortsighted for us to think that we can saddle young people—the true engines of our economy—with this burden and maintain our position as the world's most powerful economy.

Historically, the United States has done things differently. We were the leader in expanding college opportunity. From the GI bill following World War II to Pell grants in 1980, we have taken bold steps to ensure that Americans have access to college regardless of their ability to pay their way entirely on their own. We created these programs because we understood that an educated workforce is essential to our Nations's economic competitiveness. The most valuable natural resource any nation on the planet has is the genius and mental acuity of its people. Without highly skilled workers, without trained minds, without that opportunity that comes with higher education, America simply will not be able to compete as well in the global economy.

The cost of college in America puts our young people at a disadvantage compared to their peers. We are not leading; we are lagging. These obstacles to a college education deny a level playing field. We are disadvantaging our young people in their fight to compete and lead against other nations that are doing so much more.

Take this important data point: More than 51 percent of the median income is the cost of college in the United States, while the cost of college in Germany is just 4.3 percent of that country's income. In Canada it is about 5 percent. In England it is about 6 percent. Compare that to us—51 percent of median income in the United States. It is less than 7 percent in Canada, in England, in Germany—our competitors.

We should be doing everything in our power to encourage forthcoming generations to pursue higher education so that we do not slide further in global rankings and compromise our ability to compete. Where we used to lead the globe in percentage of population with a college education, now we lag. We cannot be the leading economy if we are the lagging nation in education.

I commend my colleagues, including Senators HARKIN, REED, WARREN, and GILLIBRAND, who have been so active even before I came to this body in calling attention to this issue. I urge my colleagues to step up and be a part of preserving this grand American tradition of college access, which is so essential to the other grand tradition in our Nation of social mobility, that no matter where you are born, no matter what your economic status, no matter what your color or your creed, this is the Nation where, if you have grit and toughness, discipline and hard work, you can make it. We are a country that will remove those obstacles and allow genius to be made manifest.

I hope we can begin to get bills like this that are so common sense—this idea that we can refinance student debt—to the point where we can discuss the bills on the floor and they can escape the trap of the filibuster.

TRUCK SAFETY

Before yielding the floor, I wish to take this moment to express my deepest condolences to the family of victims involved in a tragic tractor trailer accident Saturday night on the New Jersey Turnpike. My thoughts and prayers go out to the several individuals who were injured in the crash. I obviously wish them a full recovery.

We owe many thanks to the emergency personnel who responded to this weekend's accident and countless others who worked tirelessly along our highways to keep them safe. During times like these, though, we must ask ourselves whether this tragedy and so many others in New Jersey and across our Nation along our highways could have been prevented with common sense. It is too early to tell, but I am grateful to the National Transportation Safety Board for investigating

this particular accident thoroughly. I eagerly await their findings, but in the meantime, it is worth reviewing what we do know.

Larger and heavier trucks cause greater damage when collisions occur. It is just physics. That is why there are rules governing truck size and weight limitations on our highways. I have concerns about any attempts to increase truck size and weight limits. I hope that sound data and science will inform our decisions, the decisions this body must make on that issue.

Another major highway problem—one that I know is affecting the lives of families from coast to coast—is the problem with driver fatigue. Studies show that fatigue contributes to 30 to 40 percent of all major accidents—all major truck accidents. Thirty to forty percent of truck accidents are contributed to by fatigue. When drivers do not get enough rest, when they are more tired, they are much more likely to get into an accident. That is why there are limitations in place on the number of hours truckdrivers may work in any given week. I am concerned about any efforts to weaken those rules, which would allow people to push the limit of human exhaustion even further and would therefore create an environment where more accidents are possible.

The bottom line is that truck accidents and the deaths and injuries caused by them are actually increasing in America. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to take a serious look at what we can do to improve the safety of our highways.

I yield the floor.

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

Mr. WYDEN. Madam President, I come to the floor today as we get ready to vote on the veterans bill to make several points and would like to begin by commending Senators SANDERS and MCCAIN. They have obviously acted quickly. They have acted responsibly. They are taking up some of the most extraordinary concerns that really have come to light in the last few weeks regarding the access our veterans have to medical care.

I think it would be fair to say that every single Senator—every Senator—is grateful for the immeasurable sacrifices veterans make for the Nation. These are men and women who give up years of their lives to serve our country and willingly head into harm's way. They suffer physical and mental wounds all too often. Many of the veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—and I have seen this in my home State—have volunteered for three, four, and five tours of duty.

What is undisputable is this: The Senate understands that when our veterans come home, the health care services they receive must be second to none. I believe that strongly. I believe it is a concern widely shared here in the Senate. That is why the reports of long wait times and falsified records are so appalling.

The VA audit that came out this week showed, for example, how hard veterans in my home State of Oregon have been hit. More than 3,000 Oregon veterans could not be seen by a doctor within 90 days at the Portland VA facility, and nearly 3,500 faced the same wait times at the Roseberg VA facility. Many Oregon veterans who rely on the Boise and Walla Walla facilities got similar treatment. Moreover, an investigation is underway to determine how things deteriorated so rapidly. It is pretty obvious that these kinds of findings are inexcusable and they are unconscionable.

Veterans deserve the best. Senators SANDERS and MCCAIN deserve credit for working in a bipartisan way—a way that is too rare here in Washington, DC—to address this challenge. It is never easy to work in a bipartisan way. I commend them.

I wish to also raise today one part of the bill that I believe has to be resolved and can be resolved before the legislation gets to the President's desk. The legislation currently directs many of our veterans to Medicare's doctors and specialists. At first glance that might not raise questions, but I wanted to bring up the possibility of some unintended consequences.

Right now there is a mandated 2-percent cut on payments for Medicare services because of across-the-board sequestration. That is still in effect. However, that particular spending cut, that spending reduction, does not apply to treatment for veterans. So, in effect—and I know this was completely unintended—this could create an incentive for physicians—we already do not have enough of them caring for seniors who rely on Medicare—it could create an incentive for doctors to take the veteran patients over our Nation's seniors. I think no Senator wants that to happen. I have talked about this with Chairman SANDERS and with Senator MCCAIN, and they certainly do not want that false choice. I think it would be fair to say that no one wants to see seniors pitted against veterans. All Senators want the best possible care for both our older people and our veterans.

The problem, however—and all Senators are familiar with this—Medicare patients often are already waiting in line to see their doctors. In fact, many of the underperforming VA facilities are located in communities that have difficulty meeting the current demand for care. This is especially true in some medical fields that are absolutely crucial for our veterans, particularly primary care and mental health.

It is important to note that the other body—the House—has picked up on an idea that I and others have advanced in order to resolve this matter. So this is an opportunity for the Senate and the House, in a bipartisan way, to work together. I have talked to leaders of the veterans committee in the House. My sense is that we now have the House fully supportive of a way to resolve this issue and ensure that despite the fact that the veterans funds are not sequestered and the seniors funds—the Medicare funds—are, there would be a way to resolve this, and that would simply be to stipulate that any credentialed provider could contract with the VA to treat veterans. That way, in effect, we would ensure that both seniors and veterans would get the care they need. In effect, it would put the Senate and the other body on the same wavelength.

It is a simple fix. We just allow our veterans to meet with any licensed clinical provider, not just the Medicare provider.

In closing, I commend again Chairman SANDERS and Senator MCCAIN for first-rate work, accomplished at truly land-speed record timing.

As chairman of the Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction and a long history with respect to Medicare, I want them and our colleagues in the other body to know the Finance Committee is very anxious to work with all concerned to make sure the final version of this legislation—the bill we hope goes to the President's desk as soon as possible—addresses what is best for both veterans and seniors.

I am confident that by working together—Democrats and Republicans in the Senate and the House—we can achieve that resolution before the bill gets to the President's desk.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I rise to express my disappointment in today's earlier vote, that we weren't able to pass the student refinancing legislation.

I thank my colleague Senator WARREN for sponsoring that bill and for my colleagues who did support it. I hope we will have a chance to bring up this legislation again, get bipartisan support, and get it passed.

We can agree education is the gateway to opportunity. I was first in my family to go to college and went to school with the help of financial aid, and I know how important it is to many in the State of Washington that we help them make education more affordable.

Student debt in this Nation quadrupled over the past 10 years, so the total amount of debt is $1.2 trillion. Many students in my State are anxious about this situation and they want to do something about it.

Over the past 4 years student debt has even surpassed credit card debt. So when we think about that, the fact that student debt is enough to pay every American's credit card balance and still have $450 billion left over tells us how much debt is being accumulated on behalf of students just to get an education, just to basically make their way in a changing economy.

We do live in an information age, and it means that everybody having a good

base education and being able to adapt—as new information comes along that changes industry—is going to be critically important.

The fact that student debt is now the second source of personal debt in America, only behind mortgages, puts a drag on our economy. Those who are suffering under this are real individuals.

We just had a roundtable in the State of Washington last weekend with some of the best and brightest at the University of Washington. These students talked about how they were trying to invest in their own skills so they could advance in their education, and many of the stories they told were not out of the ordinary, but I think it is something we don't think about.

In a lot of these cases, these individuals were talking about how they were trying to get an education. Other people in their family, their brothers and sisters, were trying to get an education, and their parents were also trying to upgrade their skills, because in an information age economy, that is what happens, everybody has to upgrade their skills.

So these students are trying to do everything. But I was truly moved by one student who said: I have a debt that seems to be the size of a mortgage for me, but I don't have a house that goes along with it.

He was trying to say: I am coming out of college with incredible debt and how am I going to even afford the basic things people look forward to—maybe not right after graduation but as they start their careers and start to move forward. These are individuals who contribute to our economy. They buy cars, they buy homes, everything. But this individual, a graduate of Central Washington University, told me he pays the same amount for rent as he does for student loans every month.

In Washington State the average student borrower owes more than $23,000 before they graduate. That is an increase of 22 percent over the last 5 years, $4,000 for the average student borrower at the University of Washington.

So over the next weeks thousands of students in Washington State will walk across and get their diploma, but when they accept this diploma and go into the world of opportunity, they will also be going with a lot of debt. We also heard from another student at the University of Washington, how at this point in her career, as she graduates, the debt will be almost $100,000. She wants to pursue a career, but when she thinks about how much she has to pay on that student loan, that is going to affect that. In fact, during her time at the University of Washington there were points at which she worked 60 hours a week. I don't know how anybody can continue their education and work 60 hours a week.

So these are students who want to be able to refinance and pay down. In this case, with somebody who has a 6-percent or 7-percent loan, this bill and legislation would allow them to refinance.

With the legislation, an undergraduate with $30,000 in student loans, for example, would save almost $5,000 over the life of their loan by a refinancing of that interest rate, if it was 6.8 percent, to the current direct undergraduate interest rate of 3.86. Those are real dollars to these individuals.

That means much needed help for 25 million borrowers across the country. It could save, on average, for all those borrowers, about $2,000 per loan. In my State it would mean relief for 451,000 students, just like the ones we spoke to last week.

The University of Washington in the Pacific Northwest took matters into its own hands and produced a report. The report showed that the typical University of Washington student would have to work 54 hours a week for a full year to pay for 1 year of student education.

I am so proud of these students. They did their own report and got it on the front page of the Seattle Times because it spells out what we have already known, that the days when students could raise the amount of money they needed to pay for education by doing summer jobs is gone.

The burden of debt and the amount of money owed is impacting students. There is no way they can work their way through college at 54 hours or 60 hours a week and be able to do their academic work.

Entrepreneurial activity among 20- to 34-year-olds is challenged. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York has found that for the first time people with student loan debt are less likely to buy a house than those without, so it is showing up in our economy.

If you think about it, if this is what a generation of Americans are going to be faced with for the next decade or two, then that is going to have a ripple effect through our economy for several years.

A recent study by the Brookings Institution found that student loan borrowers are 60 to 70 percent less likely to apply for graduate school than those without student debt. So again now we have another complexity.

I look at this issue and I look at the fact that we have a worldwide demand for 35,000 new airplanes. We need 20,000 new workers in the aerospace industry. We have demands for computer scientists, something like 300,000 a year. We only graduate 70,000.

I look at it and say: Why aren't we helping to finance everybody who wants to get an engineering degree and a computer science degree? Why aren't we figuring out a way to make that more affordable? Because in an information age economy, that is exactly what we need to do, make an investment in education, but we can't make an investment in education on the backs of these students when they are coming out of college with this much debt or trying to struggle even to learn these careers that are so vital to our economy and they have to choose between working and actually studying. We would rather they commit themselves to these careers and these educations so we can have the workforce of the future.

I know some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle didn't support this legislation, but the Congressional Budget Office projects that the bill would actually reduce the deficit by about $14 billion over the next decade.

That is important because we want to see policies that are going to help our economy in the short run and in the long run, but they have to be fiscally responsible.

So I say to those critics who say: Oh, well, if we make the interest rate lower, then students are going to borrow more money, I don't think students are looking to borrow more to add to their debt.

I don't think students whom I talked to who had loans as high as $180,000 want to borrow more money just because we are going to reduce the interest rate. They want to refinance, reduce their obligation, and get back to studying.

There is much more we need to do to mitigate the cost of higher education. I know my colleagues and I are going to be working on that, but the Bank on Student Loans Emergency Refinancing Act was a very good step to help students and to focus them on their careers and education.

Again, I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will look again at this issue and get back to it. We need to make sure college education is more affordable. It is time for us to extend the same benefits we do for businesses and mortgages to students so they can refinance and that 25 million students in America could refinance their student loans.

I thank Senator WARREN for bringing up this issue. I hope we will get back to it again.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. CANTWELL. I ask unanimous consent that the time in quorum be equally divided between both sides.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

FEDERAL EMPLOYEE UNIONS

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise to speak on a matter of great importance that seems to have slipped through the cracks of the public's consciousness. However, with the growing furor over the recent scandal at the Veterans' Administration, I expect more and more people will be made aware of it.

I don't think it is unreasonable to argue that most Americans would be outraged to learn the Federal Government pays tens of millions of dollars every year to pay hundreds, if not thousands, of government employees not to work. This practice used to be called featherbedding. ''The term 'featherbedding' originally referred to any person who is pampered, coddled, or excessively rewarded.''

It was later used to describe certain labor relations practices. According to Wikipedia:

The modern use of the term in the labor relations setting began in the United States railroad industry, which used feathered mattresses in sleeping cars. Railway labor unions, confronted with changing technology which led to widespread unemployment, sought to preserve jobs by negotiating contracts which required employers to compensate workers to do little or no work or which required complex and time-consuming work rules so as to generate a full day's work for an employee who otherwise would not remain employed.

Congress tried to put an end to the practice in the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act amendments, which defined and outlawed featherbedding. However, the U.S. Supreme Court has narrowly defined the terminology, leaving most practices undisturbed.

The featherbedding-like practice I am referring to today is most often called official time, wherein government employees—who are highly compensated, often including overtime pay—are paid to perform no work for the government, only work for the benefit of their unions. These ''employees'' are not union employees, nor are they paid by the union. Instead, they are union members paid by the taxpayers to work full time for the union while working for the Federal Government.

Of course, this practice also goes on in the private sector. However, in the private sector, the featherbedding comes off of the bottom line and is negotiated as a measure of ensuring labor peace and in exchange for other union concessions. In the Federal Government, where the bottom line is the taxpayer and where unions are not permitted to strike, this practice is a way for weak managers to use government funds to reward public sector union political supporters and financial contributors, passing the costs along to the unknowing taxpayer for services not rendered. In the private sector, official time is carefully monitored and controlled. In the Federal sector, managers generally look the other way.

According to the Office of Personnel Management, or OPM, during fiscal year 2011 unions represented 1,202,733 nonpostal Federal civil service bargaining unit employees—an increase of more than 17,000 employees compared to fiscal year 2010. In that same year agencies reported that bargaining unit employees spent nearly 3.4 million hours on official time—an increase of nearly 10 percent compared to the previous year. How much money are we talking about, and why should American taxpayers shoulder the entire burden if the official time is only for union work?

Some may wonder what this has to do with the VA scandal. I don't think it is a coincidence that the VA—which is plagued by incompetence, dishonesty, and bureaucratic ineptitude—utilizes the practice of official time more than any other Federal agency, according to OPM. In 2011 the VA reported paying out nearly 1 million hours in official time—an increase of more than 23 percent over the previous year. The cost of official time in 2011 amounted to nearly $43 million. That is $43 million paid out to VA ''employees'' to do union work full time. Wall Street Journal Editorial Board writer Kimberley Strassel noted a few weeks back:

> The VA boasts one of the largest federal workforces, and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki bragged in 2010 that two-thirds of it is unionized. That's a whopping 200,000 union members, represented by the likes of the American Federation of Government Employees and the Service Employees International Union.

I ask unanimous consent that the article be printed in the RECORD following my remarks.

Union supporters often lament that under Federal law Federal employee unions are relatively toothless, especially when compared to the very powerful State employee unions. However, as Ms. Strassel noted, given its size and influence, the VA union may be an exception to that rule.

Once again, two-thirds of the VA workforce is unionized, and the agency has paid more than $40 million in salaries to full-time union workers in a single year. That has to have an impact on the VA's efficiency. And that is for workers who don't even work—except for the union.

Obviously, the inefficiency of the VA has recently been the subject of a very high-profile public debate. However, the impact unions have had on the VA's operation was being talked about well before news of the recent scandal broke. For example, Senators PORTMAN and COBURN sent a letter to former VA Secretary Shinseki in 2013 noting that the vast majority of VA employees on official time were trained nurses, instrument technicians, pharmacists, dental assistants, or therapists. In other words, these were employees hired specifically to fulfill roles in direct support of veterans. Yet, instead of caring for veterans, processing claims, and helping to eliminate the horrendous backlog, these employees were being paid to do union work full time—all at the expense of taxpayers. On top of that, union-negotiated work rules over things such as seniority and job classification have contributed to the bureaucratic nightmare at the VA. In addition, the unions have been the most vocal opponents of any reform proposals that would give veterans access to outside health care.

While it may be overstating the unions' influence to assign to them the blame for the entire VA scandal, it is clear that these unions have at least contributed to the problems we are now seeing at the agency. They are at least partially to blame for the backlog in veterans' claims. They are at least partially to blame for the failed VA bureaucracy. They are at least partially to blame for the failure of reasonable attempts to reform the agency in the past, and it is almost impossible to reform it the way it is currently run.

I wish I could say this problem is isolated at the VA. Unfortunately, there is at least one other scandal-plagued agency with a similar union problem. I am talking, of course, about the IRS.

We are all pretty familiar with the IRS targeting scandal. By its own admission, the agency was targeting Tea Party groups in the runup to the elections in both 2010 and 2012.

Like the VA, the IRS consists of a heavily unionized workforce. About 66 percent of IRS employees belong to the National Treasury Employees Union, or NTEU.

It shouldn't surprise anyone to learn that the NTEU is extremely active in politics, having twice endorsed President Obama. During the 2010 election cycle, when the IRS first began targeting conservative groups, the NTEU raised over $600,000 through its PAC, almost all of which went to Democrats. In the next election, in 2012, the NTEU PAC raised more than $700,000, 94 percent of which went to Democrats. In other words, during the same campaign cycles in which the IRS was targeting conservative organizations—organizations that were critical of the President, his administration, and in many cases the IRS itself—for harassment and extra scrutiny, the union that represents nearly two-thirds of IRS employees was busy raising and donating well over $1 million to Democratic candidates. And we wonder why the IRS—which should not be partisan in any way, shape, or form—is filled with partisanship. We should not have unions at the IRS or at the VA. Is it any surprise that the agency found itself predisposed toward harming conservative organizations or their causes?

Of course, the IRS has its own issues with the practice of paying out official time. Indeed, as of 2011 there were at least 200 IRS employees working full time for their union—all at taxpayers' expense. In that same year, the agency paid out more than 625,000 hours of official time. The total cost of these union activities was roughly around $27 million. But that is only the beginning. That is $27 million in a single year paid

to ''employees'' of the Federal Government who did nothing but union work. That is simply preposterous.

As I said, if the American people understood that this type of fleecing of the taxpayers goes on every day, they would be outraged.

Current law allows most Federal employees to be represented by a union. There are, however, some exceptions—and good reasons for these exceptions. Most of these exceptions are for agencies that perform a national security function or other highly sensitive work. One would think the IRS would fit in that category. One would think the VA would fit in that category. For example, we don't allow employees at the FBI, the CIA, or the Secret Service to be unionized. There is good reason for that: We don't need partisan political activities in those agencies. But we don't need them in the IRS or the Veterans' Administration either. We also don't allow employees at the GAO or the Federal Labor Relations Authority to unionize.

In days to come, Congress is going to have to take a hard look at reforming both the Veterans' Administration and the IRS. One of the questions we are going to have to ask ourselves is whether these agencies, with their important and sensitive missions and their poor performance in the recent past, should be added to the list of agencies not permitted to unionize, not permitted to be partisan. And anybody who doesn't understand that doesn't understand anything about politics.

In addition, as we continually look for ways to improve the efficiency of our government, we will need to examine the overall practice of official time and determine whether it should be eliminated entirely. I, for one, don't believe taxpayers ought to be footing the bill for union work. I think the majority of the American people, if given an opportunity to fully understand this practice and the abuse it entails, would agree with me.

One thing is for sure: If what we have seen at the VA and the IRS is in any way representative of the influence unions have on government agencies, drastic changes are going to be necessary. How can any American citizen feel the IRS is above politics when it is run by a union? And we all know that unions support almost 100 percent one party over the other. How can we feel the VA is going to be handled right when it has a union representing it and determining all the workloads?

I have talked to the IRS Commissioners since I have been on the Finance Committee, and they admit that to try to correct or punish an IRS employee who is out of control and not doing what is right takes upward of a year if you are lucky. That is why there are all kinds of politics in these agencies and they act with impunity in advancing what really are liberal causes.

If there are any two agencies that should not have unions in them, one ought to be the IRS and the other ought to be the Veterans' Administration.

I was raised in the union movement. I learned a trade. I went through a formal apprenticeship program, and I became a journeyman. I am proud of that. I believe unions have a place in our society, but they have become more and more partisan. It is reported that 40 percent of union members are Republicans. Yet almost 100 percent of every dime that is given in politics is given to Democrats. So by any measure we have to say that these folks are partisan, which I think is their right. But should we have partisan control of agencies such as the IRS, which everybody has to deal with at one time or another in their life, and the Veterans' Administration, which is in dire jeopardy right now because of the way it is being run?

I have been very much trying to do a straightforward investigation of the IRS and these accusations that have been thrown at it, many of which are true. The more I get into it, the more I realize it is being run in a partisan way for one party when it should be run in a nonpartisan way—for neither party. I am going to do something about it, and I hope the American people pay attention to it because I think most people, including younger Members, would be outraged to know that there is partisanship at these agencies that is not just average partisanship. It is blatant partisanship. The more I get into it, the more I realize that is true.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the Wall Street Journal article that I previously referred to.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, May 29, 2014]

BIG LABOR'S VA CHOKE HOLD

(By Kimberley A. Strassel)

We know with certainty that there is at least one person the Department of Veterans Affairs is serving well. That would be the president of local lodge 1798 of the National Federation of Federal Employees.

The Federal Labor Relations Authority, the agency that mediates federal labor disputes, earlier this month ruled in favor of this union president, in a dispute over whether she need bother to show up at her workplace—the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Martinsburg, W.Va. According to FLRA documents, this particular VA employee is 100% ''official time''—D.C. parlance for federal employees who work every hour of every work day for their union, at the taxpayer's expense.

In April 2012, this, ahem, VA ''employee'' broke her ankle and declared that she now wanted to do her nonwork for the VA entirely from the comfort of her home. Veterans Affairs attempted a compromise: Perhaps she could, pretty please, come in two days a week? She refused, and complained to the FLRA that the VA was interfering with her right to act as a union official. The VA failed to respond to the complaint in the required time (perhaps too busy caring for actual veterans) and so the union boss summarily won her case.

The VA battle is only just starting, but any real reform inevitably ends with a fight over organized labor. Think of it as the federal version of Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan and other states where elected officials have attempted to rein in the public-sector unions that have hijacked government agencies for their own purpose. Fixing the VA requires first breaking labor's grip, and the unions are already girding for that fight.

Federal labor unions are generally weak by comparison to state public-sector unions, though the VA might be an exception. The VA boasts one of the largest federal workforces and VA Secretary Eric Shinseki bragged in 2010 that two-thirds of it is unionized. That's a whopping 200,000 union members, represented by the likes of the American Federation of Government Employees and the Service Employees International Union. And this is government-run health care—something unions know a lot about from organizing health workers in the private sector. Compared with most D.C. unions (which organize for better parking spots) the VA houses a serious union shop.

The Bush administration worked to keep federal union excesses in check; Obama administration officials have viewed contract ''negotiations'' as a way to reward union allies. Federal unions can't bargain for wages or benefits, but the White House has made it up to them.

Manhattan Institute scholar Diana Furchtgott-Roth recently detailed Office of Personnel Management numbers obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request by Rep. Phil Gingrey (R., Ga.). On May 25, Ms. Furchtgott-Roth reported on MarketWatch that the VA in 2012 paid 258 employees to be 100 percent ''full-time,'' receiving full pay and benefits to do only union work. Seventeen had six-figure salaries, up to $132,000. According to the Office of Personnel Management, the VA paid for 988,000 hours of ''official'' time in fiscal 2011, a 23 percent increase from 2010.

Moreover, as Sens. Rob Portman (R., Ohio) and Tom Coburn (R., Okla.) noted in a 2013 letter to Mr. Shinseki, the vast majority of these ''official'' timers were nurses, instrument technicians pharmacists, dental assistants and therapists, who were being paid to do union work even as the VA tried to fill hundreds of jobs and paid overtime to other staff.

As for patient-case backlogs, the unions have helped in their creation. Contract-negotiated work rules over job classifications and duties and seniorities are central to the ''bureaucracy'' that fails veterans. More damaging has been the union hostility to any VA attempt to give veterans access to alternative sources of care—which the unions consider a direct job threat. The American Federation of Government Employees puts out regular press releases blasting any ''outsourcing'' of VA work to non-VA-union members.

The VA scandal is now putting an excruciating spotlight on the most politically sensitive agency in D.C., and the unions are worried about where this is headed. They watched in alarm as an overwhelming 390 House members—including 160 Democrats—voted on May 21 to give the VA more power to fire senior executives, a shot over the rank-and-file's bow. They watched in greater alarm as Mr. Shinseki said the VA would be letting more veterans seek care at private facilities in areas where the department's capacity is limited.

This is a first step toward a reform being drafted by Sens. Coburn, John McCain (R., Ariz.) and Richard Burr (R., N.C.), which would give veterans a card allowing them health services at facilities of their choosing. The union fear is that Democrats, in a tough election year, will be pressured toward reforms that break labor's VA stronghold.

Not surprisingly, Sen. Bernie Sanders (D., Vt.), chairman of the Veterans Affairs Committee, has promised his own ''reform.'' Odds

are it will echo the unions' call to simply throw more money at the problem. Any such bill should be viewed as Democrats once again putting the interests of their union allies ahead of veterans.

Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Madam President, last week our Nation commemorated the 70th anniversary of D-day. Leo Scheer of Huntington County, IN, is one of those courageous veterans who survived the outlying assault on the beaches of Normandy, and last month he made the trip to Washington, DC, through the Honor Flight Network to receive a hero's welcome from a grateful Nation.

My office had the honor of greeting Leo and this group of heroes upon their arrival to the World War II Memorial, and Leo made an unforgettable impression with his humility, demeanor, and strength of character. Leo is a member of what we have come to know as the ''greatest generation.'' They easily deserve that title, where duty comes as second nature, where braggadocio is not present, where simply standing up and serving your country in a time of crisis is responded to overwhelmingly without complaint and with true honor and dignity.

Sadly, there are a dwindling number of those not only who arrived on the shores of D-day in Normandy but those who served throughout the world's largest military conflict in history. While those great service men and women are still here to share their stories—at least a few—we must remember the sacred promise that we as a Nation made to them to give them the care they deserve when they come back home.

As a veteran myself, my hope is that our Nation will carry out this promise not only to our World War II vets but to all who have served in conflicts from that point forward—from Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, and other places. We must live up to the promise for all who were called to serve and answered that call.

Regrettably, in recent months we have seen this promise broken and shattered. Just this week an internal audit by the Department of Veterans Affairs revealed that the department's problems have affected 76 percent of VA facilities. Nearly 100,000 veterans continue to wait for medical appointments. These are staggering figures.

In my home State of Indiana confirmed audit findings show that veterans endured unacceptably long wait times. Some Hoosier veterans never even received an appointment. This is unacceptable. That is why today I stand here to support the bipartisan Sanders-McCain veterans bill that would implement key changes to the existing VA health care system.

This is not a perfect bill, and there are parts of it that I wish were different. I hope that we can manage some needed changes as it moves over to the House of Representatives and then to conference. I hope the final bill will make our veterans proud and begin the process of reform that the VA so desperately needs.

Let me address three key reforms in this legislation that I think are essential to moving forward and the primary reason why I have agreed to support this. First, giving veterans more choices in care—perhaps the most important provision in this legislation—is allowing veterans who cannot be scheduled within a reasonable time the option to receive care from non-VA facilities or private sector facilities outside of the VA. This also applies to veterans that reside more than 40 miles away from a VA facility, many of them not in a condition to be able to secure the transportation they need for that care, so they don't have to endure long drives to get care. We must ensure that veterans receive timely care, and if the VA cannot provide it, then our veterans should be free to go elsewhere for care, including Medicare providers.

Second, the removal of bad actors—there are a lot of good people working at VA. Their hearts are in the right place. They are talented and provide good care and good service. I don't mean to demean their contributions to veterans' health care, but we do know that there have been mistakes, mismanagement, and there has been some outright fraud, it appears. We will have to prosecute that. This reform would authorize the Secretary of the VA to demote or fire senior executive service employees based on their performance. That is not present now, and if we are going to change the management it takes more than just asking the first top person to resign as has happened. We need to look at the management team and those that oversee those that are providing the care and what their responsibility is in that role. Passage here would shake up the leadership of the VA so those people can be held accountable for their actions.

The third provision I want to mention is providing more VA locations. It is clear that some of our veterans have to travel very long distances. Also it is clear that the facilities currently in place are short of help and there are not enough to address the needs of the many veterans that are entering the system. So this bill would establish 26 new VA medical facilities around the country. As I said, while this legislation is not perfect, it is an important start but it should not and will not be the end of our work to live up to our promises to veterans.

Ultimately, as I stated before to our body of Senators, the VA needs a change of culture. Too many bureaucrats view our veterans as a list of numbers rather than the heroes worthy of our very best care. We have to look at our veterans through a different lens, one that sees them clearly as defenders of our freedom and as the heroes they are.

We must continue to investigate and reform the culture within the VA and ensure that this crisis doesn't happen again. That is why I called for an independent investigation. This bill authorizes the process of beginning these independent evaluations. Also the committee has provided additional funding to specifically allow the inspector general to conduct an independent investigation into the VA, and I join my many colleagues to ask the Department of Justice to join in this investigation. Now, unfortunately, this culture of indifference at the VA is not new. For years veterans have faced excessively long waits for disability claims. When I returned to the Senate in 2011, these waits were over 600 days in Indianapolis. Veterans were waiting over 2 years to have their claims adjudicated. Once we shined a light on the problem, the situation improved somewhat, but our veterans still face waits that are far too long both for medical visits and to receive their disability benefits.

My staff in Indianapolis currently have over 550 active cases that we are working on for Hoosier veterans who are seeking help and have not gotten satisfactory responses from the VA. So they call us and say: Can you help? We do everything that we can to help expedite the process. In many cases these veterans are just trying to assess the benefits that they have rightfully earned and they just want an answer.

Reflecting on Leo Scheer's service to our Nation on D-day reminded me of the opportunity that I had to visit the beaches of Normandy while I was Ambassador to Germany. It was, to say the least, a powerful and extremely emotional experience standing on the bluffs overlooking the spread of beaches from Utah to Omaha, and it made me reflect on the countless lives lost in service to our Nation.

I was standing there on a perfectly calm day. The water was gently lapping on the shore. The beaches were empty. A soft warm breeze was blowing. The sun was shining—just a beautiful day—and I was overwhelmed by the violence that must have taken place that I could only have imagined. We have all seen the movie ''Saving Private Ryan,'' and I give Mr. Spielberg great credit for making that a very realistic picture of what happens. But I don't think Hollywood, or those of us who weren't there, could imagine the violence that was taking place on that beach when our troops went ashore. The silence was not there. There must have been a cacophony of noise with hundreds of ships offshore unloading our soldiers into landing vehicles. Many of them were shot down by the German bunkers up in the bluffs, built-in concrete fortifications—an almost impossible task. Many of them never even got out of their landing craft. When the doors opened, many were shot before they reached the water. The water was red with the blood from our soldiers who never

made it to the beach. The beach was littered with bodies of those who never made it to the edge of the cliff. And the sacrifice that was made in climbing those cliffs and getting to those German bunkers took many, many hundreds if not thousands of more lives.

So visiting the graves of soldiers afterwards, pausing to say a prayer of gratitude for their sacrifice leads us to this point where we have to understand what it is we are trying to provide and why we need to provide it. That is in a response to those who put their lives on the line and sacrificed those lives—and many ended up with lifelong disabilities—a commitment to those that we would take care of them when they came back.

They have come back and run into a government-run bureaucracy that has run amuck. If it proves anything, it proves that government just simply doesn't do big stuff very well, without confusion, without bureaucracy, without duplication, without excessive costs. It is not efficient and not effective, nowhere near what the private sector can offer. That is why there is the provision for veterans who cannot get care at the VA on a timely basis to have the opportunity to use our private system.

They deserve our utmost care. They served on the frontline, but when they go for benefit decisions and when they go for health care, they are not in the front of the line, they are at the back of the line, and that is not right.

We cannot let the sun set today, and I am glad we are not, because we are voting to move this legislation forward. In doing so we are going to make a statement that we are going to try to live up to that promise and do the best that we possibly can. As I said, as a veteran I expect my country to fulfill the promises to my fellow service men and women, and as a Senator I will seek to hold the Veterans' Administration accountable and to do everything I can to help in the reform of the system. That reform is so desperately needed.

The leader of the D-day effort, GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower called the invasion of Normandy ''a fight in which we would accept nothing less than full victory.'' It is in that spirit that I call upon my Senate colleagues to immediately take up and pass this legislation on behalf of our veterans and then to continue the work of changing the culture of the VA so that we don't have to come back years from now and repeat this process all over again.

Let's get it right this time. The fight to restore trust to our veterans is one we are waging, and to paraphrase General Eisenhower, we should accept nothing less than victory.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank my friend from Indiana for his remarks about our military service men and women and our obligation to provide them the care they have earned for their service. I look forward to voting, along with everyone in this Chamber, on this bipartisan legislation this afternoon, which represents the first step—not the last step but the first step—toward the systemic failures that have been disclosed as a result of the comprehensive VA audit.

I come to the floor to speak again about a growing humanitarian crisis in South Texas, the State I represent, where authorities are struggling with waves of unaccompanied minors—children—coming through Mexico into the United States. The numbers are pretty staggering. So far 47,000 minors have been detained at the southwestern border since October. The Department of Homeland Security and Border Patrol estimate that there could be as many as 60,000 unaccompanied minors, mostly from Central America. If we look at the map from Guatemala City to McAllen, TX, it is roughly 1,200 miles.

Unfortunately, this influx is a direct consequence of the perception that this administration will not enforce our immigration laws. Interviews with more than 200 of the migrants who comprise some of these individuals confirm their impression, which is reinforced by Central American news media outlets—primarily newspapers—that if children can get to the United States, they will have a free ticket and be able to stay.

We had a chance to question and discuss this humanitarian crisis with Secretary Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security, this morning before the Judiciary Committee, and to his credit, he has taken an all-hands-on-deck attitude, but the truth is the Federal Government's resources are overwhelmed by this humanitarian crisis.

By creating a powerful incentive for people to come to the United States illegally, we have effectively encouraged children and their parents to make a treacherous and threatening journey from Central America, one of the most dangerous parts of the world today, through Mexico—large swaths of Mexico are controlled by drug cartels—and then all the way into Texas.

Secretary Johnson conceded this morning that somehow we are schizophrenic about this issue. When we look at the victims of human trafficking and other people, we all agree we need to do more on a bipartisan basis to deal with this scourge of human trafficking, but the fact is that the transnational criminal organizations—trafficking people for economic reasons, such as for sex, drugs, and weapons—will do anything for money. They are criminals, and that is what they do.

Unfortunately, we have a lot of innocent children who are now being swept up in this humanitarian crisis, as I said, committed by their parents to take this trek across Mexico into the United States. We have no idea how many children start that journey and how many simply drop off along the way because they have been kidnapped, injured, murdered or perhaps they just become ill as a result of exposure and die during this long trek.

It is a journey that often begins in cities, towns, and villages scattered throughout Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The first major checkpoint is the Mexican border with Guatemala. It is about 500 miles long. Before arriving there, many families and children pass through regions of northern Guatemala that are controlled by the Zetas cartel, one of the most violent criminal organizations in the world.

When they reach Mexico, many illegal immigrants jump onto a network of freight trains known by the ominous nickname ''The Beast.''

I encourage anyone who is listening to me to go online and Google or Bing or use some other search engine and type in ''The Beast'' and read some of the horrific stories about transportation from southern Mexico up to northern Mexico on The Beast. NPR, National Public Radio, repeatedly reported The Beast train is ''just as likely to spit them out as it is to shepherd them safely to the border.''

Indeed, people riding on The Beast are frequently robbed, raped or killed by the drug traffickers and gang members who control the smuggling corridors. This is organized criminal activity by transnational criminal organizations. As one former Beast passenger told CNN, ''almost everyone gets assaulted.''

If there is anybody who thinks illegal immigration and trafficking involves some sort of benign experience of traveling from a country where people don't have an opportunity to a country where people do have an opportunity, that part is true, but what they don't tell you is the horrific, life-threatening, and sometimes life-destroying experience of getting to the United States because people are committing themselves to the tender mercies of some of the most violent criminal organizations on the planet.

In recent years, Mexican authorities have discovered mass graves containing the bodies of Central American migrants—those who did not make it to our southern border. Among those who are not murdered by the cartels, many passengers on The Beast simply fall off the train. For example, they try to jump on it while it is moving. If they are lucky, they might just end up with a few broken bones, but if they are not lucky, they might end up losing a limb or being crushed to death underneath its wheels.

In short, no one should be traveling to the United States this way and least of all young children, some of whom, according to published newspaper reports, are as young as 3 and 5 years old. Can any parent comprehend the idea of a 3- or 5-year-old coming unaccompanied or perhaps en masse with drug cartels and criminal organizations transporting them from their home country to the United States?

The Border Patrol reported that 180 convicted sex offenders have been arrested since October while coming across the southwestern border. Can you imagine this trip with convicted sex offenders mixed into the mass of humanity coming across the border?

Some children who ride The Beast are kidnapped or forced to become drug mules or forced into sexual slavery. In fact, some who make it all the way to Texas and north remain prisoners of organized crime after crossing the U.S. border.

I remember talking to one young woman. About 1 year ago I had the chance to visit with her. She came from Central America. She was brought by a coyote, they called him—a human smuggler—into Houston, TX. She had family in New Jersey, but that didn't work out, so she came back to Houston where she was essentially held as an indentured servant and prostituted and forced to turn over the proceeds of that money to the coyote—the smuggler.

When people operate in the shadows of the law, they have no protection of the law, and the people who are the most likely to get hurt are the immigrants themselves or certainly the immigrant community. We need to keep that in mind. We have to remember that Mexico's biggest and most violent drug cartels are heavily involved in this trafficking, as I mentioned earlier.

Time magazine reported last year: ''Cartels control most of Mexico's smuggling networks through which victims are moved, while they also take money from pimps and brothels operating in their territories.''

The cartels, gangs, and sex traffickers are only too happy to prey on the poor, vulnerable migrants, including children, transiting through their terrain. Experts believe the Mexican drug cartels may earn as much as $10 billion a year from sex trafficking and sex slavery alone. These are not nice people.

According to Amnesty International: ''Some human rights organizations and academics estimate that as many as six in 10 women and girl''—and one-quarter of these unaccompanied minors are girls—''migrants experience sexual violence during the journey'' through Mexico—6 out of 10.

A new CRS—Congressional Research Service—memo reports that based on apprehension data provided by Customs and Border Protection, ''there has been an increase in the number of [accompanied alien children] who are girls and the number of [unaccompanied alien children] who under the age of 13.''

They are not exactly able to defend themselves against the monstrosities they encounter along the way.

I hope it is clear to everyone listening and to the President and every other person of good will, that we should be doing everything possible to discourage people from risking their lives in the first place, and especially their children's lives, on such a dangerous journey.

Before I came to the Senate, I happened to be the Attorney General of Texas, and before that I had a career in law and the judiciary. It is standard criminal jurisprudence that not only should law enforcement enforce the laws in order to maintain the law, but the law serves another important function; that is, deterrence.

In other words, it stops people from doing things they know they should not do in the first place rather than just catching them after they do it. This is one of the elements that is missing and unfortunately was encouraged by the impression that you got a free ticket if all you had to do was get on the train and show up in South Texas. As I have said, this is very dangerous stuff, and it has backfired in unexpected ways.

Yesterday, I listed five simple suggestions to the President that he could take to start fixing the problem. I was glad to hear Secretary Johnson talk about some of the ad hoc measures he has begun to implement, but the truth is they are struggling to catch up.

I urged the President, No. 1, to publicly declare that his 2012 deferred action program will not apply to children currently arriving at the border. Let me stop there to say that this morning some of my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee could not resist the temptation to take a partisan shot. They said if the House had just passed immigration reform, this never would have happened.

My point is the President's deferred action program doesn't even apply to these children, so it is still against the law for them to enter. But they realize, as a practical matter, although the resources and capacity of the Federal Government are overwhelmed, there is no way we can turn them back, and they will have to be handled compassionately and in a humane sort of way.

It would help if, No. 1, the President would make clear he has not issued a free ticket to anyone who wants to enter the country illegally.

No. 2, I encouraged him to publicly discourage people from attempting the journey through Mexico, and it would help if our Mexican counterparts would do a better job—maybe with our help and assistance—securing their southern border, since that would stop a lot of people from coming from Central America through Mexico on this dangerous journey which I have tried to describe.

I also encouraged the President to enforce all of our immigration laws regardless of political needs or any frustration he might feel or anyone else might feel on the current stalemate in which we find ourselves. Sometimes these things take a little time.

My hope is, if not before, then by next year, Congress—the Senate and the House—can begin to move a series of smaller pieces of legislation that are more transparent, consensus based, and begin to repair the broken immigration system. I don't think anybody believes on the right or the left that the status quo is acceptable, and indeed it is dangerous to the people I have described.

So I mentioned the fourth item, which is to work with the Mexican Government to improve security at the border with Guatemala. I was recently in Juarez, Mexico, right across the river from El Paso, which used to be one of the most dangerous places on the planet because of all of the conflict between the drug cartels. Things are getting better. It is still pretty rough, but things are getting better thanks to strong leaders, such as the mayor, whom I met with there, and thanks to the assistance the U.S. Government is providing through the Merida Initiative to help train law enforcement and to provide equipment and the like. So we could step up our work with the Mexican Government to help them secure their own southern border, which would eliminate more than half of this migration from Central America.

Finally, I urge the President to take the step of making sure that Texas and other U.S. border States and communities have the resources they need to address the ongoing crisis.

Today I reiterate those calls, and I also call on the President to please act as soon as possible. Make no mistake. The actions we take and sometimes the actions we don't take have unintended consequences. But in the days and weeks ahead, there will be life-or-death consequences to an untold number of vulnerable children, perhaps in the misperception that they can come to the United States if they can just get here, without understanding the treacherous journey that will befall them. We are doing no one a service by allowing that.

Because the impression created by the President has resulted in this problem, at least in substantial part, I believe he has the unique authority and power to begin to fix it. But first he will have to send the message that I mentioned a moment ago, which is that there is no free ticket into the United States. We have to deal with the humanitarian crisis of these children and make sure they are safe, but then we need to get about the business of enforcing our laws and not just giving the impression that anybody and everybody who wants to come to the United States can come here.

Perhaps in a perfect world everybody could live in America. But the fact is that we need to have our immigration laws for our protection and for the protection of legal immigrants. We need to do everything we can to send a message that we are a caring country, but we are also a country that believes in the rule of law. We need to restore order out of this chaos, while dealing with the immediate humanitarian crisis of this wave of children that is overwhelming the capability of the Federal Government to deal with it. We need to do everything we can together to address all of these issues.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, the Senator from Texas just spoke on the floor about the number of children coming across the border into the United States, and the numbers are frightening, they are so large.

We had a hearing today with Jeh Johnson, who is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. A lot of questions were asked, such as if actions by our government or statements by our President are luring these children into the United States. Let me make the record clear. There is nothing—nothing—about the President's Executive order involving those we call DREAMers—children brought to the United States—which would lead any of these families of the children to believe they could qualify to be treated as qualified for docket—that is, deferred deportation—because they would be eligible DREAMers. None—none—of these children would be eligible, period. So the suggestion that this Executive order has anything to do with luring these children to the United States is wrong.

Second, there is turmoil in Mexico and Central America. That is a fact. I am sure that is a factor in decisions being made by some to leave. But there is an issue that has been overlooked here time and again which needs to be addressed. There is a Pulitzer Prize-winning book entitled ''Enrique's Journey.'' The author is an L.A. Times writer named Sonia Nazario. She started following the paths of children—children—coming into the United States from Mexico and Central America and even South America. Here is what she found after her investigation: 48,000 children a year coming across the border into the United States, some as young as 7 years old, half of them without any escort. How do they get in? Well, many of them jump on freight trains. Can my colleagues imagine, 7-, 8-, 9-, 10-year-olds jumping on a freight train to come into the United States, trying to get here by themselves—half of them by themselves? Why? Seventy-five percent gave the same reason: To find my mother. To find my father.

That is what is bringing so many of them into the United States. What happened? Mother left that village in Mexico or somewhere in Central America and came to the United States. She works hard now and sends money home and occasionally will send toys at birthdays and Christmas and exchange photographs. And heartbroken children get on these trains and try to find them.

They found a 9-year-old boy walking around Los Angeles. They asked him why and where he was going. He said: Where is San Francisco? He was trying to find his mother.

That is the reality and the heartbreak of what is happening at our border when it comes to children, so many times over. The lucky ones make it. Many don't. A survey done by the University of Houston found over and over these kids on their way are starving, they are beaten, they are robbed, they are raped over and over. Some are pushed off of the train. Some die. Some are maimed. That is the reality.

What does it tell us? As we step back and look at this, what does it tell us? It tells us what we already know: Our immigration system in America is broken. It is flat-out broken. I know this, and everyone else does too. Twelve million people living amongst us, some of whom have been here for decades, worried about being deported tomorrow, with a household where the wife and mother may be a citizen, the children may all be citizens, but one person in the household is not—that is our broken immigration system.

Well, Congress, stop talking about it. Do something about it. So we did. We did. And the Presiding Officer was here. It was a little over a year ago. We put together a bipartisan coalition of Senators—four Democrats, four Republicans, and I was one of them—and we sat down and for months worked out comprehensive immigration reform to finally fix this broken immigration system and start to end some of the tragedies we know are happening to children and to their parents all across America. We worked on it for months.

It was a pretty interesting coalition. It included JOHN MCCAIN, a well-known Republican Senator from Arizona; LINDSEY GRAHAM, Republican Senator from South Carolina; MARCO RUBIO, a Republican Senator from Florida; JEFF FLAKE, a Republican Senator from Arizona; and on our side, CHUCK SCHUMER of New York, BOB MENENDEZ of New Jersey, MICHAEL BENNET of Colorado, and myself.

We worked on it for months, and we produced a comprehensive immigration reform bill that was endorsed by virtually every major labor organization and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. We go through the list of virtually every religion in America, and major religions endorsed it. It was an amazing bipartisan product, and I was proud to be a part of it and even more proud when the day came that we passed it on the floor of the Senate with 68 votes—Republicans and Democrats. We did it.

What happened to it? We sent it to the U.S. House of Representatives, where it has languished for over a year. For over a year they have refused to call this bill.

Now Senators who come to the floor, who voted against the reform, who don't acknowledge the obvious—that the Republican House will not even call this bill for debate and a vote—and who criticize the current immigration system in America, aren't telling us the whole story. The whole story is that we need to fix this system top to bottom—yes, a path to citizenship but a path to citizenship that eliminates those with serious criminal records—we don't want them—makes those who want to enter this path pay a fine and learn English and make sure as well that they are paying their taxes to our country. Then we will put them on a path to citizenship, where they can be at the back of the line. Under our bill, it would take a person 13 years before they become a citizen. All that time they are paying their fines, they are learning English, they are doing what they are supposed to do, and they are subject to regular questioning as to any problems that might be in their lives that we should know about. That is what the bill does.

So when I hear people come to the floor and say this immigration system is broken, I agree completely. It is a tragedy to think thousands of children are crossing the border in search of their parents, as young as 7, 8, 9, 10 years old, and teenagers, being preyed upon.

I just had in my office the Ambassador of Ecuador to the United States of America. We talked about this issue. She told me the story of a 12-year-old girl whose mother and father were in New York, and this heartbroken girl decided she had to at any cost be reunited with them. She jumped on one of those trains, and she was apprehended by Mexican authorities. The parents found out about it and tried to find her. They put her in an orphanage. She was going through the Mexican legal system. The next thing: It was announced that this 12-year-old girl had committed suicide—questionable but still a tragedy. And this Ambassador from Ecuador said: I can't tell you what that did to our country. It broke our hearts to think that little girl was just trying to find her mom and dad.

We can do better. We can be better. All of the excuses in the world don't count when it comes to this issue because we are a nation of immigrants, my friends, all of us. We may have to go back several generations—in my case, not very far. My mother was an immigrant to this country. I am lucky to be standing on the floor of the Senate representing a great State such as Illinois. That is my story. That is my family's story. That is America's story. That is who we all are.

Why can't we, in our generation, embrace the reality of immigration and fix this broken system, make sure we have security on the border to stop, as much as we physically can, the flow of illegal immigration, and make sure those who are here are reporting to our government so we know who they are, where they are, and where they work? All of these things will make us a better and stronger nation.

Let me tell my colleagues something else about these immigrant folks, and I speak with some authority. The first wave of immigrants to this country, by and large, take the toughest, hardest jobs available—anything—and they will work hard on those jobs. But they are also looking over their shoulder at their kids and they are saying to their kids: We expect more from you. We

want you to stay in school. We want you to succeed.

That dynamic of the hard-working immigrant and the first-generation American, striving to prove they can succeed, gives our country the energy it needs. It gives our economy the energy it needs.

I see my friend has come to the floor, Senator MCCAIN, and I mentioned his name earlier in a positive way because we worked together so closely on immigration reform. He has a special challenge I don't have. Yes, we have many undocumented in Illinois, but being a border State, Arizona has tougher challenges than most. We tried in our bill to be sensitive to both States and all States in what we were putting together.

So I wanted to come to the floor and say a word about children coming across the border. I see two of my colleagues here, and I will yield the floor in just a second.

We need to acknowledge the obvious. These children are vulnerable. They are being exploited. Many of them are being hurt. Some are being raped. Others are being killed. And that has to come to an end. To bring it to an end in a sensible, thoughtful, American way, we ought to pass comprehensive immigration reform. No more excuses in the U.S. House of Representatives. Call the bill. For goodness' sake, call the bill. Debate it. Vote on it. I will accept whatever comes, but what I won't accept is ignoring these problems, blaming them on someone else, and putting off to some time in the future the reality of the responsibility we should face today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, as the son of an Air Force master sergeant and a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I take very seriously my responsibility to represent the interests of those who have served our country in uniform. When it comes to our Nation's veterans, their commitment to country is without question, and our country's commitment to them should be the same.

Put simply, our veterans deserve better. That is why I am pleased to see that we have come together to address this crisis in the Senate. These men and women have served and sacrificed on behalf of a grateful nation. We need to ensure that they are getting the high-quality services they have earned. Our veterans deserve a system that proves their care is our top priority.

Unfortunately, the VA is struggling to meet the health demands for our veterans. The VA inspector general is currently investigating misconduct throughout the VA health system. In order to ensure accountability, we have to give the VA the ability to fire and demote senior executive service employees who are responsible for these types of abuses.

Under current law, senior VA employees are nearly untouchable. That means the very people responsible for hiding the true extent of wait times, for instance, and other abuses cannot be fired. That is incredible when you think about it.

We cannot tolerate bad actors who abuse their power and put our veterans in danger. That is why a key component of this bill gives the Secretary of Veterans Affairs the authority to fire or demote senior VA employees for poor performance.

Accountability is the goal here. However, that goes beyond individual employees. The Department itself needs to be held accountable for its shortcomings. So it is time we shine a light on the VA.

This bill would also establish an electronic waiting list that would be made available to veterans on the Department's Web site so everyone can see the average waiting time for an appointment at each VA medical center for specific types of care and services. New wait time goals would also be published on the Department's Web site and in the Federal Register within 90 days of the bill's enactment.

Earlier this week we saw an audit which revealed that veterans seeking care for the first time waited an average of 60 days in the Little Rock VA hospital and 52 days in the Fayetteville hospital. Clearly, these results need to be improved and indicate the failure of the VA to meet its goal of seeing new patients within 14 days.

I am committed to ensuring that the VA uses every available option it has to deliver on its mission for all veterans who have earned this care. And if it cannot, this bill gives our veterans the ability to seek that care elsewhere.

The bill we are considering today would establish a 2-year program that allows veterans who have been unable to obtain care from the VA for providing service to seek care from private providers. This option would also be provided to those who live more than 40 miles from a VA facility, including a community-based outpatient clinic. The government would be obligated to reimburse the non-VA health care provider for the services provided to the veteran.

Wait times and secret lists are not the only problem within the VA health system. We are learning now that quality-of-care issues on a range of critical care outcomes, including mortality and infection rates, are willingly being ignored by senior VA management.

We need to restore faith in the VA health care system, and that begins with accountability and following through with our promises.

The crisis surrounding the VA health care system shows an immediate need to improve timely access to medical care for our veterans. The VA needs to correct the systemic problems that are preventing our veterans from accessing the high-quality health care services offered.

I am pleased we are taking action on this important issue, and I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation before us because we need to improve the health services our veterans earned and deserve.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair welcomes the Senator from Arkansas back to the floor.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to say that this compromise is really an excellent example of what Congress can do when we work together to put our veterans first and work toward substantive solutions to the challenges they face.

Passing this legislation this afternoon is a critical step toward addressing some of the immediate accountability and transparency concerns that are plaguing the VA and fixing its deep-seated structural and cultural challenges. Each new report seems to paint a more serious and more disturbing picture of the VA's systemwide failure to provide timely access to care for our Nation's heroes. I am especially concerned by the number of facilities that serve Washington State veterans that have been flagged for further review and investigation. The VA has promised to get to the bottom of this, and I expect them to do so immediately.

However, these new reports are not only consistent with what I hear so often from veterans and VA employees but also with what the inspector general and GAO have been reporting on for more than a decade. These are not new problems, and Congress must continue to take action on them while addressing the inevitable issues that will be uncovered as ongoing investigations and reviews are completed.

I expect this Chamber to come together, as the House did yesterday—twice, in fact—to move this bill forward so we can work on our differences with the House and send this legislation to the President's desk as soon as possible.

As we all know, there are serious problems at the VA that will not be solved through legislation alone or by simply replacing the Secretary. However, I am very hopeful these steps that are in this legislation will spark long-overdue change—from the top down—in order to ensure that our veterans are given the care and support they expect and deserve.

So I wanted to come today to commend the Senator from Arizona and the Senator from Vermont for their commitment to bipartisanship and putting the needs of our veterans first. This is an important compromise, and I urge our colleagues to continue the bipartisan collaboration that made this bill possible. Let's get it passed and in place so these reforms can begin to get started. And then we must keep working to address the management, resource, and personnel shortcomings that we all know exist at the VA.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I stand in strong support of the veterans bill we are about to vote on as well. I commend everyone who worked on it on both sides of the aisle, certainly including Senator MCCAIN, who was here a minute ago, Senator SANDERS, who is on the floor, and Senator BURR, who is the ranking Republican member of the committee.

I am strongly supporting it, mostly with three key provisions in mind—one I have been working on since well before this scandal and this crisis that has engulfed the VA broke; that is, to dislodge, to get moving on crucial expanded VA outpatient clinics in 18 States around the country, including Louisiana. Mr. President, 26 clinics; 2 of those are in Louisiana, in Lafayette and Lake Charles. Those should have been built by now. They have been on the books, they have been in the VA plan for years. Through what the VA readily admits was a bureaucratic glitch—a complete screw-up at the VA—they were delayed for a significant period of time.

There was another glitch in terms of the so-called scoring of these clinics. That required legislation, which the House passed. But that legislation, which I was spearheading in the Senate, has been balled up in the Senate.

Finally, the corrective legislation, to get moving, to get these clinics done—including in Lafayette and Lake Charles, LA—is in this bill. So I have been committed to that for months—since well before this scandal erupted.

The other two provisions I want to highlight in this bill do go directly to this scandal. One is the need to give veterans choice when they are locked into a dysfunctional system. So for the first time ever we are mandating the unparalleled choice that if a veteran is either over 40 miles from a VA facility or he or she cannot get care—an appointment—in a reasonable timeframe, then that veteran can go to a Medicare provider or another provider who is delineated in the bill to get the care he or she needs in a timely way. That is a really important reform to expand choice and really competition that I think will make the VA system better and offer veterans, when need be, important care outside the strict VA system.

The third provision I wish to highlight is to give the leadership of the VA the tools it needs to clean house, to get rid of incompetence or, worse, to fire people who clearly merit that in the cases we have been reading about in the last several months.

We have had so many protections heaped on the civil service system over 100-plus years that it has become virtually impossible to fire or demote or punish someone who is deserving of that because of incompetence or worse. We need to change that because unless and until we do, bureaucracies such as the VA will remain broken. This bill has important provisions in that regard.

Those are the three top reasons I will be strongly supporting the bill.

I thank the Chair.

Mr. MARKEY. Mr. President, Massachusetts is the Bay State, but we are also the ''Brave State.'' But being first in freedom is not enough if we don't put our veterans, their families, and the families of the fallen first as well.

There are more than 388,000 veterans in Massachusetts. But too many of our bravest return home unable to find a job. They suffer from homelessness, mental health, and substance abuse. Too often, they end their lives in suicide. Twenty-two veterans kill themselves every day.

This March, not one servicemember died in action in Afghanistan or Iraq, but almost 700 veterans took their own lives. Of the 8,500 Massachusetts National Guard, six of them have committed suicide in the last year and a half.

We need to treat these unseen wounds, and give our veterans a better life, where they are employed, appreciated, and supported.

We have a sacred obligation to honor and care for our service men and women for their bravery and sacrifice.

On the battlefield, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind. As a nation, we must ensure that when warriors return home, we leave no veteran behind.

In recent years, we have provided historic budget increases for veterans, expanded access to VA health care, improved health services for all veterans, and modernized benefits earned by America's servicemembers.

But what is clear today is that hasn't been enough. The problems at the VA are unacceptable and they dishonor our veterans and their families who have sacrificed so much.

Anyone who contributed to the careless treatment of our veterans should be held fully accountable, and I mean anyone.

And so our work must continue. We must address the emerging needs of veterans, as well as those needs that have lingered for years.

Our returning veterans, and those who served in previous wars, always should get the best services, including medical care.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, is facing a crisis. The Department of Veterans Affairs inspector general reports showed that thousands of veterans have been trying to see a doctor but were never on the VA list to see a doctor. These veterans were forgotten and lost in the scheduling process. VA leadership significantly understated the time new patients waited for their primary care appointment in their performance appraisals in part because that affected their bonuses and salary increases. Mr. President, 57,000 veterans have been waiting 90 days or more for their first VA appointment. Mr. President, 64,000 veterans have fallen through the cracks and have never received an appointment after enrollment.

These deficiencies at the VA are unacceptable.

What is clear is that we need a full-scale reform of how the VA does business. Too many men and women are falling through the cracks. We need to fully fund the VA and modernize the agency and its facilities to appropriately address the new needs of returning soldiers and their families.

All veterans are heroes, but sometimes heroes need help.

The Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014 allows the immediate firing of incompetent high-level officials who broke the trust of our veterans by leaving them behind. It also includes appropriate provisions to prevent the abuse of these new powers.

The bill allows VA to lease 26 new medical facilities that would expand access to care, including $4.8 million for the VA Worcester community-based Outpatient Clinic.

It authorizes the hiring of new medical personnel for hospitals and clinics that are facing a shortage of doctors and other health professionals.

It would allow veterans living more than 40 miles from a VA hospital or clinic to go to a private doctor.

It develops an independent commission to update the VA's scheduling appointments process and another to help spur the construction of new VA facilities.

It would allow all recently separated veterans taking advantage of the post-9/11 GI bill to get instate tuition at public colleges and universities. Finally, it would extend post-9/11 GI bill education benefits to surviving spouses of veterans who have died in the line of duty.

This bill is an important first step to dealing with the crisis at the VA. However, more needs to be done. We need to make sure the Massachusetts VA hospitals in Brockton, West Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, Bedford, and Northampton can continue to provide the care that our veterans deserve, including the latest in health care for traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other injuries.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today on behalf of the 470,000 Maryland veterans in order to thank my colleagues for making veterans health care a priority by passing S. 2450, the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014. I specifically applaud the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Senator SANDERS, and Senator JOHN MCCAIN for developing this bipartisan agreement and demonstrating to the Nation that the Congress can work together to meet our greatest challenges.

I want to thank President Obama and Acting Secretary Gibson for taking preliminary action and holding senior Department of Veterans Affairs, VA,

leadership accountable. Now the hard work begins of renewing and meeting our commitments to our veterans, who have sacrificed so much for our Nation. I support this bill's efforts to provide immediate authority to refer veterans to non-VA care and its provisions addressing commonsense long-term reform. Much of the treatment our veterans need is already provided in world-class facilities that are closer to their homes than the nearest VA Hospital, and they stand ready to support them today.

I am concerned that the expedited firing provision for Senior Executive Service employees creates a separate process for VA staff employee. Let me be clear: Anyone guilty of fraud, malfeasance or criminal negligence must be held accountable. But current law and Office of Personnel Management policy provide measures to address such acts. Federal employees deserve the appropriate due process.

This bill is an exceptional step in the right direction and will begin to address some of the concerns we all have with respect to the VA, beginning with access to care. But there is still much work to do to help our veterans return to civilian life after they have served. A mere thank you is of little comfort to a veteran who cannot find meaningful employment, who is struggling to provide for his or her family or who is dealing with post-traumatic stress. Their sacrifices are often made in stressful, frustrating, and dangerous conditions. Yet these brave men and women do not shy away from committing themselves to serving our country.

Disability claims at the VA are continuing to take far too long to be processed, and the backlog is denying support to veterans who are in critical need due to service-related injuries. I will continue to push for an amendment that will make the Fully Developed Claims Program permanent. The Fully Developed Claims Program is an optional new initiative that offers veterans and survivors faster decisions from the VA on compensation, pension, and survivor benefit claims. Veterans and survivors must simply submit all relevant records in their possession and those records which are easily obtainable, such as private medical records, at the time they make their claim and certify that they have no further evidence to submit. Then the VA can review and process the claims more quickly. This program is realizing much improved processing time due to the extraordinary partnership with numerous Veterans Service Organizations, but I propose we make a guarantee to our veterans that if they utilize this program, the VA will provide their final rating in an expedited manner or they will receive a provisional rating at 180 days. This is the level of commitment from Congress that the American people expect and our veterans deserve.

A true marker of our Nation's worth is our willingness to serve those who have served us. As we continue to wind down our commitments in Afghanistan after 13 years of war, we need to gear up our commitment to our veterans. Our veterans deserve every possible tool we can provide to help ease their transition to civilian life. I am committed to making sure that our veterans receive the services and benefits they have earned and the support they were promised and deserve. The United States is the strongest Nation in the world because of our veterans, and we owe them and their families our gratitude and our respect and, most important, our support.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, today I rise in strong support of S. 2450, a bill I have proudly cosponsored that would make critically needed reforms to the Department of Veterans Affairs. As we all know, revelations from whistleblowers, reports from the Government Accountability Office, an internal review by the VA, and an interim report from the VA's inspector general, an independent watchdog, have all revealed problems within the VA that have caused the system to fail many of our veterans. This is simply unacceptable.

As the daughter of a World War II veteran, I understand the extraordinary debt we owe to the men and women who have served this Nation in defense of our freedoms. I thank my colleagues, Senator SANDERS and Senator MCCAIN, for working to forge a bipartisan bill to address some of the most serious shortcomings in the VA health care system that have been identified in recent weeks. The bill would provide for greater transparency at the VA by requiring an independent assessment of the scheduling system used at every VA medical center, along with the staffing levels and workloads at each facility. It would also task the VA inspector general to identify on an annual basis the health provider occupations with the largest staffing shortages, which will give both the VA and Congress a better understanding of the Department's needs. In order to address what has been identified as a shortage in health care providers within the VA, the bill would expand opportunities for veterans to seek care outside of the VA system, including allowing veterans who qualify to seek care at Department of Defense health facilities. The bill would also empower the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to immediately hold senior VA officials accountable if they have failed to do their jobs.

The credibility of the VA has taken a serious blow, and it will take years for the Department to regain the trust it has lost among veterans and among the American people. My strong support for this legislation is based on my belief that it will make critical and fundamental changes to the VA that will result in significant improvements to the quality of care our veterans receive and their ability to access that care. The VA is facing significant challenges, but with the passage of this legislation the Senate is taking an important step in helping to restore trust in a system that has provided tremendous care for generations of veterans. Our Nation's veterans deserve no less.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to state my strong support for the legislation on the floor that addresses the current healthcare crisis facing our nation's veterans. This bill, the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014, is the product of excellent bipartisan work done by Senator SANDERS and Senator MCCAIN. I want to thank both of my colleagues for their efforts on drafting this legislation and finding a path to bring it to the Senate floor today. I believe their legislation will give our veterans access to the healthcare they deserve and that it will invest in the Department of Veterans Affairs' health care system.

While Senator SANDERS' and MCCAIN's legislation contains many good measures that will improve the healthcare our veterans receive at the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, I would like to highlight three provisions in the bill that I believe are especially important for Congress to pass.

First, I am strongly supportive that the legislation contains a provision to allow the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs to immediately terminate senior executives for poor performance. It is my opinion that the current scandal was largely a result of ineffective and disgraceful mismanagement. As a first step, the Department must be able to terminate any managers who directed or pressured staff to falsify or cover up wait times for veterans seeking health care. It is time for a new culture of management in the VA, and I look forward to providing this authority to the Department.

Second, I am grateful the legislation provides the authority for the VA to quickly hire new clinical staff, such as physicians and nurses, when there is a shortage of medical providers within the VA. The legislation allows the VA to use any unobligated funds at the end of each fiscal year to do such hiring. The audit released by the Department of Veterans Affairs this week clearly indicated that many medical facilities had a shortage of clinical providers. The legislation on the floor also authorizes the VA to enter into medical leases the Department has requested in previous years, but that Congress has not funded. These include four community outpatient clinics in California, which are in San Diego, Chico, Chula Vista, and Redding. Thus, I am confident the authority to hire new clinical staff and the authority to enter into much needed medical leases are critical measures that Congress must pass if we expect the VA to meet the growing demand of medical care our Nation's veterans need and deserve.

I am also glad the legislation the Senate is considering contains measures to beef up how VA hospitals are

evaluated for the quality of health care they provide, and that this information will be made public for veterans. The legislation contains a provision that would require the Department of Health and Human Services to complete evaluations of VA hospitals and to post this information publically. It also requires the Government Accountability Office to look at the metrics the VA is using to evaluate patient care and hospital quality. Finally, the bill will require the VA to publish its appointment wait times, which will increase the transparency of how quickly our veterans can access health care. Thus, I want to thank both Senator SANDERS and Senator MCCAIN for including such important provisions that will improve accountability, transparency, and health care quality at the VA.

Recently, the Department of Veterans Affairs released the results of its nation-wide Access Audit detailing the breadth of its struggle to responsibly manage waiting lists for care at its medical facilities across the country. The allegations of false record-keeping and other inappropriate scheduling practices were further substantiated. The audit made it clear that many staff members—13 percent interviewed nationally—were instructed to use inappropriate scheduling actions by their supervisors. The audit also revealed that at least one scheduler at 76 percent of all VA facilities indicated they received direction to enter inaccurate or misleading appointment data. The result is that some veterans were forced to wait an egregious amount of time for medical appointments, and surely many of these veterans suffered negative health effects as a result of these delays.

After the press reports of secret wait lists at the Phoenix VA Medical Center, I wrote a letter to the VA's acting inspector general urging him to expand the scope of his investigation in order to determine if similar problems were occurring elsewhere. On May 28, 2014, the VA's Office of the Inspector General released an interim report of the ongoing review at the Phoenix VA Health Care System. This independent review verified that deliberate action was taking to falsify wait times and to keep some veterans—1,700 in Phoenix—off official wait lists. In response to this report, on June 2, I wrote to Acting Secretary Sloan Gibson requesting an immediate review of medical appointment wait times at all California VA medical facilities, and that the VA take action to expedite appointments for veterans in my State waiting an excessive amount of time to receive health care.

California is home to 8 major Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, health care systems which include 66 medical centers and outpatient clinics. According to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau, of the nearly 22 million veterans in the United States, nine percent, or roughly 2 million, live in California; a figure greater than that of any other State. California's large population of veterans, many of which are concentrated in southern California, creates a substantial demand for medical care at California's VA Medical Centers.

The VA's Access Audit, released this week, validated the national extent of lengthy wait times and potential falsification of appointment records. It also makes it clear that California is not exempt from the recent VA scandal. The data collected shows that over 20,000 veterans in California are having to wait more than 30 days for a medical appointment. Nearly 3,000 are waiting more than 90 days for their appointment. Furthermore, nearly 7,000 California veterans are on electronic wait lists who have not been able to schedule any appointment. This lack of urgency to provide care to our Nation's veterans is not only appalling, it is also irresponsible.

In addition, I am deeply troubled that the recent audit identified that five VA health care facilities in my State had some evidence of falsifying or hiding wait times. They are the Livermore Medical Center, the Yuba City Outpatient Clinic, the Sepulveda Ambulatory Care Center, the Escondido Outpatient Clinic, and the Imperial Valley Outpatient Clinic. The VA recommended the Office of the Inspector General conduct investigations at these facilities in order to determine if any fraudulent or criminal activity occurred, and I eagerly await the results of these investigations.

It is clear to me that excessive wait times for medical appointments negatively impacts the health of our veterans. So, fixing the VA is not only about fixing the systemic management problems that led to a cover-up of appointment wait times at certain VA facilities across the Nation. The fix also must be about improving the VA's ability to provide high caliber health care to all of our Nation's veterans.

The VA must radically alter how it manages health care. It is my opinion that the VA's performance should be tied to the health outcomes of our veterans. The VA has played number games with appointment wait times in order to evaluate their performance for too long, and that must end today. I hope the new leadership at the Department will work to develop better measures of performance that are based on how well our veterans do in terms of health and wellbeing as a result of the care they receive at the VA.

For example, the VA should strive to reduce preventable drug resistant infections acquired in medical facilities. Deadly drug resistant infections are linked to poor infection control and the overuse of antibiotics in hospitals. These infections, like Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus, MRSA, and Clostridium difficile are deadly, difficult to treat, and largely preventable. VA hospitals that provide high quality medical care, that use antibiotics prudently, and that practice good hygiene will have lower rates of these infections, faster recovery times for hospitalized patients, and reduced health care costs. VA hospitals that have clear data that they use antibiotics appropriately, have fewer deadly hospital acquired infections, and have veterans who can be discharged faster should be noticed for their performance. I truly believe that a greater focus on health care quality and outcomes is critical for improving the VA's health care system.

The delays in access to health care and the culture of cover-ups that emerged within the Department of Veterans Affairs are absolutely unacceptable. Our Nation's veterans served and sacrificed for our country, and they deserve better. I truly believe the legislation introduced by Senators SANDERS and MCCAIN is the solution our veterans need and deserve. This is not a partisan issue, this is an issue of doing what is right by those who defended our freedom.

Thus, I urge my colleagues to vote for this bill.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I come to the floor today in support of S. 2450, the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act of 2014.

The preliminary VA inspector general's report of delayed care at the Phoenix Hospital uncovered serious and systemic failures in our VA system. The internal audit by the Veterans Health Administration confirmed these delays. These problems have dragged on long enough and must be addressed and corrected. 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. That is why I support this bill.

This bill contains a number of provisions that will improve veterans access to care when they need it the most by:

Sending care into the community and ensuring veterans do not have to wait more than 14 days to see a doctor or physician;

expeditiously hiring new doctors, nurses and other health care providers in locations that have shortages;

requiring the VA to upgrade their electronic scheduling software;

authorizing the VA to enter into 27 major medical leases that will increase access to care for thousands of veterans who currently have to travel long distances to get the care they need;

requiring the President to create a commission to evaluate access issues in the VA Health Care system;

and, creating a commission on capital planning for VA medical facilities to look at the processes to ensure our veterans are being treated in safe facilities.

There is also a provision that would allow the Secretary of the VA to terminate VA senior executives for poor performance. This provision would also require the Secretary to provide Congress a justification for any removal

within 30 days. I also support giving SES employees the ability to appeal to the Merit System Protection Board within 7 days of termination, providing them the protections from retaliation and discrimination they deserve.

In addition to supporting this bill, 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.

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 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 FY–2014 omnibus appropriations bill. This plan includes better funding, better technology, better training and better oversight of the VA.

The Veteran's Administration needs a new attitude from the bottom up in every facility across the Nation. It is time to turn the VA around. Veterans who have fought on the front lines should not have to stand in line for the care they have earned and deserve.

This legislation is a significant step in the right direction, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, parliamentary inquiry: How much time is on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican side has 6 minutes, the Democrats just under 13 minutes.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for the Senator from Alabama to have 6 minutes, and I ask unanimous consent for 4 additional minutes for this side, following the Senator from Vermont.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Hearing none, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I appreciate the work of my colleagues on this legislation. They have accomplished some very good things. We need legislation to pass to help our veterans. The needs are real, and recent revelations of substantially substandard care—and too often no care at all—at our VA medical centers are shocking. There is and has been a long-term problem with the management of that agency. It is heartbreaking. It is an embarrassment. We owe our veterans better care than they have been given.

One of the keys to improve that care is improving accountability, ensuring money is being properly spent, not simply wasted by government bureaucrats. The money needs to get to our veterans.

Our national debt now is $17 trillion. It is growing rapidly. We cannot be lighthearted or cavalier about our responsibility to follow our agreement to honor the budget limitations we have. There are a lot of budgetary freedoms we have and a lot of ability we have and duties we have to set priorities in our spending. Veterans clearly are a priority. I fought hard against the recent push to cut veterans pensions and led an effort to restore those pensions payments.

In this case we are dealing with an issue of bureaucratic accountability. What happens so often is that in the crush and press of business, we are unable to reach agreements on finding money somewhere else in this monstrous bureaucracy and government of ours, and we simply break the budget and add to the debt. Our veterans deserve better than that.

I am the ranking Republican on the Budget Committee. We wrestle with these issues—the chairman of the committee, Senator MURRAY—and the numbers from the Congressional Budget Office indicate that this legislation, as drafted, violates the Budget Act.

Indeed, the entire bill, the way the language is written, has been declared an ''emergency'' which allows its authors to avoid finding the efficiencies and the accountabilities needed to stay within the Federal budget limits both parties agreed to. There is plenty of wasteful spending to be cut elsewhere in government, and much we can do to increase accountability at the VA.

Even more concerning is the new open-ended entitlement legislation in the bill. The bill would authorize emergency spending but sets no limits on that spending. Section 801 says ''such sums as necessary.'' Well, how much is necessary? This is an important conversation to have, to wrestle with, and to develop solutions. But by simply not developing these solutions, we invite more of the same kind of accountability problems we have seen that brought us here.

I feel strongly that we have to do the right thing for our veterans, but history suggests a blank check for the bureaucracy, an unlimited entitlement program, will not have the desired results—indeed, may even yield the opposite results from what we hope to achieve.

We need to resist the temptation to create more entitlements and more entitlements, which is one of the reasons we are heading recklessly toward fiscal crisis, as our own Congressional Budget Office has indicated, and instead focus on creating reforms and solutions that improve that quality of service and the effectiveness that is delivered. Isn't that our job? Isn't that what our veterans deserve from us—the very best we can give them? As many hours as it takes for us to get this right, instead of simply avoiding the difficult issues we must tackle to solve this calamity long-term?

There are also 3 years of emergency spending under the legislation, which I think is an unwise precedent for us to set. Again: it leads to the kind of unaccountability, the lack of oversight that helped create this crisis in the first place. We should designate—maybe if we have to do this—2014 money this year where the crisis is. We have already appropriated money. If we need some more, that could be perhaps justified as emergency spending, but a 3-year bill goes beyond what I think is proper. It fails to establish the oversight that Congress has a solemn duty to deliver. We can't just write a blank check and think it will solve these problems. We have to ask the tougher, deeper questions about the changes needed in Washington to do right by our veterans. Details matter. Every line of legislation matters. We need to get this right.

The Appropriations Committee has already reported out the 2015 VA–HUD bill. It is already on the floor and could be here as early as next week. The Senate could easily attach a bipartisan amendment to that that provides the spending called for in this bill with offsets, cuts, efficiencies, and reductions in other spending to pay for it. There are places we could do this.

So I have to tell you, there are some good things in the bill. I think there are. It improves the situation. I like the idea of giving veterans more choice to go to the doctor who is close to them. It is something Senator MCCAIN and Senator SANDERS have agreed on. I think that is progress, very much so, but I have to say I cannot suggest to my colleagues that the budget violation now before us should be waived. It should not. Ignoring this requirement will not help our veterans in the long run, but will lead to the same kind of problems we are confronting today. We should adhere to the agreement we reached on spending by finding offsets. If we don't adhere to our spending limits, other programs will crowd out the budget for veterans and mean we have less money in the future not more, to fund these programs. If we ignore our debt, we do a disservice to our veterans. Unfortunately, the bill does not do what the law we agreed to requires. It is not paid for. We all agree veterans are our priority. So then is it not our duty to them to fulfill this priority by reducing wasteful spending elsewhere so that money can be spent on veterans instead? Can we not deliver for these veterans that most basic level of responsibility on our part as lawmakers?

Finally, colleagues, a vote to sustain the budget point of order is a vote that tells the committee to find appropriate money for the bill and does not kill the bill. It does not knock down the bill. It allows it to continue to be alive and a piece of legislation before us. It would just require us to fix the funding. It would require us to fix the bill. So that

is what we should be doing. That is why I feel I must raise the budget point of order.

In summary, the bill has mandatory spending that violates the limits we have agreed to in the Budget Act, and the bill also abuses the emergency designation to circumvent the requirement for offsets and the need for accountability.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I raise a point of order against the emergency designation provision contained in Section 802(b) of H.R. 3230, the vehicle for S. 2450, the Veterans' Access to Care Through Choice Act, pursuant to section 403(E)(1) of the fiscal year 2010 budget resolution, S. Con. Res. 13.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I am going to yield to Senator MCCAIN in a moment, but before I do that, pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions and section 4(g)(3) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, I move to waive all applicable sections of those acts and applicable budget resolutions for purposes of the pending bill, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, how much time remains on both sides?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona has 4 minutes, the Senator from Vermont has 10 minutes.

Mr. MCCAIN. Does the Senator from Vermont want to go ahead?

Mr. SANDERS. I am happy, if the Senator from Arizona needs more time at the end of his 4, for him go right ahead.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I wish to thank a lot of people, including the staffs of the committees, Senator SANDERS' staff, Dahlia Melendez and Travis Murphy; Senator BURR's staff, Natasha Hickman, Maureen O'Neill, Anna Abram, and Victoria Lee; Senator COBURN's staff, Jabari White; my own staff, Elizabeth Lopez, Jeremy Hayes, and Joe Donoghue, and all the hard work that has gone into this legislation.

I think it is well known to my colleagues that this is an unprecedented piece of legislation in that for the first time it is going to provide our veterans with a choice. There are many other provisions I would like to discuss also but have been, and I am sure my colleague from Vermont will be addressing those.

There are, according to a recent VA audit, over 57,000 veterans who have been waiting for an appointment for over 3 months to see a physician at the VA. Over 63,000 veterans over the past 10 years have never been able to get an appointment at all. There are allegations in the Phoenix VA hospital that 40 veterans have died.

Today, June 11, the Federal Bureau of Investigation has opened a criminal investigation into allegedly misleading scheduling practices at the Department of Veterans Affairs that may have concealed how long veterans had to wait for appointments to see a doctor. ''Our Phoenix office has opened a criminal investigation,'' FBI Director James Comey said in response to a lawmaker's question at a hearing Wednesday.

If that is not an emergency, I do not know what is. If it is not an emergency that the very lives of the men and women who have served our country with honor and distinction are being either jeopardized or allegations of absolutely being lost through malpractice and malfeasance, if that is not an emergency, I have never seen one before this body.

I urge my colleagues to vote this for what it is, this budget point of order. This is an emergency. If it is not an emergency that we have neglected the brave men and women who have served this country and keep us free, than I do not know what an emergency is.

Hard work has been done on this legislation, hard work and a lot of compromises. I am happy to see that the majority of the veterans service organizations are now in support of it. Is it a perfect piece of legislation? No. Is it exactly what I wanted? No. Is it exactly what the Senator from Vermont wanted? Absolutely not. But this is an emergency. I tell my colleagues, if it is not an emergency of how we care for those who have served on the field of battle, then nothing else is before this body.

It breaks our hearts. It breaks American's hearts when they hear and see these stories of those brave men and women and the neglect they have suffered, the lack of a fulfillment of an obligation we made to them. I hope we will vote against this budget point of order. I hope we will vote unanimously, 100 to 0, to pass this legislation, send it to the House, go to conference, get it to the President's desk, and start healing the wounds that have been inflicted on these men and women.

There is no way we can ever compensate for those who have gone without the treatment they have earned, but at least we can expeditiously fix this problem to the best of our ability. Is this the ultimate and final solution to those problems that have been uncovered? No, but it is a beginning. It is not the end of the beginning, it is a beginning. There will be more proposals before us. There will be more efforts to fix this gaping wound in America's conscience.

I urge my colleagues to vote to waive the budget point of order. This is an emergency. I urge my colleagues to vote for the bill. Again, I thank everyone for their involvement, especially Senator BURR and Senator COBURN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. Let me just thank Senator MCCAIN for his very hard and bold work on this issue. He stood and came forward when we needed someone to do so. I think we have made real progress in a bipartisan way.

As Senator MCCAIN just said, and I agree with him, if this is not an emergency, I am not quite clear what an emergency is.

During the last 4 years some 2 million new veterans have come into the VA system. Many of them have come in with very difficult medical problems, PTSD, TBI. We have an aging veteran population. Taking care of older people is complex and expensive. The simple truth is that in many parts of this country—not all parts I suspect, but in a number of places in this country—we simply do not have the number of doctors, nurses, and other medical staff to accommodate the needs of our veterans. I have been told, unofficially at least, that at the very minimum there is a need for 700 new physicians in the VA. I am told that is the floor, that the reality may be higher than that.

I have been told that in Phoenix alone there is a need for hundreds of new providers in order to address the problems in that one large facility. Further, this legislation says to veterans that if there are long wait times, if they cannot get into a facility in a reasonable time, they can go outside of the VA. That is what this bill says.

You know what. That is going to cost money. That will cost money. This legislation also says that if they live 40 miles or more from a VA facility, they have the option of going to a private provider. That benefit is going to cost money. The bottom line is that if we are going to do what in my view we should do; that is, to make sure every facility in the VA has adequate staffing—doctors, nurses, other medical personnel—and to make sure there is available funding to pay for those veterans who will now get care outside of the VA—right now the VA is spending about $4.8 billion a year in contract fees. There is no question in my mind that number is going to go up, but that is what we are voting on now.

If you want to provide timely care to veterans, if you agree they should go outside of the VA, it is going to cost money. If we are going to do that and the other things in this bill, that legislation needs to be passed as written, and we must waive the point of order brought up by Senator SESSIONS.

Lastly, I remind my colleagues that when Congress voted to go to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, it did so with emergency funding. Those wars will, it is estimated, cost between $3 and $6 trillion by the time we take care of the last veteran. If we can spend that kind of money to go to war on an emergency basis, surely we can spend one-tenth of 1 percent of that amount to take care of the men and women who fought those wars.

What we have done, as Senator MCCAIN has indicated, is developed a compromise. I am sure he is not happy

with everything in the bill. I am not happy with everything in the bill as well. I did want to also remind Senators about a few of the other provisions that are in this bill that are important and I think do have bipartisan support.

This bill allows for 26 major medical facility leases, which means improved and expanded care for veterans in 27 States and Puerto Rico. This bill provides for the expedited hiring of VA doctors and nurses and $500 million targeted to hire those providers with unobligated funds. As I mentioned earlier, this bill allows for veterans to go outside of the VA when there are waiting lines and when they live 40 miles from a facility. This bill also deals with an issue where there is widespread support both in the House and the Senate; that is, the need to address instate tuition for all veterans at public colleges and universities.

It also provides that surviving spouses of those who die in the line of duty will be eligible for the post-9/11 GI bill. This bill also importantly establishes commissions to provide help to the VA in terms of improving scheduling capabilities—God knows they certainly need that help—and also for capital planning.

Lastly—and we need to reiterate this point—this bill gives the Secretary of the VA the authority to immediately fire incompetent employees and those who have falsified or manipulated data in terms of waiting periods.

Our legislation differs from the House in that in order to prevent, in my view, the politicization of the VA or eliminate all due process, it provides for a very expedited appeals process.

The House of Representatives passed legislation yesterday which covers a lot of the same ground the Sanders-McCain bill covers, and I am absolutely confident that working with Chairman MILLER and Ranking Member MICHAUD we can bridge the differences and send the President a bill that he can sign in the very near future.

Finally and lastly, I want to say to the 300,000 employees who work at the VA that the overwhelming majority of those people are hard-working, honest, serious people. For many of them, taking care of veterans is not a job; it is a mission. Many of them are, in fact, veterans themselves. These people understand the sacrifices the veterans have made to protect our country, and they are doing the best that they can to support our veterans.

I hope we pass this bill. I hope we pass a waiver for the budget point of order. I hope we get a conference committee moving immediately, and I hope we get a bill to the President as soon as possible.

Furthermore, as Senator MCCAIN has just mentioned, I don't think this is the end of the discussion regarding the needs of veterans. I hope very much that in our committee and on the floor we can begin to address some of the other very serious issues facing the veterans' community.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BROWN). The senior Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I ask unanimous consent for 5 minutes for Dr. COBURN.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. COBURN. I thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee for working with Senator MCCAIN to get a bill.

I support Senator SESSIONS and the budget points of order on this bill. I take exception to some of the statements by my colleague from Vermont.

As reported yesterday, if you look at the patient list for many of the primary care doctors in the VA, they are half of what the average practicing physician outside the VA is. When you drill down on those, many of them have patients that have been deceased for years. About 10 to 15 percent of their patient list has never been to the VA, or they came once from a different State or were transferred from somewhere else. What you actually see is the patient load in the private sector is about 2½ times what the patient load is in the VA.

I have no doubt we need to increase the number of physicians in the VA, but we also need to increase markedly the amount of output that those physicians perform.

The other thing that is important in this bill is the transparency—which I don't believe has been mentioned—that will actually allow veterans to know the quality outcomes of where they are being treated and the credentials of those who are treating them. Those are important factors for care.

Our veterans deserve the best care. I agree with the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee that the vast majority of our VA employees are hard-working employees, but there are some who aren't.

Our lack of oversight and the lack of management expertise at the VA has now exploded into issues that are going to continue to be exploded. We hear every day new whistleblowers coming forward on the problems in the VA.

It is not only scheduling; it is a lack of truthfulness in a lot of other areas. It is a lot of inaccuracy in terms of outcome.

I agree with the chairman. This is just the beginning. But if, in fact, somebody puts their life on the line for us, we certainly, at a minimum, ought to make sure that we don't just have words that say we are going to give you the health care if you are an injured returning war veteran, but that we actually give that care, and that it meets the standard of care we want for anybody in our family. This is just the start.

The other thing that I would say, in agreement with Senator SESSIONS, there are ways to pay for this bill.

On the clinics, we drill down on one clinic—and I am going to go spend just a minute talking about it. It is a clinic that will triple in size, but with an average expected increase in veteran population of 5 percent and visits of less than 7 percent over the next 20 years. So it is going to go from 50,000 to 190,000 square feet.

We are going to spend $188 million for that facility and pay $40 a square foot per year for it on a rate of increase of 4 percent in part of the lease. We can rent the same space in Tulsa at $15 a foot and spend less money than we pay for the engineering cost for this to have a clinic just as good or better.

So the planning and the management of the VA on these clinics is suspect, and I plan on drilling down on every one of those before this bill comes to conference and give our conferees the information based on that. Because we are going to spend emergency money, as the chairman would like to do on this, we ought to make sure there isn't a penny that is wasted.

So we can do it. We can do it better, we can do it for less money, and we can do it in the confines of what we are actually going to see.

The final thing is I would say again to my colleague from Vermont, I appreciate his willingness to compromise on the issues. His heart is dedicated to veterans, and I understand that. Our philosophies are different on how we get there, but his commitment is nonetheless real and felt, and I thank him.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SANDERS. I yield back the remainder of the time.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The question is on agreeing to the motion to waive.

The yeas and nays have been ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 75, nays 19, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 186 Leg.]

YEAS—75

Alexander	Booker	Cardin
Ayotte	Boozman	Carper
Baldwin	Boxer	Casey
Begich	Brown	Chambliss
Bennet	Burr	Collins
Blumenthal	Cantwell	Coons

Cornyn	Johnson (SD)	Reed
Donnelly	Kaine	Reid
Durbin	King	Rockefeller
Feinstein	Kirk	Rubio
Fischer	Klobuchar	Sanders
Franken	Landrieu	Schatz
Gillibrand	Leahy	Schumer
Grassley	Levin	Shaheen
Hagan	Manchin	Stabenow
Harkin	Markey	Tester
Hatch	McCain	Toomey
Heinrich	McConnell	Udall (CO)
Heitkamp	Menendez	Udall (NM)
Heller	Mikulski	Vitter
Hirono	Murkowski	Walsh
Hoeven	Murphy	Warner
Inhofe	Murray	Warren
Isakson	Nelson	Whitehouse
Johanns	Pryor	Wyden

NAYS—19

Barrasso	Enzi	Roberts
Blunt	Flake	Sessions
Coats	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Coburn	Lee	Thune
Corker	Paul	Wicker
Crapo	Portman	
Cruz	Risch	

NOT VOTING—6

Cochran	McCaskill	Moran
Graham	Merkley	Scott

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 75, the nays are 19.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to. The point of order falls.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

Mr. PORTMAN. 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. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) and the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

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

The result was announced—yeas 93, nays 3, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 187 Leg.]

YEAS—93

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

NAYS—3

Corker	Johnson (WI)	Sessions

NOT VOTING—4

Cochran	Merkley
McCaskill	Moran

The bill (H.R. 3230), as amended, was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent that the title amendment to H.R. 3230, which is at the desk, be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. INHOFE. Reserving the right to object, let me inquire of the Senator if it is his intent to speak on that tonight.

Mr. TESTER. In a moment I am going to ask unanimous consent to go into morning business, and I am going to speak on the veterans bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. If the Senator from Montana would yield for a question, is there any kind of order established regarding whom would be recognized at this point?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is not.

Mr. LEVIN. The Senator from Oklahoma and I thought we would be recognized 1 hour ago. We understood the exigency that there would be some delay.

If we could establish an order—apparently Senator GRASSLEY is waiting to be recognized as well.

May I ask the Senator from Montana how long he would be speaking? Would it be in order?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. How long am I speaking?

Mr. LEVIN. Yes.

Mr. TESTER. About 7 minutes.

Through the Chair to the Senator from Michigan, it was my understanding that I was going to speak, the Senator would have his colloquy with Senator INHOFE, and then Senator GRASSLEY would speak.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank the Senator.

Mr. GRASSLEY. May I ask the Senator a question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. How much time is the colloquy going to take?

Mr. LEVIN. I would say about 7 or 8 minutes.

Mr. INHOFE. I think I had the floor, and I was objecting to the UC.

Let me just share that we would—we could—do ours probably in about 12 minutes, and then we could have more time tomorrow, if that would work out.

I withdraw my objection.

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

The amendment (No. 3237) was agreed to, as follows:

Amend the title so as to read:

''To improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.''

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. TESTER. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time previously agreed to.

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

The Senator from Montana.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. TESTER. I rise to speak about the care this Nation provides to veterans—care that they have earned, the care that we owe them, the care that we promised them, and the care that we should never stop working to improve.

I joined the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee when I came to the Senate in January of 2007. Soon thereafter I launched a listening tour around the great State of Montana to hear what veterans thought about the health care they receive.

Montana has the second-most veterans per capita. We serve our country at some of the highest rates in the Nation. We are home to a large Native-American population that serves more often than any other minority in this country.

In 2007, the surge in Iraq was in full swing. Veterans had many concerns on their minds. But in rural Montana I heard over and over from the veterans about how the mileage reimbursement that disabled veterans receive to see their doctor at the VA was far too low. In fact, it was at 11 cents a mile, hardly enough to even pay for the gas, much less the tires, the oil, and the automobile itself.

That number matters in a State where folks have to drive a couple hundred miles across the State to see their doctor.

So when I came back to Washington I worked with then-Senator Byrd to raise that reimbursement rate for the first time in decades. Now more veterans can afford to see their doctor, and that is how a representative of government should work—identify a problem, write a bill to fix it, work with colleagues, hear their concerns, and pass a solution into law. That is what we have done here today.

Today's bill is a good bill that gets at some of the VA's most pressing problems. Today's bill addresses many of the transparency, accountability, and access-to-care issues that are plaguing

the VA. By getting rid of incentives to falsify wait times and make it easier to remove bad managers, we will hold more folks accountable for the care veterans receive. By making it easier to hire medical professionals and allowing more veterans to seek care from outside providers, we will reduce the bottleneck that forces veterans to wait too long for care.

I want to be clear about one issue. Once veterans get in the door at the VA, they receive incredibly good health care. As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I continue to travel around Montana to talk to veterans. I speak to veterans' groups around the country as well.

They tell me that VA care is some of the best in the Nation. I have had wives, husbands, daughters, and sons seek me out to tell me what VA is doing right. Additionally, 9 out of 10 veterans report they are happy with the care they receive at the VA. That is important to remember.

It isn't all bad news, but the fact is that while the war in Afghanistan is winding down, and the war in Iraq has come to a close, the struggle for many service men and women continues here at home.

We went to war after 9/11 to fight against terror, to fight for the freedoms that we value in this country, but we didn't think far enough down the road. We didn't think about how we could care for our fighting men and women when they returned from battle.

When I joined the Veterans' Affairs Committee, the VA was starting to recover from years of neglect. In 2007, as Americans fought in the streets of Baghdad, Congress had to pass an emergency budget bill to keep the lights on in the VA. Imagine that—fighting two wars, but we didn't properly fund the department that cares for our troops when they come home.

With better planning and advance appropriations, we have come a long way, but attention spans and new cycles are short.

The bill we passed today is a good start, but it can't be the end of the story. Moving forward, we must make sure that we have all the facts because you can't fix a problem if you don't understand it.

That is why I have already worked with my colleagues to help pass legislation out of committee that will free up more resources for the inspector general's office of the VA to do its job and to make reports from the VA inspector general public and transparent.

The bill also prohibits the payment of bonuses to VA medical directors and senior VA employees until investigations are complete and reforms are made. Our message is clear; that is, that veterans come first.

In the 7 years since I held that first veterans listening session across Montana, since then we have worked with veterans groups to open new veterans centers and community-based out-patient clinics across the State of Montana.

I have helped more veterans get transportation to get to their doctor appointments, and I have helped lead the way to expand the use of telehealth for rural veterans. We did this while working with the VA secretaries from both parties by working across the aisle to write commonsense legislation that meets the needs of veterans and their families. Not only should improving veterans care be an unrelenting focus for this body but it must be a nonpartisan one.

Improving mental health care for veterans is not a partisan issue. Improving veterans' ability to get a good job is not a partisan issue. Making sure that veterans get the care they have earned, the care that we promised them when they signed up to fight should never be a partisan issue.

Let's keep working together to honor the sacrifices made by our fighting men and women, as well as the families who anxiously wait for them back home.

On Saturday morning I will be in Anaconda, MT, kicking off my latest veterans listening tour to get more ideas about how we can improve the services and care for veterans.

I know that many of my colleagues are holding similar sessions in their States, and I look forward to hearing what ideas they bring back so that we can work together to improve veterans health care.

If this bill is the end of this Congress's work on veterans issues, it will be disappointing to me and it will be disappointing to the veterans out there who put their lives on the line to defend our freedom.

We have more work to do, and I hope it doesn't require another crisis to get it done.

I wish to thank BERNIE SANDERS for his great work on this bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. LEVIN. Before the Memorial Day recess, the Armed Services Committee voted 25 to 1 to favorably report out S. 2410, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015.

The bill is on the calendar, and both it and the committee report have been filed and are available online and in print.

As the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator INHOFE and I hope to bring the bill to the Senate floor as soon as the Senate schedule allows. I have talked with the majority leader about it, and he says he is going to do his best, but there are a number of things that we can do to be helpful on this effort.

Neither of us wants to be in the position that we were in last year when Senators were unable to take up the bill and vote on any amendments to this important legislation because of how close it was to the end of the session when it was brought up.

Both of us are on the floor today urging Senators who are considering amendments to the bill to file them before the July recess.

We would then be in a position—both of us, with our staffs—to work with Senators to clear as many amendments as possible for inclusion in a manager's package and to begin identifying relevant amendments that would be likely to be contested.

Now, we believe if we can develop a list of a few relevant amendments that would require votes to start with when we first take up the bill, it would help us in getting to the floor. I believe that is the case, given the circumstances the Senate is in.

We have an awful lot of work ahead of us. We don't have a long time to do it. If we were able to put together a proposal to the leaders, that we have not only the bill, which is obviously on the calendar we have worked on a bipartisan basis to pass with the 25-vote majority—which is minus 1 vote in the Senate—it would be our belief this would have greater practical appeal to our leaders.

We think this approach would enable us to reach unanimous consent as to an initial set of relevant amendments to be considered so we could then move forward expeditiously when the Senate returns to the bill. I hope our colleagues will help us in this matter.

I think it is in everybody's interest and it is in the national security interest that we have a bill before us. We have to pass a bill in order to go to conference with the House or else we are put in the same kind of position we were in last year, where we simply present what amounted to a conference report before a bill had ever been truly debated and sent. We and our staff, working with colleagues, put together what amounted to a conference report, which was not a conference report in technical terms but was in effect the work product of both the Senate and the House and our committees by process of negotiation.

So our colleagues can be very helpful in getting this bill to the floor, meeting the concerns of our Nation and doing what we should be doing for our troops and our families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I first say and express my appreciation to Chairman LEVIN. We hear a lot of talk about bipartisanship and people getting along. That is usually just talk. In this case, it is real.

We have a committee of Democrats and Republicans concerned about defending our Nation with totally inadequate resources. Chairman LEVIN has responded every time we have had some kind of a controversial matter come up. Then our staff—Peter Levine

is the staff director for the majority and John Bonsell is the staff director for the minority—I have yet to call them when issues come up that we haven't been able to get this done, and this is kind of unusual. This doesn't happen in the Senate in very many committees.

I believe, and have always said, the NDAA is the most important bill of the year, keeping in mind we have actually passed one for 52 consecutive years. This is something that has to be done.

We adopted the National Defense Authorization Act on May 22, as the chairman said, 25 to 1, which doesn't happen very often around here. It contains a lot of vital work we have to do and it is within the budget caps.

I think it supports the training of the troops, the maintenance and modernization, research and development, and the pay and benefits. These are tough issues to negotiate, but we have done that, and we have it ready for more action.

What we don't want is what happened last year. Last year we had a lot of amendments. We on the Republican side were wanting to have all these amendments. I think we are entitled to amendments. We did a count last year of how many amendments were on the average bill. It was something like 140 amendments. We didn't have nearly that many requests, but we were able to get them in.

If we start now, we can do that. So I wish to tell my Republican colleagues that I don't want them to come back and start complaining later on, if we don't start getting amendments now so we can hash them out, find out what is acceptable, and find out where the opposition would be. But we don't want to wait until the end of the year.

It got so close last year, as we were approaching December 31, and we all know that if we don't have a Defense authorization bill by that time, hazard pay is at risk, reenlistment bonuses won't be paid. Stop and think about the cost. Right now, if we were to hire a person in training to be an F–22 pilot, the cost is $9 million. However, the retention bonus for over a 9-year period could be $225,000. Look at the economics of it. We don't want that to happen.

Last year we were able to get a bill. It is the first time I have ever participated in a ''big four'' meeting. Actually, three of us sat down because we had one no-show. So three of us put together a bill in a period of time, tried to consider all the amendments, and most people were pretty satisfied with it, but that is not the way it is supposed to happen.

We are going to have a lot of amendments. We always do. The only way we are going to be able to do this is to get this out on the floor. I think it needs to be passed before the end of the fiscal year. So I invite my friends on both sides of the aisle to bring down their amendments.

Let me again say how appreciative I am personally of having worked with CARL LEVIN in this process and with the staff, who have been so easy to work with, and so competent and professional.

Mr. LEVIN. If the Senator will yield.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. I thank Senator GRASSLEY for his patience.

Senator INHOFE and his staff worked extraordinarily well with us on this side of the aisle. It is a bipartisan bill. It is a bipartisan committee. Senator INHOFE has helped in a very important way to maintain this bipartisan tradition of our committee. I thank him for the remarks, and I thank him and his staff.

I hope our colleagues will listen to what we both are urging them to do. Let us take a look at the amendments now, instead of waiting and waiting and waiting. Because if we look at amendments now, we increase our chances of getting this bill to the floor earlier rather than later.

I thank the Presiding Officer and my friend from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

IMMIGRATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I come to the floor to address two issues, a shorter issue on immigration and a longer issue on the student loan program, particularly in reference to legislation offered earlier this morning.

On immigration, this morning, Secretary Johnson appeared before the Judiciary Committee. We had a chance to ask a number of questions related to the administration's release of 36,000 criminal aliens, for what reasons the Department voluntarily did release them—especially convicted murderers—and what they are doing to track down and keep track of where these people are. I didn't get answers, but the Secretary committed to respond in writing about the matter, and I thank him ahead of time for doing that.

I also asked about data on countries that refuse to cooperate in taking back their nationals. Today I am introducing a bill with Senator INHOFE to fix this situation and allow the government to detain foreign nationals who pose a threat to our homeland. I have a longer statement on that issue.

Finally, I mention that the Secretary of Homeland Security answered a lot of questions related to unaccompanied children coming to the United States, mostly from Central America, and entering our southern border.

I agree we do have a humanitarian problem. These are vulnerable children whose lives are on the line. They are escorted by strangers for the most part, away from their families in some cases, and each of these young people probably not understanding what lies ahead.

When in custody, our government makes an attempt to reunite them with their families. However, sometimes the government is handing them over to nonrelatives, which concerns me because of the potential of placing them in the hands of pimps and traffickers.

As I said this morning in the committee, these children are being lured into these dire circumstances by false promises. That is evident from the interviews being done with the children.

Already, border agents and intelligence analysts have been interviewing the youth to understand why they are migrating at this particular time. Today I received a document that summarizes the findings of these interviewers. The document, while it does not have any author or official seal, was apparently done to summarize the interviews of individuals crossing the border along the McAllen, Rio Grande City, and Weslaco stations.

Two hundred thirty subjects were interviewed from several countries. An overwhelming majority said they were coming to the United States to take advantage of the new U.S. law that grants a free pass to unaccompanied children and female adults traveling with minors. That so-called free pass refers to a Notice to Appear document issued and then saying they are released on their own recognizance pending a hearing.

There is no new law. There is a new bill that passed the Senate 1 year ago but not through the House of Representatives, and it may never be. So there is no new law granting a free pass to unaccompanied children and female adults traveling with minors.

Specifically, this report states:

> A high percentage of the subjects interviewed stated their family members in the U.S. urged them to travel immediately, because the United States Government was only issuing immigration [free passes] until the end of June 2014.

The report states that:

> The issue of free passes was the main reason provided by 95 percent, plus or minus, of the interviewed subjects.

So while I understand there are a lot of factors involved, we cannot ignore the fact that these children are coming or are being forced here because of a belief on their part that they will never be deported.

We can say that is thanks to the Obama administration because this administration has refused to be serious about immigration enforcement. The President needs to send a signal right away, if he wants to stop this catastrophe from happening, that the laws will be enforced.

Instead of reviewing deportation policies and suggesting ways to remove fewer people, the President should task Secretary Johnson with finding ways to actually enforce the laws we have on the books.

We must send a very strong signal that there is no benefit and no avenue

for them to remain in the United States. We must do this so the children are not lured into dire situations in the future. Even before they cross the border into the United States, they are probably already in circumstances we would consider a dire situation.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mr. GRASSLEY. In fiscal year 2014, the U.S. Department of Education will make about $112 billion in Federal direct loans to students. The Federal Government already holds more than $1 trillion in student loan debt. So that makes the U.S. Department of Education one of the country's largest lenders. Total student loan debt in the United States is now second only to mortgage debt, and about 90 percent of all student loans happen to be issued by the Federal Government.

When elected officials say we have a student loan crisis because too many students owe more than they can afford to repay, we have to keep in mind who it was and is that made those loans to students in the first place.

It was, in fact, Uncle Sam.

What is one of the first things a Federal regulator looks at when a private bank issues a loan? They look at whether the bank has confirmed the ability of the borrower to repay. Federal student loans are given out without a credit check or any analysis of the student's ability to repay the loans in the first place.

The fastest growing category of student loans is Federal unsubsidized student loans, which are given out regardless of need. That means that students across this country get an award letter from their college saying they are eligible for thousands of dollars in Federal loans, even though in many cases they may not need all of those loans to cover their tuition and other costs. Colleges are required to offer the full amount of Federal student loans for which the student is eligible even if a financial aid counselor at that university knows that a student is borrowing more than the student needs and even if that counselor realizes they will have trouble repaying. If a private bank followed these same tactics and gave out loans on these terms, that bank would be accused of predatory lending. These easy-money policies may even be helping fuel tuition increases, which then obviously makes the problem even worse. A Federal government trying to help a student and at the same time maybe giving incentives to increase tuition actually is not helping that student in the long run.

Between Federal student loan policies that effectively encourage overborrowing and the lack of good jobs for college graduates in this current economy, it is no wonder that so many college graduates find themselves in over their heads with student loan debt.

Unfortunately, for all the concerns we have heard expressed on the Senate floor about excessive student loan debt, my colleagues on the other side of the aisle decided to play election-year politics with this issue rather than tackle any of the root causes of the problem. In fact, when it comes to economic growth and job creation, the first rule ought to be do no harm. By including yet another massive tax increase, the bill the Senate declined to take up would have only added to the list of tax and regulatory burdens currently choking our economy.

We should be intensely focused on removing burdens to economic growth and as a result have some job creation. Instead, the policies we see from the other side of the aisle seem to be based on the old European model of accepting anemic economic growth and trying to make up for it with debt-financed government handouts for as long as possible.

I just referred to an old European model because many countries in Europe have already rejected this failed approach and instead have sought to reform entitlements, cut spending, and reduce taxes—measures we ought to be taking right here in the United States. Our goal should be to expand opportunities for young people and the middle class and not add them to the welfare state.

Incidentally, the President's recent so-called Executive action on student loans shows that he shares the same outlook of assuming a stagnant economy for the foreseeable future. He is talking about making people who graduated years ago retroactively eligible for programs enacted in 2010 that allow students to lower their monthly payments if they have a lower income. First of all, that happens to be a very transparent admission that many students who graduated near the beginning of President Obama's first term in office still don't have good-paying jobs halfway through the second term. What he doesn't tell you is that when you lower your student loan payments, you will pay off your loan more slowly and obviously accumulate more interest. In other words, you will eventually end up paying a lot more to Uncle Sam than you otherwise would have. When banks were offering adjustable-rate or interest-only mortgages, they were criticized for taking advantage of borrowers who would be faced with bigger payments down the road.

The pay-as-you-earn program may be useful tools short term for those in distress, but it will cost every one of them in the long term; that is, assuming you ever get a job that pays well. However, the second part of the program says that if you still haven't found a job that pays well enough to pay off your loan after 10 years, your loan will be forgiven if you work for the government or a nonprofit or after 20 years if you work in the private sector, which apparently is considered less worthwhile. And who foots the bill when these people get their loans forgiven? The American taxpayer will pay for those people's college loans.

Creighton University Professor Ernie Goss has analyzed the President's plan and thinks it is a poor use of taxpayer funds. This is what he said:

> A lot of these men and women that are out there working don't have kids in college, won't have kids in college, and it's a big transfer of income to those of us who have university educations or particularly those of us who are in university education.

So increasing Federal subsidies for colleges at the expense of the American taxpayers who work hard to pay for their own bills just encourages colleges to keep increasing tuition.

Furthermore, expanding a program designed to help student loan borrowers who still cannot afford their student loan payments 10 or 20 years after graduation looks a lot like planning for further economic stagnation typical of the last 4 or 5 years rather than focusing on improving economic growth and resultant job creation.

The political messaging bill the Senate declined to take up today would also do nothing to address the problems of students borrowing more than they will be able to afford to repay in the first place. I have a bill that will help with that problem.

The Higher Education Act already contains a requirement for colleges to provide counseling to new borrowers of Federal student loans; however, the current disclosures in the law do not do enough to ensure that students understand what kind of debt they will face after graduation. My bill, which I have entitled ''Know Before You Owe Federal Student Loan Act,'' strengthens the current student loan counseling requirements by making the counseling an annual requirement before new loans are disbursed rather than just for first-time borrowers.

My bill adds several key components to the information institutions of higher education are required to share with students as part of loan counseling. Perhaps most significantly, colleges would have to provide an estimate of a student's loan debt-to-income ratio upon graduation. This would be based on the starting wages for that student's program of study and the estimated student loan debt the student will likely take out to complete the program. That way, students will have a very real picture of the student loan payments they will face and whether they will be able to afford those payments with their likely future income.

Students will also be provided with information about the higher risk of default if they have a projected loan debt-to-income ratio greater than 12 percent. They will be told that they should borrow only the minimum amount necessary to cover expenses and that they do not have to accept the full amount of the loans offered.

Students will also be given options for reducing borrowing through scholarships, reduced expenses, work-study or other work opportunities.

Because adding an extra year of study can significantly increase student loan debt, an explanation will be

provided about the importance of graduating on time to avoid additional borrowing and the impact of adding an additional year of study to the total indebtedness.

Finally, the bill requires that a student manually enter either in writing or through electronic means the exact dollar amount of the Federal direct loan funding the student desires to borrow. The current process almost makes borrowing the maximum amount the default option. If you want to borrow less than you need to borrow, you have to ask for less. Students may wrongly assume that the Federal Government has determined this is the appropriate amount for them to borrow when in fact the government doesn't know anything about that student's situation. Surely the Federal Government would not lend them more than they can afford to repay, right? No, that is wrong. This provision will ensure that students make a conscious decision about how much they borrow rather than simply accepting the total amount of Federal student loans for which they are eligible.

I should add that good college financial aid counselors can and do advise students not to borrow more than they need, but the process itself needs to be reformed to give them the proper tools.

In fact, the reforms I have outlined were inspired by efforts already underway in my home State of Iowa. Grand View University in Des Moines, IA, has a financial empowerment plan where students and families construct a comprehensive 4-year financing plan. Under this plan, borrowing is based on the student's future earning potential in the student's field of study. The 4-year plan also helps ensure students graduate on time, and tuition is capped at 2 percent a year over those 4 years.

Iowa Student Loan—our State-based nonprofit lender—also has a program called Student Loan Game Plan, which is an online, interactive resource that calculates a student's likely debt-to-income ratio. It walks students through how their borrowing will affect their lifestyle in the future and what actions they can take now to reduce their borrowing. As a result, in the past year over 15 percent of the students who participated decreased the amount they had planned to borrow by an average of $2,536, saving Iowa students over $1 million in additional loan debt.

Finally, my own alma mater, the University of Northern Iowa, has a program called the Live Like a Student Program. This involves a number of resources to help students learn to manage their finances better, including 3-week courses, one-on-one counseling, and workshops.

We often tell prospective college students that they will earn on average $1 million more during a lifetime. It is true that college generally is a good investment; however, when a student's academic dreams become a nightmare—and usually upon graduation that happens because they borrowed more from the Federal Government than they can afford to repay on their starting salary—they understandably feel that they have been had. And by whom? Their own government.

The Federal Government, as the lender making these loans, has a responsibility to at least ensure that students know what they are getting themselves into before they get in over their heads. This legislation I described that will be introduced will do that.

I would urge my colleagues to take a look at that piece of legislation. I would ask them to support it and join as a cosponsor so collectively we can help prevent more students from drowning in Federal student loan debt.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I very much appreciate the efforts of Senator MCCAIN and Senator SANDERS to get the VA health care bill through the Senate. However, I was somewhat disappointed with how abrupt and abbreviated the amendment process was; to wit, there was none. As a result, I think some very good amendments never had a chance to be considered. One of those amendments was mine, and I would like to discuss it briefly because I think it is something the Senate should pursue.

I will note that everybody I spoke to about it—Republicans and Democrats alike—liked the amendment and thought it made sense. So I will describe it.

A little background: Some time ago, as we entered the computer age, we figured out that there were better ways to maintain health records than in cardboard file folders stuffed away in file drawers. One of the leaders in solving that problem—lost information buried in file folders—was the Veterans' Administration. They developed one of the best electronic health records in the country. For years they were leaders in the technology of electronic health records. To this day, the VA electronic health record system is one of which they can be proud.

It has one flaw, and that flaw is that it is limited to Veterans' Administration medical facilities and Veterans' Administration medical providers. If a veteran in Rhode Island is walking through Providence and trying to cross the plaza in Kennedy Square and gets hit by a vehicle and rushed to the Rhode Island Hospital emergency room, the Rhode Island Hospital emergency room has no access to that veteran's electronic health record.

At the same time a number of States have really stepped up not only to have electronic health records but to have a hub that exchanges the information in an electronic health record. So when you go to get an MRI or go to see a specialist or are taken to an emergency room or have a lab test, the results of that encounter are loaded automatically into your electronic health record. That can only work if you have the whole system pulling together, and some States are doing that.

Now you have the difficult situation where there are States that are building an information network for health records and the Veterans' Administration, which has one of the best electronic health records in the country, is not participating in that local effort to tie the medical system together for the benefit of local folks. That is an oversight that needs to be corrected, and my amendment would encourage and support the Veterans' Administration in taking its electronic health records and connecting them to the information exchanges that are growing.

In Rhode Island it is called Current Care. It is run by the Rhode Island Quality Institute. It does a phenomenal job. We are reaching out to veterans to do it voluntarily, but it has been a real chore to work with the Veterans' Administration to move this along. It has taken an enormous amount of time despite the goodwill of the people involved. There has not been much in the way of resources available. We have had to go to private and nonprofit and charitable sources to try to fund this. That doesn't make sense.

This bill is particularly important—where we are providing more out-of-network access for veterans and more ability for veterans to go to doctors that will not be in the electronic health network record—because it would allow the very good electronic health record of the Veterans' Administration to connect with these emerging electronic health records information networks. It is simply leaving veterans behind to leave them out under these circumstances.

I hope I will have a chance to move this legislation on some other vehicle, but I have to say, as important as this bill was, it was disappointing that a piece of legislation as simple as mine—an amendment that would have enjoyed extraordinary bipartisan support and probably would have been agreed to on a voice vote—never had a chance to see the light of day because, as I said, of the abbreviation and abruptness, to put it mildly, of the amendment process.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WHITEHOUSE). The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I wish to begin by thanking a number of my colleagues, most especially our good friends who are very active Members of this body, Senators SANDERS and MCCAIN, for acting in a very bipartisan and courageous way to enable us to reach a compromise and vote on a truly historic step forward—as we did recently—to begin to bring an end to this crisis in our health care system and the VA.

I also thank my colleague from Rhode Island for his amendment, and I

hope it has some support in some form—as it and other amendments deserve as well—because as commendable as the bill is, it certainly does not solve all of the problems in the VA health care system, let alone the VA.

Let's recognize that the disability claims backlog persists. The bureaucratic rigmarole and sclerotic bureaucracy of the VA in many parts of the country continue to plague our veterans, and we need to recognize that top to bottom the VA needs an overhaul in its culture as well as its management. But this bill represents a good faith and effective way to respond initially—the beginning of a solution to a health care crisis that is decades long in the building. The delays in the VA health care system are well known and longstanding.

I spend a lot of time, as a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee as well the Armed Services Committee, listening to veterans. I have a veterans advisory council that gives me extraordinarily insightful and important advice. I make a point of visiting the VA health care facilities all around Connecticut, and I spend a lot of time in places where veterans gather, such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and others. Listening to them is a major source of information for me in forming my judgment about what should be done with the VA health care system. What I hear from them—most commonly—is that the health care is good, but it takes too long to get it. The doctors, nurses, and health care providers do very good work, but it takes too long to see them. The delays are what our veterans find most troubling about this system.

What we have seen—disclosed first by CNN and then by others—is not only delays but false record keeping to disguise those delays and falsification of documents and lists to hide a failure to meet deadlines—in fact, to provide timely care. That kind of falsification of records and destruction of documents, and, in effect, cooking the books and then covering it up goes beyond simply delaying health care. It is, in effect, a form of fraud. We have taken a first step here to meet the immediate needs and help end the delays.

This bill will enable veterans to seek private health care at private facilities or private clinics or private hospitals if they have to wait too long or live too far away to make use of the VA facility.

It also increases resources—a longer-term effort to provide more doctors and fill the 400 vacancies that exist right now. Those resources are vitally necessary, not only to provide more providers but also to rebuild, renovate, and construct new health care facilities.

In providing more resources, this bill will also aid 26 VA facilities, such as the Errera clinic and facility in West Haven.

It also imposes accountability. It makes sure that officials in the VA who are incompetent or corrupt can be fired more easily and that bonuses or promotions can be stopped for those officials who betrayed a trust. It also shows that what is necessary here is more money and better management—not one or the other. Both together are necessary to really serve our veterans with the health care they deserve, which is first class, world class health care and nothing less. That is what our Nation's heroes truly deserve, and more and more of them will be making use of that health care—2 million more over the past 5 years and millions more over the next 5 years. That burden is not something to be addressed at the margins. It has to be addressed head-on and fully and generously because that is the promise we made to our veterans—first class, world class health care, and nothing less.

I will close by saying that accountability means something more than just firing corrupt or incompetent officials. It means holding them responsible for criminal culpability when they cook the books, falsify records, make false statements, and in effect lie to the American people as well as to their superiors in the VA. That will require a criminal investigation by the Department of Justice, which is the only law enforcement agency that has the resources, expertise, and authority to conduct a prompt and effective criminal investigation on the scope and scale that is required.

There are more than 50 locations where evidence of criminal culpability has been found. Thirteen percent of VA schedulers have indicated to the auditors that they were coerced or threatened into adopting, in effect, improper practices. Another 8 percent kept secret or unofficial lists, and many at those facilities and others may have cooked the books. I am not jumping to conclusions. I am not rushing to judgment. That is why an investigation is necessary and appropriate.

Only the Department of Justice can convene a grand jury. Only the Department of Justice has the FBI resources. The VA inspector general has 165 investigators for the whole country, and that is not enough. That is simply not sufficient for this investigation.

The VA is overwhelmed and overworked in its health care facilities, caseloads, and the needs that VA clients and patients are bringing to these facilities. The VA does some things very well when it comes to amputees, post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injury, and many kinds of injuries associated with the battlefield. Combat medicine is more advanced than it has ever been before, and the VA is part of a very progressive effort to increase and to deliver health care more efficiently to that population.

But the population of veterans who have fought in the longest wars in our history—although they may be a smaller part of our population than ever before in our wars—has been through multiple deployments, and they deserve the kind of intensive and comprehensive health care that the VA has committed to provide, and that will take more resources.

This bill is a beginning. It is only a downpayment on what we owe our Nation's finest and bravest. We owe them the best that we can provide in health care and nothing less. That is part of what we promised, and that promise must be fulfilled. Thanks to the action of this body today we have begun on that path.

I urge the House of Representatives to adopt this measure and to help us fulfill that promise. I hope they will do it soon.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HEINRICH). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of World Refugee Day on June 20. On December 4, 2000, the United Nations General Assembly decided to designate June 20 as World Refugee Day. Each year on this day, we have an opportunity to honor the women, men, and children who have faced such extreme persecution, conflict, and violence that they have been forced to flee their homes and their communities. I am as saddened by their losses as I am impressed by the strength, courage, and resilience demonstrated by their commitment to protecting their families and building new communities around the world.

There are more than 45 million refugees and internally displaced persons globally. With so many people unable to return to their homes, I am proud to be part of a nation that was built on the basic principle that all men and women were created equal and that all people have basic rights, no matter where they come from. Since 1975, our great Nation has welcomed more than 3 million refugees, and we continue to allow thousands of refugees to permanently relocate here every year. The United States is also the world's largest donor to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Today, we recognize that every minute, eight people leave everything behind to escape war, persecution, or terror. We recognize that nearly half of all refugees are younger than 18 years old. We recognize that, even after fleeing from conflict and persecution, refugees continue to face numerous challenges, from providing food for their families to persevering through homesickness and loss. We recognize that we are a nation that shares our home with those who cannot return to their own.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am proud to rise today to support the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. This bill would allow eligible students refinance their Federal loans, transfer private loans into Federal loans with better interest rates, and eliminates tax loopholes for millionaires and billionaires. This bill would help more than 25 million students in the United States, including 481,000 student borrowers in Maryland.

Middle-class families and their children deserve a fair shot at higher education. Students deserve fair, affordable loans to help them get the education they need to succeed, and the working women of America deserve a fair shot at fair pay with equal pay for equal work. Right now, millions of American students are graduating from college and universities, but as they are handed their diplomas, they are being handed a lifetime of debt. The average student debt for 2012 college graduates was $29,400, and for the first time in U.S. history, student loan debt topped credit card debt at $1 trillion. When you are fresh out of college and paying living expenses and investing in a 401(k), these loans add up and become burdensome.

This especially affects young women struggling to pay debts against a wage gap. College-educated women earn just 82 cents for every dollar a man makes, but they don't get an 18 percent wage gap discount on their student loans. How can we expect women to achieve their dream when they are burdened with crippling debt and fighting against a wage gap that continues to grow over time?

Recently, a Maryland woman wrote to me. She is a single mother and was on welfare for 9 months after giving birth to her son but said she did not want to become a statistic. She pursued higher education so she could improve her life. She got a bachelor's degree and a master's degree and graduated in the top 5 percent of her class. While attending school, she worked full time and raised her son. She enrolled in an income-based loan program and despite paying more than requested each month, her interest rate has increased. She cannot care for her son and pay off $63,000 in student loans without assistance in refinancing her loans.

The women of America want more. Women make up almost half of the workforce and 40 percent are the sole breadwinners for families but still only make 77 cents for every dollar a man makes. African-American women earn 62 cents and Hispanic women earn 54 cents. Even if they have the same grades, degree, and job title, women are consistently paid less in their first job out of college. On average, women will lose more than $431,000 over their lifetimes because of the wage gap. This doesn't just affect student loans; It affects their contributions to Social Security, pensions, and retirement security.

I am so proud of America's women. We have accomplished so much. We have gone to space, become CEOs of Fortune 500 Companies and even made it into the U.S. Senate. Today, women are graduating from higher education in record numbers. It is time to help them get a fair shot at achieving their dreams. That starts with equal pay.

Getting a college education is the core of the American dream. I am fighting to make sure that every student has access to that dream. Let's work together to make sure that when students graduate, their first mortgage isn't their student debt. Carrying the burden of student loans drags down young people's financial future, making it harder to buy a home, start a family, or save for retirement. I support Senator WARREN's bill because it reduces debt and fights for American families. It lowers interest rates, giving everyone a fair shot at repaying their loans for a more secure financial future because women deserve a fair shot at getting equal pay for equal work.

I have said this often, but we in this country enjoy many freedoms: the freedom of speech, the freedom of the press, the freedom of religion. But there is an implicit freedom our constitution doesn't lay out in writing, but its promise has excited the passions, hopes, and dreams of people in this country since its founding. The freedom to take whatever talents God has given you, to fill whatever passion is in your heart, to learn so you can earn and make a contribution—the freedom to achieve.

When I was a young girl at a Catholic all-girls school, my Mom and Dad made it clear they wanted me to go to college. But right around graduation my family was going through a rough time because my Dad's grocery store had suffered a terrible fire. I offered to put off college and work at the grocery store until the business got back on its feet. My Dad said, ''Barb, you have to go. Your mother and I will find a way, because no matter what happens to you, no one can ever take that degree away from you. The best way I can protect you is to make sure you can earn a living all of your life.'' My father gave me the freedom to achieve. And this legislation will give millions of Americans that same freedom without adding a dime to the deficit.

Senator WARREN's legislation should be passed in a swift, expeditious, and uncluttered way. It gives our students access to the American dream. It gives our young people access to the freedom to achieve, to be able to follow their talents, and to be able to achieve higher education in whatever field they will be able to serve this country.

While our work isn't done when it comes to ensuring access to affordable higher education, this bill helps us get there. While these bills will fix the problem today, I will continue to work with my colleagues to figure out a longer-term solution.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I wish to discuss the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act (S. 2432). Student loans in this country are at an unprecedented $1.2 trillion and now exceed credit card debt as the largest consumer debt market after mortgages. Unfortunately, unlike mortgages, student borrowers are unable to take advantage of the low interest rate environment and many borrowers are stuck in high fixed-rate loans for 20 or more years. This means that these borrowers must delay, or put off permanently, other financial decisions such as buying a home, saving for retirement, or starting a small business. This is not just a ''young American'' issue—recent data shows that individuals of every demographic have increasing student debt burden, and the impact of those with student debt being unable to fully participate in the economy will affect all Americans for years to come.

This issue is particularly important to me, as South Dakota has the highest proportion in the country of residents with student loan debt. That is why I have signed on to co-sponsor Senator WARREN's bill to refinance student loans, and why, as chairman of the Banking Committee, which has jurisdiction over student loans made by private lenders, I will work to consider all actions that can be taken to address both existing and future student debt.

RELEASE OF CRIMINAL ALIENS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, in the last few weeks, startling data from the Obama Administration has revealed that the Department of Homeland Security has released over 36,000 aliens with criminal convictions into the United States.

According to responses to some Members of Congress, Secretary Johnson has acknowledged that 36,007 convicted criminal aliens were released from Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody in fiscal year 2013. Many of these aliens had multiple convictions. In fact, among the 36,007 aliens released, they had nearly 88,000 convictions.

Data prepared by ICE, and reported by the Center for Immigration Studies, shows that among the criminally convicted aliens released into American communities were: 193 homicide convictions, including one willful killing of a public official with a gun, 426 sexual assault convictions, 303 kidnapping convictions, 1,075 aggravated assault convictions, 1,160 stolen vehicle convictions, 9,187 dangerous drug convictions, and 16,070 drunk or drugged driving convictions.

I have repeatedly said that this administration has failed the American public by refusing to enforce the laws on the books. This administration has turned a blind eye to those who have broken the law and have irresponsibly exercised their executive authority to find a way to allow people here unlawfully to remain in the country.

In failing to enforce the immigration laws, the administration has betrayed its responsibility to protect the public safety of the American people.

President Obama's administration has continually stated that they are focused on enforcement against the worst of the worst convicted criminals. Yet they are releasing thousands of aliens every year with serious and, in many cases, violent criminal convictions.

ICE has responded to criticism by declaring that many of the individuals released were under supervisory restrictions. These restrictions range from bond to ankle bracelets to a periodic telephone call to a designated ICE phone line. Some individuals, however, are issued an order of recognizance and therefore are under no supervision at all.

Is the American public supposed to feel safer because the same administration that released violent criminals into our communities claims to be monitoring them? Is the American public supposed to trust these aliens convicted of crimes and are here unlawfully to follow the terms of their release?

Despite requests, ICE has failed to specify the nature of the release conditions placed upon these violent criminal aliens. In the interest of public safety, we should all demand to know the release conditions of those aliens released who have been convicted of violent crimes.

The administration is also claiming that many of the individuals they released in 2013 were due to the 2001 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Zadvydas v. Davis. This decision limited the Federal Government's ability to detain aliens who have been ordered removed.

This case sets the pitiful precedent that aliens subject to final orders of removal, including ones convicted of a crime, cannot be held longer than 6 months and will be released in the United States if their home country refuses to take them back or their home country simply delays the U.S. government's request for a travel document. Other countries know that—because of the ruling in Zadvydas—they can simply run out the clock on issuing travel documents for the criminally convicted individual. Therefore, we have aliens, with no legal right to be in the United States, unwanted by their own country, being released into the country by our own administration.

This Supreme Court decision has had a detrimental effect on our ability to obtain travel documents from foreign countries and effectuate removal orders. Many countries refuse to take back their criminal aliens, leaving us no choice but to release them into our own communities.

This precedent needs to be corrected. The administration has relied upon the ruling in Zadvydas to release thousands of criminally convicted aliens. However, they have refused to help fix it. In fact, the Senate immigration reform bill that they supported does not include a fix to the 2001 Supreme Court decision. They have not asked Congress to extend the length of time they are allowed to detain foreign nationals with final orders of removal.

That is why I am cosponsoring the ''Keeping Our Communities Safe Act'' being introduced today by the Senator from Oklahoma. His bill would close the legal loophole that requires ICE to release dangerous criminals onto the streets of America. It would allow ICE to detain non-removable immigrants beyond six months if the alien is a national security threat or is a threat to the safety of the community and has a past violent crime conviction.

In addition to hiding behind the Supreme Court decision, the administration has refused to use the tools at its disposal to get countries to cooperate. Federal law allows the Secretary of State to discontinue granting visas to all residents of a country that refuses or unreasonably delays taking back its aliens facing deportation from the United States.

Secretary Johnson, at a House Judiciary 2 weeks ago, acknowledged that in his capacity as Secretary, his department has never asked the Department of State to use this authority. This visa sanction authority has only been invoked one time, in 2011 against Guayana, within 2 months Guayana issued travel documents for 112 of 113 aliens ordered removed from the United States to Guayana. This tactic has been proven effective and Secretary Johnson should be employing this measure.

Of the 36,000 persons released in 2013, ICE claims that 3,652 were due to the 2001 Supreme Court decision. So, only a small portion of those released were mandatorily released under Zadvydas.

While thousands of criminally convicted aliens have been released into the United States, both at ICE's discretion and due to bad Supreme Court precedent, President Obama has called for a reduction of immigration detention capacity by 10 percent.

The simplicity of this idea seriously calls into question this administration's management capabilities. The fact that thousands of people are being released from detention clearly suggests that ICE needs more beds, not less, in order to avoid releasing more criminally convicted aliens into America.

This administration is knowingly putting the safety of the American people at risk. Releasing violent criminals into the American population should cause great doubt about this administration's ability to enforce current immigration laws.

ICE needs to provide the American people with more information about the criminal aliens it releases. ICE needs to tell the American people what terms of release are given to what criminal offenses. ICE needs to tell the American people what types of criminal offenses it deems appropriate to release at their own discretion.

ICE needs to tell the American people how many of these criminally convicted aliens comply with the terms of their release. ICE needs to tell the American people how many of these criminally convicted aliens commit further crimes after being released. ICE needs to tell the American people how many of these criminally convicted aliens who are released become fugitives.

This administration tells us to trust them. They say they are removing more people than ever before. They claim the immigration bill passed by this body will solve our problems. Yet they have failed us and the American people. They continue to turn a blind eye to lawbreakers and refuse to take this matter seriously.

There should be more outrage about the news coming from this administration. Releasing 36,000 criminal aliens is a serious matter and one that better be fixed soon for the sake of the American public.

LAUCK NOMINATION

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to speak in support of a fellow Virginian as President Obama's nominee to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia, Judge Hannah Lauck. When confirmed, Hannah will become the first woman judge on the Federal trial bench in Richmond, VA.

Hannah is exceptionally well qualified to carry out the duties and responsibilities of a Federal district judge.

Hannah earned her bachelor's degree, magna cum laude, in 1986 from Wellesley College, where she was also elected to Phi Beta Kappa.

She went on to receive her J.D. from Yale Law School in 1991. While in law school she directed the Homelessness Clinic and served on the board of the Initiative for Public Interest Law.

Hannah began her legal career in the Eastern District of Virginia serving as a clerk for Judge James Spencer. Judge Spencer—a Reagan appointee to the bench—is extremely well-regarded in Richmond for his legal acumen, honest nature, and service to the community and will be taking senior status this year.

Coming full circle, Hannah has now been selected to fill the seat of Judge Spencer, her mentor and for whom she clerked right out of law school.

From 1994 to 2004, she served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia where she handled both civil defense matters as well as criminal prosecutions.

Following a brief stint in the private sector, Hannah became a U.S. Magistrate judge in the Eastern District of Virginia, where she has served since 2005.

As a magistrate judge, she helped begin one of the first Federal reentry courts, which is designed to reduce recidivism of individuals released from prison who have serious addictions. These reentry courts are crucial to our

efforts to reduce prison overcrowding and ensure we are helping people who have made mistakes in life become productive members of society.

She is also an active member of her community where she has helped train the next generation of legal experts. For many years, she has taught at the University of Richmond T.C. Williams School of Law.

Hannah serves on the board of the Federal Bar Association and is an active member and former board member of the Richmond Bar Association and the Metropolitan Richmond Women's Bar Association.

She comes highly recommended by the Virginia State Bar, the Virginia Bar Association, has been recognized as one of Virginia's leaders in the Law and has received the strong support of many of her legal colleagues.

Hannah has an exemplary record as a prosecutor and a magistrate judge and all of her peers praise her character and integrity. I am pleased to strongly support her nomination to the Federal bench and thank all of you for joining me in supporting her nomination. This body, and our Nation, will all be well served by her presence on this court.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

MADISON COUNTY, IOWA

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. 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. 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 Madison 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 Madison County worth over $831,434 and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $3.5 million to the local economy.

Of course, one of my favorite memories of working together is the community's hard work to secure funding made available in various farm bill programs and particularly Madison County Memorial Hospital's purchase of a mammography machine. I lost two sisters to breast cancer and know the devastating toll it takes on those who have it and their families and communities. That is why I have championed prevention and wellness throughout my career, especially early detection. I have also dramatically increased funding for cancer research at the National Institutes of Health and established the Department of Defense's breast cancer research program. I applaud your community's dedication to early detection of breast cancer. Ensuring Iowans have access to quality, affordable health care is critical—particularly for those in rural areas, who may find this care out of reach. I am pleased that the hospital is equipped with the equipment and facilities to care for Madison County residents and promote wellness in the area.

Among the highlights:

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, Madison County has received $631,434 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Madison County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling $20,000.

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, Madison County has received more than $596,024 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, Madison County's fire departments have received over $456,845 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

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 Madison 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 Madison 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 Madison County, to fulfill their own dreams and initiatives. 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.•

STORY COUNTY, IOWA

• Mr. HARKIN. Mr. 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 Story 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 Story County worth over $750 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $200 million to the local economy.

Of course, I have many favorite memories of working together including dozens of projects worth more than $200 million at Iowa State University like the Community Vitality Center that supports Iowa's small and medium-sized communities, funding $468 million toward construction and programming for a state-of-the-art national animal disease laboratory and jail-based meth treatment for non-violent offenders provided by the Story County Sherriff's Department.

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 Story 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, working with mayors, city council members, and local economic development officials in Story County, I have fought for more than $55 million for innovate businesses in Ames such as Etrema Products, Bioprotection Systems, Advanced Analytical, and Powerfilm, 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 Story City to use that money to leverage other investments to jumpstart change and renewal. I am so pleased that Story County has earned $221,000 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, Story County has received $535,488 in Harkin grants.

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 provided critical support to Iowa communities impacted by the devastating floods of 2008. Story County has received over $2.4 million 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, Story County has received more than $87 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, Story County's fire departments have received over $2 million for firefighter safety and operations equipment and more than $470,000 in Byrne Justice Assistance Grant funding.

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 Story 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 Story 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 Story 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.●

RECOGNIZING RON SPEARS

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize artist Ron Spears for sharing his talents to create the Nevada Statehood Forever Stamp, almost 150 years following Nevada's entrance into the war-torn union.

This year commemorates a very special year in Nevada's history during which we celebrate 150 years of statehood. From those days of bitter conflict, Nevada forged a State dedicated to preserving liberty and bettering America. Our dramatic entrance is why our State calls itself Battle Born and why Nevadans, over the past 150 years, have been entrepreneurial, fiercely independent, and as diverse as our terrain. It is an honor to recognize the

artist who painted and captured the essence of the Nevada statehood in the Forever Stamp.

A resident of Reno, NV, Ron Spears is a university professor with a master's in fine art. His career is decorated with many different projects, ranging from illustrations on casino games, book covers, magazine articles, and even illustrations for Magic: The Gathering, Dungeons and Dragons, Harry Potter Card Game, Upper Deck, Blizzard Entertainment, and others. Now, Ron can add the Nevada Statehood Forever Stamp to his long list of works of art. His contribution to our State's history is something to be both commended and applauded. Ron's creativity glows from this stamp commemorating Nevada's sesquicentennial.

The brilliance and the vision that Ron discovered on his 2-year travels throughout this great State exemplifies the very inspiration that was born on October 31, 1864. Just beyond the neon lights of the Las Vegas Strip sits the stunning red rocks and bright blue skies that set the stage for a destination that is hard to miss, the Valley of Fire, Nevada's oldest State park. The magnificent formations of sandstone and dunes are what make this park a truly unique and brilliant place, one that I am glad was captured for our stamp. To say that I was struck by Ron's workmanship and vision would be an understatement.

I am truly proud that we are able to showcase this incredible achievement that I am sure will serve as a model for other artists and pioneers, right here in Nevada. Today I ask my colleagues and residents of the Silver State to join me in recognizing Ron for this great achievement and honor.●

TRIBUTE TO MR. JOEY LEE

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, today I honor Joseph ''Joey'' Lee for his outstanding achievements as a teacher at Pinkerton Academy in Derry, NH. Mr. Lee is the New Hampshire Department of Education's Granite State Teacher of the Year for 2014, selected from a field of 36 nominees.

Mr. Lee is also New Hampshire's candidate for the National Teacher of the Year award, the Nation's oldest and most prestigious program focused on excellence in teaching.

In May, Mr. Lee visited Washington, DC, to meet President Obama and discuss education initiatives with representatives from the Department of Education.

Born in Hooksett and a graduate of Plymouth State University, Mr. Lee has taught at Pinkerton Academy for 6 years. A social studies teacher, he currently teaches cultural geography while also coaching golf, directing the hockey program and co-advising the China Exchange Program.

Mr. Lee has a talent for connecting with students, recognizing their unique strengths and challenges and adapting his teaching style to their needs. He is passionate about applying classroom content to real-life situations.

The New Hampshire Department of Education recognized Mr. Lee for his conviction and passion for teaching, his energy in the classroom and his commitment to his students. I congratulate Mr. Lee on the honor of being the Granite State Teacher of the Year.●

TRIBUTE TO BILL LONERGAN

● Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Bill Lonergan for his exemplary leadership as assistant principal of Pinkerton Academy in Derry, NH. Bill was named Assistant Principal of the Year by the New Hampshire Association of School Principals for commitment to helping students succeed.

A 1980 graduate of Pinkerton Academy, Mr. Lonergan first returned to the school as a student teacher in the English department. He soon became a full-time member of the staff, both teaching and serving as associate dean of students. In total, he has worked at Pinkerton for 21 years.

Mr. Lonergan developed Pinkerton's ''Freshman Academy'' program, working with parents, teachers and students to ease the transition from area middle schools to the high school level. The program, which is among Mr. Lonergan's many accomplishments, is personalized to each student's strengths and interests, and has improved academic performance and integration into the Pinkerton community.

Mr. Lonergan's vision and dedication have made a difference for countless students. I am pleased to recognize his contributions to Pinkerton Academy, and congratulate him on being named Assistant Principal of the Year.●

REMEMBERING HANK LAURICELLA

● MR. VITTER. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the memory of Hank Lauricella, a beloved community leader from Harahan, LA, who tragically passed away in March of this year. Hank was born in 1930 and would have turned 84 on October 19.

I was truly honored to serve with Hank in the Louisiana Legislature, albeit in different bodies. In all of my many dealings with Hank, he was a pure class act and a truly dedicated public servant. Hank was never a show horse out to grab media or other attention. He was a workhorse who got important, concrete things done, particularly in the area of economic development and transportation infrastructure.

Hank was born in Harahan, LA, and attended Holy Cross High School. Following his time at Holy Cross High School, Hank attended the University of Tennessee, where he received his bachelors of science in business administration. While at Tennessee, Hank was a standout athlete who gained immense national recognition. He was a member of the 1951 national championship team at the University of Tennessee and was first runner-up for the Heisman Trophy. In 1981, Hank was appropriately elected to the College Football Hall of Fame.

Following his college career and a year playing professional football with the Dallas Texans, Hank served as a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army from 1953 to 1955, with 1 year of his service in Korea. After his service in the Army, Hank returned to Louisiana where he joined the family business, John L. Lauricella and Sons, now known as Lauricella Land Company. In that role, Hank was instrumental in providing strong leadership in guiding the company as they transitioned from residential to commercial real estate development.

For over 30 years, Hank served the Jefferson Parish community and indeed all of Louisiana in both the State House and the State Senate. During his time in the State legislature, Hank made economic development one of his top priorities. Hank promoted legislation that benefited the Louisiana Superdome, the Morial Convention Center, Louis Armstrong International Airport, the Port of New Orleans, and the Pontchartrain Center. Hank also served as an effective leader in many other roles. He was an original member of the Superdome Stadium Commission and played an instrumental role in the construction of the Superdome. Hank served on the boards for the Port of New Orleans, the World Trade Center of New Orleans, the Jefferson Business Council, and he served as the first chairman of the Board of the Jefferson Community Foundation.

Hank Lauricella was a man of many talents and interests. Not only was Hank a superior athlete, he also had a passion for gardening and cooking. He loved to cook using the tomatoes, basil, and rosemary that he grew in his own garden.

Of course Hank is lovingly remembered by his wife of 61 years, Betty, his four sons and one daughter, and his fifteen grandchildren. But well beyond that, Hank is remembered as a great friend and true public servant by the entire extended community which he served so ably.

I am so pleased to join them in continuing to remember and honor Hank Lauricella, a man who provided a great example of leadership through his service to others and his community.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:15 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4810. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts for the provision of hospital care and medical services at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities for Department of Veterans Affairs patients with extended waiting times

for appointments at Department facilities, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill was read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 4810. An act to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts for the provision of hospital care and medical services at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities for Department of Veterans Affairs patients with extended waiting times for appointments at Department facilities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following resolution was read, and placed on the calendar:

S. Res. 470. A resolution amending Senate Resolution 400 (94th Congress) to clarify the responsibility of committees of the Senate in the provision of the advice and consent of the Senate to nominations to positions in the intelligence community.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communication was laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and was referred as indicated:

EC–6086. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the extension of waiver authority for Belarus; to the Committee on Finance.

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. ROCKEFELLER:

S. 2461. A bill to amend title XXI of the Social Security Act to extend and improve the Children's Health Insurance Program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 2462. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt certain educational institutions from the employer health insurance mandate; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 2463. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for extensions of detention of certain aliens ordered removed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota (for himself, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. BENNET, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. THUNE, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 2464. A bill to adopt the bison as the national mammal of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 2465. A bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to take into trust 4 parcels of Federal land for the benefit of certain Indian Pueblos in the State of New Mexico; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself and Mr. RISCH):

S. 2466. A bill to amend the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 to include the desecration of cemeteries among the many forms of violations of the right to religious freedom; 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. PORTMAN (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KIRK, Mr. PAUL, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. THUNE):

S. Res. 469. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate on the May 31, 2014, transfer of five detainees from the detention facility at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mrs. FEINSTEIN:

S. Res. 470. A resolution amending Senate Resolution 400 (94th Congress) to clarify the responsibility of committees of the Senate in the provision of the advice and consent of the Senate to nominations to positions in the intelligence community; placed on the calendar.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KING, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. REID, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. THUNE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. COATS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BURR, Mr. LEE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. VITTER, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. PAUL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. KIRK):

S. Res. 471. A resolution honoring former President George H.W. Bush on the occasion of his 90th birthday and Barbara Bush on the occasion of her 89th birthday and extending the best wishes of the Senate to former President Bush and Mrs. Bush; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. REED, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. LEAHY):

S. Res. 472. A resolution honoring Dr. James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Energy, and Director of Central Intelligence; considered and agreed to.

By Ms. AYOTTE:

S. Con. Res. 37. A concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the United States Capitol in commemoration of the Shimon Peres Congressional Gold Medal ceremony; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 313

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) 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. 919

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 919, a bill to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, and for other purposes.

S. 1011

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1011, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 1033

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1033, a bill to authorize a grant program to promote physical education, activity, and fitness and nutrition, and to ensure healthy students, and for other purposes.

S. 1040

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) and the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) were added as cosponsors 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. 1406

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1406, a bill to amend the Horse Protection Act to designate additional unlawful acts under the Act, strengthen penalties for violations of the Act, improve Department of Agriculture enforcement of the Act, and for other purposes.

S. 1431

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1431, a bill to permanently extend the Internet Tax Freedom Act.

S. 1690

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1690, a bill to reauthorize the Second Chance Act of 2007.

S. 1733

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1733, a bill to stop exploitation through trafficking.

S. 1790

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1790, a bill to modernize laws, and eliminate discrimination, with respect to people living with HIV/AIDS, and for other purposes.

S. 1799

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1799, a bill to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

S. 1837

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1837, a bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to prohibit the use of consumer credit checks against prospective and current employees for the purposes of making adverse employment decisions.

S. 1957

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1957, a bill to establish the American Infrastructure Fund, to provide bond guarantees and make loans to States, local governments, and infrastructure providers for investments in certain infrastructure projects, and to provide equity investments in such projects, and for other purposes.

S. 2176

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) 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. 2188

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2188, a bill to amend the Act of June 18, 1934, to reaffirm the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for Indian tribes.

S. 2281

At the request of Mr. KAINE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2281, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to make technical improvements to the Net Price Calculator system so that prospective students may have a more accurate understanding of the true cost of college.

S. 2282

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2282, a bill to prohibit the provision of performance awards to employees of the Internal Revenue Service who owe back taxes.

S. 2307

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2307, a bill to prevent international violence against women, and for other purposes.

S. 2340

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2340, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require the Secretary to provide for the use of data from the second preceding tax year to carry out the simplification of applications for the estimation and determination of financial aid eligibility, to increase the income threshold to qualify for zero expected family contribution, and for other purposes.

S. 2346

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) and the Senator from Iowa (Mr. HARKIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2346, a bill to amend the National Trails System Act to include national discovery trails, and to designate the American Discovery Trail, and for other purposes.

S. 2360

At the request of Mr. LEVIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2360, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the rules relating to inverted corporations.

S. 2429

At the request of Mr. WARNER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2429, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the exclusion for employer-provided educational assistance to employer payment of interest on certain refinanced student loans.

S. 2434

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2434, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that working families have access to affordable health insurance coverage.

S. 2450

At the request of Mr. MCCAIN, the names of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S. 2450, a bill to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET), the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. REED) were added as cosponsors of S. 2450, supra.

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2450, supra.

At the request of Mr. VITTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2450, supra.

S. 2451

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Idaho (Mr. CRAPO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2451, a bill to support the local decisionmaking functions of local educational agencies by limiting the authority of the Secretary of Education to issue regulations, rules, grant conditions, and guidance materials, and for other purposes.

S. 2460

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) and the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) were added as cosponsors of S. 2460, a bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act and the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require additional disclosures and protections for students and cosigners with respect to student loans, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. VITTER, and Mr. CRUZ):

S. 2463. A bill to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for extensions of detention of certain aliens ordered removed, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, a year ago this month I stood before you during the Senate's debate on immigration to offer an amendment that would prevent convicted criminal aliens from being released back into our communities. Unfortunately, my amendment never came up for a vote despite the fact that this is an issue that should concern us all.

This problem arises from a couple of Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2005, which held that immigrants who have been ordered removed cannot be detained for more than 6 months. Even though an alien is an aggravated felon or has committed a crime of violence, they must be released back into society if no other country will accept them.

By releasing these criminals back into our communities we are allowing

them to commit even more crimes against Americans. For example, a Vietnamese immigrant, Binh Thai Luc, was ordered deported after serving time in prison for armed robbery and assault. Due to the Supreme Court decision in Zadvydas v. Davis, Luc was released from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, ICE, custody when Vietnam refused to admit him. He is now facing charges for the murder of 5 people in San Francisco in March of 2012. Five people would be alive today if our law enforcement officials had not been handcuffed by the Supreme Court.

From 2008–2012, nearly 17,000 immigrants with orders of removal were released back into our communities. Just last month, we learned that this number has more than doubled in one year. In 2013 alone, more than 36,000 criminally convicted aliens were released by ICE because their home countries had yet to take them back.

That is an astonishing number, especially when you look at what crimes these offenders have committed. These 36,000 criminals have been convicted of more than 87,000 crimes, including: 193 homicide convictions; 426 sexual assault convictions; 1,075 aggravated assault convictions; and 16,070 DUI convictions.

These are convictions, not allegations. Convicted murderers, sex offenders, and other violent felons that have been ordered removed from our country are now free to live among us.

Today, in light of these revelations, I am reintroducing my amendment as a standalone bill along with Senators GRASSLEY, VITTER, CRUZ, and SESSIONS. S. 2463, the Keep Our Communities Safe Act of 2014, amends the Immigration and Naturalization Act to allow the Department of Homeland Security to detain non-removable immigrants beyond 6 months in specific situations. These situations include circumstances when an alien's release would threaten national security, have serious adverse foreign policy consequences, or would threaten the safety of the community and the alien either is an aggravated felon or has committed a crime of violence.

Some organizations, such as the ACLU, believe this bill amounts to indefinite detention in violation of a criminal's due process rights. However, in addition to the specified circumstances of continued detention mentioned earlier, this bill requires the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security to recertify that a person is a threat every 6 months. Furthermore, an alien can submit evidence for a review of his detention and aliens will still have access to our federal courts, giving judges a say in the process.

I would like to commend my friend, Congressman LAMAR SMITH from Texas, for his good work on this in the House and I ask that both the Senate and the House take up consideration of the Keep Our Communities Safe Act to protect our fellow Americans from these violent offenders.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 469—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ON THE MAY 31, 2014, TRANSFER OF FIVE DETAINEES FROM THE DETENTION FACILITY AT UNITED STATES NAVAL STATION, GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. HATCH, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. KIRK, Mr. PAUL, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. SESSIONS, and Mr. THUNE) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services:

S. RES. 469

Whereas in enacting the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113–66), Congress provided the executive branch with clear guidance and requirements for transferring or releasing individuals from the detention facility at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba;

Whereas the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 states the Secretary of Defense may transfer an individual detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, if the Secretary determines, following a review conducted in accordance with the requirements of section 1023 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012 (10 U.S.C. 801 note) and Executive Order No. 13567, that the individual is no longer a threat to the United States, or the individual is ordered released by a United States court, or such an individual can be transferred if the Secretary determines that actions have been or are planned to be taken which will substantially mitigate the risk of the individual engaging or re-engaging in any terrorist activity or other hostile activity that threatens the United States or United States persons or interests and the transfer is in the national security interest of the United States;

Whereas the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 states that the Secretary of Defense must notify the appropriate committees of Congress of such a determination not later than 30 days before the transfer or release of the individual concerned from United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba;

Whereas the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 states that such a notification must include a detailed statement of the basis for the transfer or release, an explanation of why the transfer or release is in the national security interests of the United States, a description of any actions taken to mitigate the risks of reengagement by the individual to be transferred or released, a copy of any Periodic Review Board findings relating to the individual, and a description of the evaluation conducted pursuant to factors that must be considered prior to such a transfer or release;

Whereas the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113–76) states that none of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in that Act may be used to transfer covered individuals detained at United States Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, except in accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014;

Whereas on May 31, 2014, detainees Khairullah Khairkhwa, Abdul Haq Wasiq, Mohammed Fazl, Noorullah Noori, and Mohammed Nabi Omari were transferred from United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to Qatar; and

Whereas the appropriate committees of Congress were not notified of the transfers as required by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 prior to the transfers: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) the transfers of detainees Khairullah Khairkhwa, Abdul Haq Wasiq, Mohammed Fazl, Noorullah Noori, and Mohammed Nabi Omari from United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to Qatar on May 31, 2014, violated the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113–66) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113–76); and

(2) Congress should—

(A) investigate the actions taken by President Obama and his administration that led to the unlawful transfer of such detainees, including an evaluation of other options considered to reach the desired common defense policy outcome of the President; and

(B) determine the impact of the transfer of such detainees on the common defense of the United States and measures that should be taken to mitigate any negative consequences.

SENATE RESOLUTION 470—AMENDING SENATE RESOLUTION 400 (94TH CONGRESS) TO CLARIFY THE RESPONSIBILITY OF COMMITTEES OF THE SENATE IN THE PROVISION OF THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE SENATE TO NOMINATIONS TO POSITIONS IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Mrs. FEINSTEIN submitted the following resolution; which was placed on the calendar:

S. RES. 470

Resolved,

SECTION 1. RESPONSIBILITY OF COMMITTEES IN ADVICE AND CONSENT OF SENATE TO INTELLIGENCE APPOINTMENTS.

Section 17 of Senate Resolution 400 agreed to May 19, 1976 (94th Congress) is amended to read as follows:

''SEC. 17. (a)(1) Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c), the Select Committee shall have jurisdiction to review, hold hearings, and report the nominations of civilian individuals for positions in the intelligence community for which appointments are made by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

''(2) Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c), other committees with jurisdiction over the department or agency of the Executive Branch which contain a position referred to in paragraph (1) may hold hearings and interviews with individuals nominated for such position, but only the Select Committee shall report such nomination.

''(3) In this subsection, the term 'intelligence community' means an element of the intelligence community specified in or designated under section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)).

''(b)(1) With respect to the confirmation of the Assistant Attorney General for National Security, or any successor position, the nomination of any individual by the President to serve in such position shall be referred to the Committee on the Judiciary and, if and when reported, to the Select Committee for not to

exceed 20 calendar days, except that in cases when the 20-day period expires while the Senate is in recess, the Select Committee shall have 5 additional calendar days after the Senate reconvenes to report the nomination.

''(2) If, upon the expiration of the period described in paragraph (1), the Select Committee has not reported the nomination, such nomination shall be automatically discharged from the Select Committee and placed on the Executive Calendar.

''(c)(1) With respect to the confirmation of appointment to the position of Director of the National Security Agency, Inspector General of the National Security Agency, Director of the National Reconnaissance Office, or Inspector General of the National Reconnaissance Office, or any successor position to such a position, the nomination of any individual by the President to serve in such position, who at the time of the nomination is a member of the Armed Forces on active duty, shall be referred to the Committee on Armed Services and, if and when reported, to the Select Committee for not to exceed 30 calendar days, except that in cases when the 30-day period expires while the Senate is in recess, the Select Committee shall have 5 additional calendar days after the Senate reconvenes to report the nomination.

''(2) With respect to the confirmation of appointment to the position of Director of the National Security Agency, Inspector General of the National Security Agency, Director of the National Reconnaissance Office, or Inspector General or the National Reconnaissance Office, or any successor position to such a position, the nomination of any individual by the President to serve in such position, who at the time of the nomination is not a member of the Armed Forces on active duty, shall be referred to the Select Committee and, if and when reported, to the Committee on Armed Services for not to exceed 30 calendar days, except that in cases when the 30-day period expires while the Senate is in recess, the Committee on Armed Services shall have an additional 5 calendar days after the Senate reconvenes to report the nomination.

''(3) If, upon the expiration of the period of sequential referral described in paragraphs (1) and (2), the committee to which the nomination was sequentially referred has not reported the nomination, the nomination shall be automatically discharged from that committee and placed on the Executive Calendar.''.

SENATE RESOLUTION 471—HONORING FORMER PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY AND BARBARA BUSH ON THE OCCASION OF HER 89TH BIRTHDAY AND EXTENDING THE BEST WISHES OF THE SENATE TO FORMER PRESIDENT BUSH AND MRS. BUSH

Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KING, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. REID of Nevada, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. HATCH, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. THUNE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. HELLER, Mr. WICKER, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. COATS, Mr. CORKER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BURR, Mr. LEE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. VITTER, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. PAUL, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. SHELBY, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. KIRK) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 471

Whereas George Herbert Walker Bush was born in Milton, Massachusetts, on June 12, 1924;

Whereas on his 18th birthday, George H.W. Bush enlisted in the Armed Forces of the United States;

Whereas George H.W. Bush was the youngest pilot in the United States Navy when he received his wings;

Whereas George H.W. Bush flew 58 combat missions during World War II, including a mission over the Pacific as a torpedo bomber pilot during which he was shot down by Japanese antiaircraft fire and later rescued from the water by a United States submarine, the U.S.S. Finback;

Whereas George H.W. Bush was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and three Air Medals for his service during World War II;

Whereas George H.W. Bush was honorably released from active duty in 1945, achieving the rank of Lieutenant;

Whereas in January 1945, George H.W. Bush married Barbara Pierce;

Whereas George H.W. Bush graduated from Yale University, where he was captain of the baseball team and excelled in academics;

Whereas in 1966, George H.W. Bush was elected to the House of Representatives, where he served with integrity for two terms;

Whereas in 1970, President Richard Nixon appointed George H.W. Bush to be the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, a post he held for two years after confirmation by the Senate;

Whereas in 1974, President Gerald R. Ford appointed George H.W. Bush as chief of the United States Liaison Office in the People's Republic of China, where his efforts helped foster the development of positive relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China;

Whereas from January 1976 to January 1977, George H.W. Bush served as the Director of Central Intelligence, and the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters was later designated the George Bush Center for Intelligence in his honor;

Whereas from 1981 to 1989, George H.W. Bush served as the 43rd Vice President of the United States;

Whereas George H.W. Bush was elected the 41st President of the United States in 1988;

Whereas George H.W. Bush directed the negotiation of and signed the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, signed at Moscow July 31, 1991 and entered into force December 5, 1994 (the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty of 1991 (START I)), which required the United States and the Soviet Union to reduce their nuclear arsenals by ⅓;

Whereas during his Presidency, George H.W. Bush signed into law the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) and Public Law 101-549 (commonly known as the ''Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990'') (42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.);

Whereas since leaving office, George H.W. Bush has been an international ambassador of United States goodwill and a strong supporter of the George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University, which was named for the former President in 1997;

Whereas George H.W. Bush was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2011;

Whereas, on June 8, 2014, former First Lady Barbara Bush, George H.W. Bush's wife of 69 years, who has dedicated herself to promoting family literacy and improving the lives of the people of the United States through learning, celebrated her 89th birthday; and

Whereas, on June 12, 2014, George H.W. Bush celebrates his 90th birthday: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors former President George H.W. Bush on the occasion of his 90th birthday; and

(2) extends the congratulations and best wishes of the Senate to former President Bush and Barbara Bush.

SENATE RESOLUTION 472—HONORING DR. JAMES SCHLESINGER, FORMER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE, SECRETARY OF ENERGY, AND DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Mr. SESSIONS (for himself, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mr. MCCAIN, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. LEAHY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 472

Whereas the Honorable Dr. James Rodney Schlesinger was born in New York City, New York, on February 15, 1929, and died in Baltimore, Maryland, on March 27, 2014, at the age of 85;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger married Rachel Line Mellinger in 1954 and remained her devoted husband until her death in 1995;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger is survived by his 8 children, Cora Schlesinger, Charles Schlesinger, Ann Schlesinger, William Schlesinger, Emily Schlesinger, Thomas Schlesinger, Clara Schlesinger, and James Schlesinger, Jr., and 11 grandchildren;

Whereas, in 1950, Dr. Schlesinger graduated summa cum laude from Harvard University, where he was elected Phi Beta Kappa and awarded the Frederick Sheldon Travel Fellowship;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger subsequently earned master's and doctoral degrees in economics from Harvard University;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger was a generous patron of the arts, and was instrumental in establishing the Rachel M. Schlesinger Concert Hall and Arts Center in Alexandria, Virginia;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger was a generous sponsor of higher education, serving on the International Council at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs of Harvard University, endowing the Julius Schlesinger Professorship of Operations Management at New York University Stern School of Business and the James R. Schlesinger Distinguished Professorship at the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia, and sponsoring an ongoing music scholarship at Harvard College in honor of his beloved wife;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger was a distinguished statesman-scholar of great integrity, intellect, and insight who dedicated his life to protecting the security and liberty of the United States and the people of the United States throughout a highly-decorated and distinguished career that spanned 7 decades;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger's intellectual contributions to the fields of economics and national security include serving as professor of economics at the University of Virginia from 1955 until 1963, serving at the RAND Corporation from 1963 until 1969, including a term as the director of strategic studies, and

authoring numerous important scholarly publications, such as The Political Economy of National Security: A Study of the Economic Aspect of the Contemporary Power Struggle (1960), Defense Planning and Budgeting: The Issue of Centralized Control (1968), American Security and Energy Policy (1980), America at Century's End (1989), and, most recently, Minimum Deterrence: Examining the Evidence (2013);

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger's service in the Federal Government began in 1969, when he took a lead role on defense matters as the assistant director and acting deputy director of the United States Bureau of the Budget;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger served as a member and chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) from 1971 until 1973, working tirelessly to implement extensive organizational and management changes to strengthen the regulatory performance of the Commission;

Whereas, as Director of Central Intelligence in 1973, Dr. Schlesinger focused on the agency's adherence to its legislative charter;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger was confirmed as the Secretary of Defense in 1973 at age 44, a position he held until 1975;

Whereas, during his tenure as Secretary of Defense, Dr. Schlesinger contributed to the national security of the United States by authoring the ''Schlesinger Doctrine'', which instituted important reforms strengthening the flexibility and credibility of the United States nuclear deterrent to prevent war, reassure the allies of the United States, and protect the liberties of all people of the United States, and by taking action, including overseeing the successful development of the A-10 close-air support aircraft and the F-16 fighter aircraft, to ensure that the United States maintained ''essential equivalence'' with the Soviet Union's conventional military forces and surging nuclear capabilities;

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger was highly regarded by the uniformed services, and led the Department of Defense with great skill and prescience through numerous challenges, including the 1973 Yom Kippur War, in which he was key to the United States airlift that, according to Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir, ''meant life for our people'', the 1974 Cyprus Crisis, the closing phase of the Indochina conflict, and the 1975 *Mayaguez* incident, in which his actions helped save the lives of United States citizens held by the Khmer Rouge, the withdrawal of the United States Armed Forces from Vietnam, and cuts to the budget of the Department of Defense;

Whereas, in light of his realistic views of the power and intentions of the Soviet Union, Dr. Schlesinger was invited to China as a private citizen in 1975 at the personal request of Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, and upon Mao's death, was the only foreigner invited by the Chinese leadership to lay a wreath at Mao's bier;

Whereas, in 1976, during a difficult period of oil embargoes and fuel shortages, President-elect Jimmy Carter invited Dr. Schlesinger to serve as his special advisor on energy to establish a national energy policy and create the charter for the Department of Energy;

Whereas President Carter appointed Dr. Schlesinger as the first Secretary of Energy in 1977, and in this role Dr. Schlesinger successfully initiated new conservation standards, the gradual deregulation of oil and natural gas industries, and the unification of United States policies with respect to energy and national security;

Whereas following his return to private life in 1979, Dr. Schlesinger continued to work tirelessly in a wide array of public service and civic positions, including as a member of President Ronald Reagan's Commission on Strategic Forces, a member of Virginia Governor Charles Robb's Commission on Virginia's Future, chairman of the board of trustees for the Mitre Corporation, a member of the Defense Policy Board and co-chair of studies for the Defense Science Board, chairman of the National Space-Based Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) Board, a director of the Sandia National Corporation, a trustee of the Atlantic Council, a trustee of the Nixon Center, a trustee of the Henry M. Jackson Foundation, and an original member of the Secretary of State's International Security Advisory Board;

Whereas, in the recent past, Dr. Schlesinger was appointed by President George W. Bush to the Homeland Security Advisory Board, invited by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to lead the Schlesinger Task Force to recommend measures to ensure the highest levels of competence and control of the nuclear forces of the United States, and invited by Congress to serve as the Vice Chairman of the Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States, which produced the 2009 study ''America's Strategic Posture'' that served as the blueprint for the 2010 Nuclear Posture Review of the Department of Defense;

Whereas in addition to Dr. Schlesinger's earned doctorate from Harvard University, he was awarded 13 honorary doctorates, and was the recipient of numerous prestigious medals and awards, including the National Security Medal (presented by President Carter), the Defense Science Board's Eugene G. Fubini Award, the United States Army Association's George Catlett Marshall Medal, the Air Force Association's H. H. Arnold Award, the Navy League's National Meritorious Citation, the Society of Experimental Test Pilots' James H. Doolittle Award, the Military Order of World Wars' Distinguished Service Medal, the Air Force Association's Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Henry M. Jackson Foundation's Henry M. Jackson Award for Distinguished Public Service; and

Whereas Dr. Schlesinger's monumental contributions to the security and liberty of the United States and Western civilization, and to the betterment of his local community, should serve as an example to all people of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) has heard with profound sorrow and deep regret the announcement of the death of the Honorable Dr. James R. Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Energy, and Director of Central Intelligence;

(2) honors the legacy of Dr. Schlesinger's commitment to the liberty and security of the United States and Western civilization, the betterment of his local community, and his loving family;

(3) extends its deepest condolences and sympathy to the family, friends, and colleagues of Dr. Schlesinger who have lost a beloved father, grandfather, and leader;

(4) honors Dr. Schlesinger's wisdom, discernment, scholarship, and dedication to public service that greatly benefited his community, country, and Western civilization;

(5) recognizes with great appreciation that, while serving as a public servant under President Nixon, President Ford, and President Carter, Dr. Schlesinger contributed significantly, thoughtfully, and directly to the betterment of the policies and practices of the United States in the areas of national defense, energy, and intelligence;

(6) recognizes with great appreciation that, after returning to private life, Dr. Schlesinger continued to serve the United States selflessly through bipartisan contributions to the reasoned public discourse of issues and his leadership on high-level studies sponsored by the Executive, the Department of Defense, the Department of State, and the Congress;

(7) recognizes with great appreciation Dr. Schlesinger's exemplary life, which was guided by his commitment to the continuing security and liberty of the United States, and by his honor, duty, and devotion to country, family, scholarship, and personal moral integrity;

(8) expresses profound respect and admiration for Dr. Schlesinger and his extraordinary legacy of commitment to the people of the United States, United States military personnel, and all those who help safeguard the Nation; and

(9) directs the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to the family of the Honorable Dr. James R. Schlesinger.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 37—AUTHORIZING THE USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL IN COMMEMORATION OF THE SHIMON PERES CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY

Ms. AYOTTE submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. CON. RES. 37

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring),

SECTION 1. USE OF THE ROTUNDA OF THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL IN COMMEMORATION OF THE SHIMON PERES CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY.

(a) AUTHORIZATION.—The rotunda of the United States Capitol is authorized to be used on June 26, 2014, for the commemoration of the award of the Congressional Gold Medal to Shimon Peres.

(b) PREPARATIONS.—Physical preparations for the conduct of the ceremony described in subsection (a) shall be carried out in accordance with such conditions as may be prescribed by the Architect of the Capitol.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3233. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2450, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3234. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2450, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3235. Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KING, and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2450, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3236. Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3230, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3237. Mr. TESTER proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3230, supra.

SA 3238. Mr. REID (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. CHAMBLISS)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1681, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of

the United States Government and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

SA 3239. Mr. HATCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2450, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3233. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2450, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 703. ASSISTING VETERANS WITH MILITARY EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAINING TO MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING CIVILIAN EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Part B of title III of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 243 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 314 the following:

"SEC. 315. ASSISTING VETERANS WITH MILITARY EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAINING TO MEET REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING CIVILIAN EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS.

"(a) PROGRAM.—The Secretary shall establish a program consisting of awarding demonstration grants to States to streamline State requirements and procedures in order to assist veterans who completed military emergency medical technician training while serving in the Armed Forces of the United States to meet certification, licensure, and other requirements applicable to becoming an emergency medical technician in the State.

"(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts received as a demonstration grant under this section shall be used to prepare and implement a plan to streamline State requirements and procedures as described in subsection (a), including by—

"(1) determining the extent to which the requirements for the education, training, and skill level of emergency medical technicians in the State are equivalent to requirements for the education, training, and skill level of military emergency medical technicians; and

"(2) identifying methods, such as waivers, for military emergency medical technicians to forego or meet any such equivalent State requirements.

"(c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for a grant under this section, a State shall demonstrate that the State has a shortage of emergency medical technicians.

"(d) REPORT.—The Secretary shall submit to the Congress an annual report on the program under this section.

"(e) FUNDING.—Of the amount authorized by section 751(j)(1) to be appropriated to carry out section 751 for fiscal year 2014, $1,000,000 shall be allocated to carry out this section for the period of fiscal years 2014 through 2018.".

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 751(j)(1) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 294a(j)(1)) is amended by striking "to carry out this section" and inserting "to carry out this section and section 315".

SA 3234. Mr. WARNER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2450, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 703. SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS OF LAW SCHOOLS THAT ASSIST VETERANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall take such actions as the Secretary considers appropriate to support programs of law schools that provide assistance to veterans with respect to obtaining benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

(b) LIAISON.—The Secretary shall ensure that each regional office of the Department of Veterans Affairs has a liaison appointed to work with programs described in subsection (a).

(c) PRIORITY REVIEW.—The Secretary shall give priority in the adjudication of claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary to a claim that is certified as complete by a program described in subsection (a).

(d) DIAGNOSIS.—The Secretary shall allow practitioners and graduate psychology clinics to do a Disability Benefits Questionnaire that will supplant a Compensation and Pension exam for initial diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

(e) ACCESS TO SYSTEMS.—The Secretary shall allow programs described in subsection (a) to access the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal, the Veterans Benefits Management System, and the Beneficiary Identification Records Locator System for current active files and for claims files to the same degree as an organization recognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

(f) TRAINING.—The Secretary shall provide training to the head of a program described in subsection (a) on matters relating to submitting claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary.

(g) REMOVAL OF IMPEDIMENTS TO AWARDING OF GRANTS.—To the degree practicable, the Secretary shall remove impediments to the awarding of grants to pro bono legal clinics.

(h) EMAIL DISTRIBUTION LISTS.—The Secretary shall include programs described in subsection (a) in email distributions relating to fast letters, training letters, regulation changes, and training opportunities.

SA 3235. Ms. COLLINS (for herself, Mr. KING, and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2450, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 43, between lines 20 and 21, insert the following:

SEC. 305. REAUTHORIZATION OF PILOT PROGRAM OF ENHANCED CONTRACT CARE AUTHORITY FOR HEALTH CARE NEEDS OF VETERANS.

Section 403(a)(3) of the Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act of 2008 (Public Law 110–387; 38 U.S.C. 1703 note) is amended by striking "only during the three-year period beginning on the date of the commencement of the pilot program under paragraph (2)" and inserting "through September 30, 2017".

SA 3236. Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 3230, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, insert the following:

TITLE IX—OTHER MATTERS

SEC. 901. PILOT PROGRAM ON ELECTRONIC EXCHANGE OF HEALTH INFORMATION BETWEEN DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND STATE HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall carry out a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of enabling the electronic bi-directional sharing of health information between the Department of Veterans Affairs and non-Department health care providers through the award of grants to State health information exchanges for enabling such sharing.

(b) GRANTS TO HEALTH INFORMATION EXCHANGES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out the pilot program under this section through the award of grants to State health information exchanges.

(2) SELECTION.—The Secretary shall award grants under paragraph (1) to not more than four State health information exchanges.

(3) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall give priority in the award of grants under paragraph (1) to a State health information exchange that—

(A) is located in a State in which a high percentage of hospitals and physicians in the State share information with the State health information exchange of the State;

(B) has been awarded a grant from not less than two of—

(i) the Beacon Community Cooperative Agreement Program;

(ii) the State Health Information Exchange Cooperative Agreement Program; and

(iii) the Regional Extension Center Program; and

(C) has a relationship with a Federally-qualified health center (as defined in section 1905(l)(2)(B) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396d(l)(2)(B))), a facility funded by the Indian Health Service, or the Department of Defense.

(4) LIMITATION ON AMOUNT.—Each grant awarded under paragraph (1) shall not exceed $250,000.

(c) USE OF AMOUNTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A State health information exchange that is awarded a grant under subsection (b) shall use the grant amounts to develop the capability to allow non-Department health care providers to electronically exchange health information with the health care system of the Department of Veterans Affairs through the use of the exchange.

(2) DEVELOPMENT OF CAPABILITY.—In developing the capability described in paragraph (1), a State health information exchange that is awarded a grant under subsection (b) may use the grant amounts as follows:

(A) To make upgrades to the exchange that are required to enable non-Department health care providers to electronically access and share health information maintained by the Department through the exchange, and to securely store and display that information.

(B) To enter into agreements with the Department on the sharing of information between the Department and non-Department health care providers through the exchange.

(C) To develop technical capacity and privacy safeguards necessary for the sharing of information pursuant to agreements described in subparagraph (B).

(D) To acquire legal support and technical assistance necessary for the sharing of information pursuant to agreements described in subparagraph (B).

(E) To pay any fees associated with the exchange of information between the Department and non-Department health care providers.

(F) To assist the Department with the implementation of new information sharing capabilities and training of employees of the Department in using such capabilities.

(G) To evaluate the implementation of the capability described in paragraph (1) and assess the effectiveness of such implementation.

(d) OPERATION PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Before obligating any of the amounts awarded pursuant to subsection (b), a State health information exchange that is awarded a grant under subsection (b)(1) shall, in coordination with the Secretary, develop an operation plan to carry out the development of the capability described in subsection (c)(1).

(2) ELEMENTS.—The operation plan required by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

(A) A plan for training employees of the Department to use new health information sharing capabilities.

(B) A coordinated outreach strategy to maximize the enrollment of veterans in State health information exchanges.

(e) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the feasibility and advisability of enabling the electronic bi-directional sharing of health information between the Department and non-Department health care providers.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall include an assessment of the following:

(A) The extent to which veterans and health care providers are benefitting from enhanced health information sharing capabilities under the pilot program.

(B) The success of outreach to veterans under the pilot program, including the extent to which veterans are opting into the sharing of health information under the pilot program.

(C) The need for additional resources, if any, in carrying out the pilot program.

(D) Any challenges or obstacles to making progress toward the electronic bi-directional sharing of health information between the Department of Veterans Affairs and non-Department health care providers that were encountered in carrying out the pilot program.

(f) OUTREACH TO VETERANS.—The Secretary shall conduct outreach to veterans to inform veterans of the opportunity to participate in health information sharing initiatives, including State health information exchanges, to improve the health information of, and the hospital care, medical services, and other health care received by, such veterans who receive such care and services from non-Department health care providers in addition to such care and services from the Department.

(g) FUNDING.—Amounts to carry out this section shall be derived from amounts available to the Department of Veterans Affairs for purposes of carrying out initiatives related to the Virtual Lifetime Electronic Record.

(h) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—Notwithstanding section 5701 of title 38, United States Code, the Secretary may disclose information about a veteran, if the veteran consents to such disclosure, to State health information exchanges and non-Department health care providers for purposes of carrying out the pilot program.

(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) HEALTH INFORMATION.—The term ''health information'' has the meaning given such term in section 1171(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1320d(4)).

(2) STATE.—The term ''State'' means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

SA 3237. Mr. TESTER proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 3230, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; as follows:

Amend the title so as to read:

''To improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.''

SA 3238. Mr. REID (for Mrs. FEINSTEIN (for herself and Mr. CHAMBLISS)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1681, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, 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 ''Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Definitions.

TITLE I—INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

Sec. 101. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 102. Classified Schedule of Authorizations.
Sec. 103. Personnel ceiling adjustments.
Sec. 104. Intelligence Community Management Account.

TITLE II—CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY RETIREMENT AND DISABILITY SYSTEM

Sec. 201. Authorization of appropriations.
Sec. 202. CIARDS and FERS special retirement credit for service on detail to another agency.

TITLE III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—General Matters

Sec. 301. Increase in employee compensation and benefits authorized by law.
Sec. 302. Restriction on conduct of intelligence activities.
Sec. 303. Specific authorization of funding for High Performance Computing Center 2.
Sec. 304. Clarification of exemption from Freedom of Information Act of identities of employees submitting complaints to the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community.
Sec. 305. Functional managers for the intelligence community.
Sec. 306. Annual assessment of intelligence community performance by function.
Sec. 307. Software licensing.
Sec. 308. Plans to respond to unauthorized public disclosures of covert actions.
Sec. 309. Auditability.
Sec. 310. Reports of fraud, waste, and abuse.
Sec. 311. Public Interest Declassification Board.
Sec. 312. Official representation items in support of the Coast Guard Attaché Program.
Sec. 313. Declassification review of certain items collected during the mission that killed Osama bin Laden on May 1, 2011.
Sec. 314. Merger of the Foreign Counterintelligence Program and the General Defense Intelligence Program.

Subtitle B—Reporting

Sec. 321. Significant interpretations of law concerning intelligence activities.
Sec. 322. Review for official publication of opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice concerning intelligence activities.
Sec. 323. Submittal to Congress by heads of elements of intelligence community of plans for orderly shutdown in event of absence of appropriations.
Sec. 324. Reports on chemical weapons in Syria.
Sec. 325. Reports to the intelligence community on penetrations of networks and information systems of certain contractors.
Sec. 326. Report on electronic waste.
Sec. 327. Promoting STEM education to meet the future workforce needs of the intelligence community.
Sec. 328. Repeal of the termination of notification requirements regarding the authorized disclosure of national intelligence.
Sec. 329. Repeal or modification of certain reporting requirements.

TITLE IV—MATTERS RELATING TO ELEMENTS OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Subtitle A—National Security Agency

Sec. 401. Appointment of the Director of the National Security Agency.
Sec. 402. Appointment of the Inspector General of the National Security Agency.
Sec. 403. Effective date and applicability.

Subtitle B—National Reconnaissance Office

Sec. 411. Appointment of the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office.
Sec. 412. Appointment of the Inspector General of the National Reconnaissance Office.
Sec. 413. Effective date and applicability.

Subtitle C—Central Intelligence Agency

Sec. 421. Gifts, devises, and bequests.

TITLE V—SECURITY CLEARANCE REFORM

Sec. 501. Continuous evaluation and sharing of derogatory information regarding personnel with access to classified information.
Sec. 502. Requirements for intelligence community contractors.
Sec. 503. Technology improvements to security clearance processing.
Sec. 504. Report on reciprocity of security clearances.
Sec. 505. Improving the periodic reinvestigation process.
Sec. 506. Appropriate committees of Congress defined.

TITLE VI—INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS

Sec. 601. Protection of intelligence community whistleblowers.
Sec. 602. Review of security clearance or access determinations.

Sec. 603. Revisions of other laws.
Sec. 604. Policies and procedures; non-applicability to certain terminations.

TITLE VII—TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS

Sec. 701. Technical amendments to the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949.
Sec. 702. Technical amendments to the National Security Act of 1947 relating to the past elimination of certain positions.
Sec. 703. Technical amendments to the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CONGRESSIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES.—The term ''congressional intelligence committees'' means—

(A) the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate; and

(B) the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives.

(2) INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.—The term ''intelligence community'' has the meaning given that term in section 3(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3003(4)).

TITLE I—INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES

SEC. 101. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Funds are hereby authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2014 for the conduct of the intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the following elements of the United States Government:

(1) The Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

(2) The Central Intelligence Agency.

(3) The Department of Defense.

(4) The Defense Intelligence Agency.

(5) The National Security Agency.

(6) The Department of the Army, the Department of the Navy, and the Department of the Air Force.

(7) The Coast Guard.

(8) The Department of State.

(9) The Department of the Treasury.

(10) The Department of Energy.

(11) The Department of Justice.

(12) The Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(13) The Drug Enforcement Administration.

(14) The National Reconnaissance Office.

(15) The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.

(16) The Department of Homeland Security.

SEC. 102. CLASSIFIED SCHEDULE OF AUTHORIZATIONS.

(a) SPECIFICATIONS OF AMOUNTS AND PERSONNEL LEVELS.—The amounts authorized to be appropriated under section 101 and, subject to section 103, the authorized personnel ceilings as of September 30, 2014, for the conduct of the intelligence activities of the elements listed in paragraphs (1) through (16) of section 101, are those specified in the classified Schedule of Authorizations prepared to accompany the bill S. 1681 of the One Hundred Thirteenth Congress.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF CLASSIFIED SCHEDULE OF AUTHORIZATIONS.—

(1) AVAILABILITY.—The classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in subsection (a) shall be made available to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and to the President.

(2) DISTRIBUTION BY THE PRESIDENT.—Subject to paragraph (3), the President shall provide for suitable distribution of the classified Schedule of Authorizations, or of appropriate portions of the Schedule, within the executive branch.

(3) LIMITS ON DISCLOSURE.—The President shall not publicly disclose the classified Schedule of Authorizations or any portion of such Schedule except—

(A) as provided in section 601(a) of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (50 U.S.C. 3306(a));

(B) to the extent necessary to implement the budget; or

(C) as otherwise required by law.

SEC. 103. PERSONNEL CEILING ADJUSTMENTS.

(a) AUTHORITY FOR INCREASES.—The Director of National Intelligence may authorize employment of civilian personnel in excess of the number authorized for fiscal year 2014 by the classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in section 102(a) if the Director of National Intelligence determines that such action is necessary to the performance of important intelligence functions, except that the number of personnel employed in excess of the number authorized under such section may not, for any element of the intelligence community, exceed 3 percent of the number of civilian personnel authorized under such Schedule for such element.

(b) TREATMENT OF CERTAIN PERSONNEL.—The Director of National Intelligence shall establish guidelines that govern, for each element of the intelligence community, the treatment under the personnel levels authorized under section 102(a), including any exemption from such personnel levels, of employment or assignment in—

(1) a student program, trainee program, or similar program;

(2) a reserve corps or as a reemployed annuitant; or

(3) details, joint duty, or long term, full-time training.

(c) NOTICE TO CONGRESSIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEES.—The Director of National Intelligence shall notify the congressional intelligence committees in writing at least 15 days prior to each exercise of an authority described in subsection (a).

SEC. 104. INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT ACCOUNT.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated for the Intelligence Community Management Account of the Director of National Intelligence for fiscal year 2014 the sum of $528,229,000. Within such amount, funds identified in the classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in section 102(a) for advanced research and development shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

(b) AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL LEVELS.—The elements within the Intelligence Community Management Account of the Director of National Intelligence are authorized 855 positions as of September 30, 2014. Personnel serving in such elements may be permanent employees of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence or personnel detailed from other elements of the United States Government.

(c) CLASSIFIED AUTHORIZATIONS.—

(1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to amounts authorized to be appropriated for the Intelligence Community Management Account by subsection (a), there are authorized to be appropriated for the Community Management Account for fiscal year 2014 such additional amounts as are specified in the classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in section 102(a). Such additional amounts for advanced research and development shall remain available until September 30, 2015.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF PERSONNEL.—In addition to the personnel authorized by subsection (b) for elements of the Intelligence Community Management Account as of September 30, 2014, there are authorized such additional personnel for the Community Management Account as of that date as are specified in the classified Schedule of Authorizations referred to in section 102(a).

TITLE II—CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY RETIREMENT AND DISABILITY SYSTEM

SEC. 201. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated for the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability Fund for fiscal year 2014 the sum of $514,000,000.

SEC. 202. CIARDS AND FERS SPECIAL RETIREMENT CREDIT FOR SERVICE ON DETAIL TO ANOTHER AGENCY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 203(b) of the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement Act (50 U.S.C. 2013(b)) is amended—

(1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''service in the Agency performed'' and inserting ''service performed by an Agency employee''; and

(2) in paragraph (1), by striking ''Agency activities'' and inserting ''intelligence activities''.

(b) APPLICATION.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall be applied to retired or deceased officers of the Central Intelligence Agency who were designated at any time under section 203 of the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement Act (50 U.S.C. 2013) prior to the date of the enactment of this Act.

TITLE III—GENERAL PROVISIONS

Subtitle A—General Matters

SEC. 301. INCREASE IN EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS AUTHORIZED BY LAW.

Appropriations authorized by this Act for salary, pay, retirement, and other benefits for Federal employees may be increased by such additional or supplemental amounts as may be necessary for increases in such compensation or benefits authorized by law.

SEC. 302. RESTRICTION ON CONDUCT OF INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

The authorization of appropriations by this Act shall not be deemed to constitute authority for the conduct of any intelligence activity which is not otherwise authorized by the Constitution or the laws of the United States.

SEC. 303. SPECIFIC AUTHORIZATION OF FUNDING FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE COMPUTING CENTER 2.

Funds appropriated for the construction of the High Performance Computing Center 2 (HPCC 2), as described in the table entitled Consolidated Cryptologic Program (CCP) in the classified annex to accompany the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2013 (Public Law 113–6; 127 Stat. 198), in excess of the amount specified for such activity in the tables in the classified annex prepared to accompany the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112–277; 126 Stat. 2468) shall be specifically authorized by Congress for the purposes of section 504 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3094).

SEC. 304. CLARIFICATION OF EXEMPTION FROM FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT OF IDENTITIES OF EMPLOYEES SUBMITTING COMPLAINTS TO THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

Section 103H(g)(3)(A) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3033(g)(3)(A)) is amended by striking ''undertaken;'' and inserting ''undertaken, and this provision shall qualify as a withholding statute pursuant to subsection (b)(3) of section 552 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the 'Freedom of Information Act');''.

SEC. 305. FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS FOR THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

(a) FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS AUTHORIZED.—Title I of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3021 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 103I the following new section:

"SEC. 103J. FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS FOR THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

''(a) FUNCTIONAL MANAGERS AUTHORIZED.—The Director of National Intelligence may establish within the intelligence community one or more positions of manager of an intelligence function. Any position so established may be known as the 'Functional Manager' of the intelligence function concerned.

''(b) PERSONNEL.—The Director shall designate individuals to serve as manager of intelligence functions established under subsection (a) from among officers and employees of elements of the intelligence community.

''(c) DUTIES.—Each manager of an intelligence function established under subsection (a) shall have the duties as follows:

''(1) To act as principal advisor to the Director on the intelligence function.

''(2) To carry out such other responsibilities with respect to the intelligence function as the Director may specify for purposes of this section.''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the National Security Act of 1947 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 103I the following new item:

''Sec. 103J. Functional managers for the intelligence community.''.

SEC. 306. ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE BY FUNCTION.

(a) ANNUAL ASSESSMENTS REQUIRED.—Title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 506I the following new section:

"SEC. 506J. ANNUAL ASSESSMENT OF INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY PERFORMANCE BY FUNCTION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than April 1, 2016, and each year thereafter, the Director of National Intelligence shall, in consultation with the Functional Managers, submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report on covered intelligence functions during the preceding year.

''(b) ELEMENTS.—Each report under subsection (a) shall include for each covered intelligence function for the year covered by such report the following:

''(1) An identification of the capabilities, programs, and activities of such intelligence function, regardless of the element of the intelligence community that carried out such capabilities, programs, and activities.

''(2) A description of the investment and allocation of resources for such intelligence function, including an analysis of the allocation of resources within the context of the National Intelligence Strategy, priorities for recipients of resources, and areas of risk.

''(3) A description and assessment of the performance of such intelligence function.

''(4) An identification of any issues related to the application of technical interoperability standards in the capabilities, programs, and activities of such intelligence function.

''(5) An identification of the operational overlap or need for de-confliction, if any, within such intelligence function.

''(6) A description of any efforts to integrate such intelligence function with other intelligence disciplines as part of an integrated intelligence enterprise.

''(7) A description of any efforts to establish consistency in tradecraft and training within such intelligence function.

''(8) A description and assessment of developments in technology that bear on the future of such intelligence function.

''(9) Such other matters relating to such intelligence function as the Director may specify for purposes of this section.

''(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) The term 'covered intelligence functions' means each intelligence function for which a Functional Manager has been established under section 103J during the year covered by a report under this section.

''(2) The term 'Functional Manager' means the manager of an intelligence function established under section 103J.''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the National Security Act of 1947 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 506I the following new item:

''Sec. 506J. Annual assessment of intelligence community performance by function.''.

SEC. 307. SOFTWARE LICENSING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title I of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3021 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 108 the following new section:

"SEC. 109. SOFTWARE LICENSING.

''(a) REQUIREMENT FOR INVENTORIES OF SOFTWARE LICENSES.—The chief information officer of each element of the intelligence community, in consultation with the Chief Information Officer of the Intelligence Community, shall biennially—

''(1) conduct an inventory of all existing software licenses of such element, including utilized and unutilized licenses;

''(2) assess the actions that could be carried out by such element to achieve the greatest possible economies of scale and associated cost savings in software procurement and usage; and

''(3) submit to the Chief Information Officer of the Intelligence Community each inventory required by paragraph (1) and each assessment required by paragraph (2).

''(b) INVENTORIES BY THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.—The Chief Information Officer of the Intelligence Community, based on the inventories and assessments required by subsection (a), shall biennially—

''(1) compile an inventory of all existing software licenses of the intelligence community, including utilized and unutilized licenses; and

''(2) assess the actions that could be carried out by the intelligence community to achieve the greatest possible economies of scale and associated cost savings in software procurement and usage.

''(c) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—The Chief Information Officer of the Intelligence Community shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a copy of each inventory compiled under subsection (b)(1).''.

(b) INITIAL INVENTORY.—

(1) INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ELEMENTS.—

(A) DATE.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the chief information officer of each element of the intelligence community shall complete the initial inventory, assessment, and submission required under section 109(a) of the National Security Act of 1947, as added by subsection (a) of this section.

(B) BASIS.—The initial inventory conducted for each element of the intelligence community under section 109(a)(1) of the National Security Act of 1947, as added by subsection (a) of this section, shall be based on the inventory of software licenses conducted pursuant to section 305 of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112–277; 126 Stat. 2472) for such element.

(2) CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Chief Information Officer of the Intelligence Community shall complete the initial compilation and assessment required under section 109(b) of the National Security Act of 1947, as added by subsection (a).

(c) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENTS.—The table of contents in the first section of the National Security Act of 1947 is amended—

(1) by striking the second item relating to section 104 (relating to Annual national security strategy report); and

(2) inserting after the item relating to section 108 the following new item:

''Sec. 109. Software licensing.''.

SEC. 308. PLANS TO RESPOND TO UNAUTHORIZED PUBLIC DISCLOSURES OF COVERT ACTIONS.

Section 503 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3093) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(h) For each type of activity undertaken as part of a covert action, the President shall establish in writing a plan to respond to the unauthorized public disclosure of that type of activity.''.

SEC. 309. AUDITABILITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3091 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 509. AUDITABILITY OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

''(a) REQUIREMENT FOR ANNUAL AUDITS.—The head of each covered entity shall ensure that there is a full financial audit of such covered entity each year beginning with fiscal year 2014. Such audits may be conducted by an internal or external independent accounting or auditing organization.

''(b) REQUIREMENT FOR UNQUALIFIED OPINION.—Beginning as early as practicable, but in no event later than the audit required under subsection (a) for fiscal year 2016, the head of each covered entity shall take all reasonable steps necessary to ensure that each audit required under subsection (a) contains an unqualified opinion on the financial statements of such covered entity for the fiscal year covered by such audit.

''(c) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—The chief financial officer of each covered entity shall provide to the congressional intelligence committees an annual audit report from an accounting or auditing organization on each audit of the covered entity conducted pursuant to subsection (a).

''(d) COVERED ENTITY DEFINED.—In this section, the term 'covered entity' means the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the National Reconnaissance Office, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency.''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the National Security Act of 1947 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 508 the following new item:

''Sec. 509. Auditability of certain elements of the intelligence community.''.

SEC. 310. REPORTS OF FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE.

Section 8H(a) of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended in paragraph (1)—

(1) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (C) and (D), respectively;

(2) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) An employee of an element of the intelligence community, an employee assigned or detailed to an element of the intelligence community, or an employee of a contractor to the intelligence community, who intends to report to Congress a complaint or information with respect to an urgent concern may report such complaint or information to the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community.''; and

(3) in subparagraph (D), as redesignated by paragraph (1)—

(A) by striking ''Act or section 17'' and inserting ''Act, section 17''; and

(B) by striking the period at the end and inserting '', or section 103H(k) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3033(k)).''.

SEC. 311. PUBLIC INTEREST DECLASSIFICATION BOARD.

Section 710(b) of the Public Interest Declassification Act of 2000 (Public Law 106–567; 50 U.S.C. 3161 note) is amended by striking ''2014.'' and inserting ''2018.''.

SEC. 312. OFFICIAL REPRESENTATION ITEMS IN SUPPORT OF THE COAST GUARD ATTACHÉ PROGRAM.

Notwithstanding any other limitation on the amount of funds that may be used for official representation items, the Secretary of Homeland Security may use funds made available to the Secretary through the National Intelligence Program for necessary expenses for intelligence analysis and operations coordination activities for official representation items in support of the Coast Guard Attaché Program.

SEC. 313. DECLASSIFICATION REVIEW OF CERTAIN ITEMS COLLECTED DURING THE MISSION THAT KILLED OSAMA BIN LADEN ON MAY 1, 2011.

Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall—

(1) in the manner described in the classified annex to this Act—

(A) complete a declassification review of documents collected in Abbottabad, Pakistan, during the mission that killed Osama bin Laden on May 1, 2011; and

(B) make publicly available any information declassified as a result of the declassification review required under paragraph (1); and

(2) report to the congressional intelligence committees—

(A) the results of the declassification review required under paragraph (1); and

(B) a justification for not declassifying any information required to be included in such declassification review that remains classified.

SEC. 314. MERGER OF THE FOREIGN COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAM AND THE GENERAL DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Director of National Intelligence shall carry out the merger of the Foreign Counterintelligence Program into the General Defense Intelligence Program as directed in the classified annex to this Act. The merger shall go into effect no earlier than 30 days after written notification of the merger is provided to the congressional intelligence committees.

Subtitle B—Reporting

SEC. 321. SIGNIFICANT INTERPRETATIONS OF LAW CONCERNING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title V of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3021 et seq.), as added by section 309 of this Act, is further amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 510. SIGNIFICANT INTERPRETATIONS OF LAW CONCERNING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

''(a) NOTIFICATION.—Except as provided in subsection (c) and to the extent consistent with due regard for the protection from unauthorized disclosure of classified information relating to sensitive intelligence sources and methods or other exceptionally sensitive matters, the General Counsel of each element of the intelligence community shall notify the congressional intelligence committees, in writing, of any significant legal interpretation of the United States Constitution or Federal law affecting intelligence activities conducted by such element by not later than 30 days after the date of the commencement of any intelligence activity pursuant to such interpretation.

''(b) CONTENT.—Each notification under subsection (a) shall provide a summary of the significant legal interpretation and the intelligence activity or activities conducted pursuant to such interpretation.

''(c) EXCEPTIONS.—A notification under subsection (a) shall not be required for a significant legal interpretation if—

''(1) notice of the significant legal interpretation was previously provided to the congressional intelligence committees under subsection (a); or

''(2) the significant legal interpretation was made before the date of the enactment of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014.

''(d) LIMITED ACCESS FOR COVERT ACTION.—If the President determines that it is essential to limit access to a covert action finding under section 503(c)(2), the President may limit access to information concerning such finding that is subject to notification under this section to those members of Congress who have been granted access to the relevant finding under section 503(c)(2).''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the National Security Act of 1947 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 509, as so added, the following new item:

''Sec. 510. Significant interpretations of law concerning intelligence activities.''.

SEC. 322. REVIEW FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF OPINIONS OF THE OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CONCERNING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES.

(a) PROCESS FOR REVIEW FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall, in coordination with the Director of National Intelligence, establish a process for the regular review for official publication of significant opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice that have been provided to an element of the intelligence community.

(b) FACTORS.—The process of review of opinions established under subsection (a) shall include consideration of the following:

(1) The potential importance of an opinion to other agencies or officials in the Executive branch.

(2) The likelihood that similar questions addressed in an opinion may arise in the future.

(3) The historical importance of an opinion or the context in which it arose.

(4) The potential significance of an opinion to the overall jurisprudence of the Office of Legal Counsel.

(5) Such other factors as the Attorney General and the Director of National Intelligence consider appropriate.

(c) PRESUMPTION.—The process of review established under subsection (a) shall apply a presumption that significant opinions of the Office of Legal Counsel should be published when practicable, consistent with national security and other confidentiality considerations.

(d) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall require the official publication of any opinion of the Office of Legal Counsel, including publication under any circumstance as follows:

(1) When publication would reveal classified or other sensitive information relating to national security.

(2) When publication could reasonably be anticipated to interfere with Federal law enforcement efforts or is prohibited by law.

(3) When publication would conflict with preserving internal Executive branch deliberative processes or protecting other information properly subject to privilege.

(e) REQUIREMENT TO PROVIDE CLASSIFIED OPINIONS TO CONGRESS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Any opinion of the Office of Legal Counsel that would have been selected for publication under the process of review established under subsection (a) but for the fact that publication would reveal classified or other sensitive information relating to national security shall be provided or made available to the appropriate committees of Congress.

(2) EXCEPTION FOR COVERT ACTION.—If the President determines that it is essential to limit access to a covert action finding under section 503(c)(2) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3093(c)(2)), the President may limit access to information concerning such finding that would otherwise be provided or made available under this subsection to those members of Congress who have been granted access to such finding under such section 503(c)(2).

(f) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—The determination whether an opinion of the Office of Legal Counsel is appropriate for official publication under the process of review established under subsection (a) is discretionary and is not subject to judicial review.

SEC. 323. SUBMITTAL TO CONGRESS BY HEADS OF ELEMENTS OF INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY OF PLANS FOR ORDERLY SHUTDOWN IN EVENT OF ABSENCE OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Whenever the head of an applicable agency submits a plan to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget in accordance with section 124 of Office of Management and Budget Circular A–11, pertaining to agency operations in the absence of appropriations, or any successor circular of the Office that requires the head of an applicable agency to submit to the Director a plan for an orderly shutdown in the event of the absence of appropriations, such head shall submit a copy of such plan to the following:

(1) The congressional intelligence committees.

(2) The Subcommittee on Defense of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

(3) The Subcommittee on Defense of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(4) In the case of a plan for an element of the intelligence community that is within the Department of Defense, to—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services of the House of Representatives.

(b) HEAD OF AN APPLICABLE AGENCY DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''head of an applicable agency'' includes the following:

(1) The Director of National Intelligence.

(2) The Director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

(3) Each head of each element of the intelligence community that is within the Department of Defense.

SEC. 324. REPORTS ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN SYRIA.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to Congress a report on the Syrian chemical weapons program.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include the following elements:

(1) A comprehensive assessment of chemical weapon stockpiles in Syria, including

names, types, and quantities of chemical weapons agents, types of munitions, and location and form of storage, production, and research and development facilities.

(2) A listing of key personnel associated with the Syrian chemical weapons program.

(3) An assessment of undeclared chemical weapons stockpiles, munitions, and facilities.

(4) An assessment of how these stockpiles, precursors, and delivery systems were obtained.

(5) A description of key intelligence gaps related to the Syrian chemical weapons program.

(6) An assessment of any denial and deception efforts on the part of the Syrian regime related to its chemical weapons program.

(c) PROGRESS REPORTS.—Every 90 days until the date that is 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to Congress a progress report providing any material updates to the report required under subsection (a).

SEC. 325. REPORTS TO THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ON PENETRATIONS OF NETWORKS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS OF CERTAIN CONTRACTORS.

(a) PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING PENETRATIONS.—The Director of National Intelligence shall establish procedures that require each cleared intelligence contractor to report to an element of the intelligence community designated by the Director for purposes of such procedures when a network or information system of such contractor that meets the criteria established pursuant to subsection (b) is successfully penetrated.

(b) NETWORKS AND INFORMATION SYSTEMS SUBJECT TO REPORTING.—The Director of National Intelligence shall, in consultation with appropriate officials, establish criteria for covered networks to be subject to the procedures for reporting system penetrations under subsection (a).

(c) PROCEDURE REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) RAPID REPORTING.—The procedures established pursuant to subsection (a) shall require each cleared intelligence contractor to rapidly report to an element of the intelligence community designated pursuant to subsection (a) of each successful penetration of the network or information systems of such contractor that meet the criteria established pursuant to subsection (b). Each such report shall include the following:

(A) A description of the technique or method used in such penetration.

(B) A sample of the malicious software, if discovered and isolated by the contractor, involved in such penetration.

(C) A summary of information created by or for such element in connection with any program of such element that has been potentially compromised due to such penetration.

(2) ACCESS TO EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION BY INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY PERSONNEL.—The procedures established pursuant to subsection (a) shall—

(A) include mechanisms for intelligence community personnel to, upon request, obtain access to equipment or information of a cleared intelligence contractor necessary to conduct forensic analysis in addition to any analysis conducted by such contractor;

(B) provide that a cleared intelligence contractor is only required to provide access to equipment or information as described in subparagraph (A) to determine whether information created by or for an element of the intelligence community in connection with any intelligence community program was successfully exfiltrated from a network or information system of such contractor and, if so, what information was exfiltrated; and

(C) provide for the reasonable protection of trade secrets, commercial or financial information, and information that can be used to identify a specific person (other than the name of the suspected perpetrator of the penetration).

(3) LIMITATION ON DISSEMINATION OF CERTAIN INFORMATION.—The procedures established pursuant to subsection (a) shall prohibit the dissemination outside the intelligence community of information obtained or derived through such procedures that is not created by or for the intelligence community except—

(A) with the approval of the contractor providing such information;

(B) to the congressional intelligence committees or the Subcommittees on Defense of the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Senate for such committees and such Subcommittees to perform oversight; or

(C) to law enforcement agencies to investigate a penetration reported under this section.

(d) ISSUANCE OF PROCEDURES AND ESTABLISHMENT OF CRITERIA.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall establish the procedures required under subsection (a) and the criteria required under subsection (b).

(2) APPLICABILITY DATE.—The requirements of this section shall apply on the date on which the Director of National Intelligence establishes the procedures required under this section.

(e) COORDINATION WITH THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE TO PREVENT DUPLICATE REPORTING.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense shall establish procedures to permit a contractor that is a cleared intelligence contractor and a cleared defense contractor under section 941 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112–239; 10 U.S.C. 2224 note) to submit a single report that satisfies the requirements of this section and such section 941 for an incident of penetration of network or information system.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) CLEARED INTELLIGENCE CONTRACTOR.—The term ''cleared intelligence contractor'' means a private entity granted clearance by the Director of National Intelligence or the head of an element of the intelligence community to access, receive, or store classified information for the purpose of bidding for a contract or conducting activities in support of any program of an element of the intelligence community.

(2) COVERED NETWORK.—The term ''covered network'' means a network or information system of a cleared intelligence contractor that contains or processes information created by or for an element of the intelligence community with respect to which such contractor is required to apply enhanced protection.

(g) SAVINGS CLAUSES.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter or limit any otherwise authorized access by government personnel to networks or information systems owned or operated by a contractor that processes or stores government data.

SEC. 326. REPORT ON ELECTRONIC WASTE.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to the congressional intelligence committees a report on the extent to which the intelligence community has implemented the recommendations of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community contained in the report entitled ''Study of Intelligence Community Electronic Waste Disposal Practices'' issued in May 2013. Such report shall include an assessment of the extent to which the policies, standards, and guidelines of the intelligence community governing the proper disposal of electronic waste are applicable to covered commercial electronic waste that may contain classified information.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED COMMERCIAL ELECTRONIC WASTE.—The term ''covered commercial electronic waste'' means electronic waste of a commercial entity that contracts with an element of the intelligence community.

(2) ELECTRONIC WASTE.—The term ''electronic waste'' includes any obsolete, broken, or irreparable electronic device, including a television, copier, facsimile machine, tablet, telephone, computer, computer monitor, laptop, printer, scanner, and associated electrical wiring.

SEC. 327. PROMOTING STEM EDUCATION TO MEET THE FUTURE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to the Secretary of Education and the congressional intelligence committees a report describing the anticipated hiring needs of the intelligence community in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including cybersecurity and computer literacy. The report shall—

(1) describe the extent to which competitions, challenges, or internships at elements of the intelligence community that do not involve access to classified information may be utilized to promote education in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including cybersecurity and computer literacy, within high schools or institutions of higher education in the United States;

(2) include cost estimates for carrying out such competitions, challenges, or internships; and

(3) include strategies for conducting expedited security clearance investigations and adjudications for students at institutions of higher education for purposes of offering internships at elements of the intelligence community.

(b) CONSIDERATION OF EXISTING PROGRAMS.—In developing the report under subsection (a), the Director shall take into consideration existing programs of the intelligence community, including the education programs of the National Security Agency and the Information Assurance Scholarship Program of the Department of Defense, as appropriate.

(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) HIGH SCHOOL.—The term ''high school'' mean a school that awards a secondary school diploma.

(2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ''institution of higher education'' has the meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

(3) SECONDARY SCHOOL.—The term ''secondary school'' has the meaning given the term in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

SEC. 328. REPEAL OF THE TERMINATION OF NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS REGARDING THE AUTHORIZED DISCLOSURE OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

Section 504 of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112–277; 126 Stat. 2477) is amended by striking subsection (e).

SEC. 329. REPEAL OR MODIFICATION OF CERTAIN REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) REPEAL OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) THREAT OF ATTACK ON THE UNITED STATES USING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION.—Section 114 of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3050) is amended by striking subsection (b).

(2) TREATY ON CONVENTIONAL ARMED FORCES IN EUROPE.—Section 2(5)(E) of the Senate resolution advising and consenting to ratification of the Document Agreed Among the States Parties to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) of November 19, 1990, adopted at Vienna May 31, 1996 (Treaty Doc. 105-5) (commonly referred to as the ''CFE Flank Document''), 105th Congress, agreed to May 14, 1997, is repealed.

(b) MODIFICATION OF REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEES.—Section 410(b) of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (50 U.S.C. 3309) is amended to read as follows:

''(b) NOTIFICATION OF ESTABLISHMENT OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—The Director of National Intelligence and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency shall each notify the congressional intelligence committees each time each such Director creates an advisory committee. Each notification shall include—

''(1) a description of such advisory committee, including the subject matter of such committee;

''(2) a list of members of such advisory committee; and

''(3) in the case of an advisory committee created by the Director of National Intelligence, the reasons for a determination by the Director under section 4(b)(3) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) that an advisory committee cannot comply with the requirements of such Act.''.

(2) INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION SHARING.—Section 102A(g)(4) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3024(g)(4)) is amended to read as follows:

''(4) The Director of National Intelligence shall, in a timely manner, report to Congress any statute, regulation, policy, or practice that the Director believes impedes the ability of the Director to fully and effectively ensure maximum availability of access to intelligence information within the intelligence community consistent with the protection of the national security of the United States.''.

(3) INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY BUSINESS SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION.—Section 506D(j) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3100(j)) is amended in the matter preceding paragraph (1) by striking ''2015'' and inserting ''2014''.

(4) ACTIVITIES OF PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OFFICERS.—Section 1062(f)(1) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (42 U.S.C. 2000ee–1(f)(1)) is amended in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) by striking ''quarterly'' and inserting ''semi-annually''.

(c) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—The National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in the table of contents in the first section, by striking the item relating to section 114 and inserting the following new item:

''Sec. 114. Annual report on hiring and retention of minority employees.'';

(2) in section 114 (50 U.S.C. 3050)—

(A) by amending the heading to read as follows: ''**ANNUAL REPORT ON HIRING AND RETENTION OF MINORITY EMPLOYEES**'';

(B) by striking ''(a) ANNUAL REPORT ON HIRING AND RETENTION OF MINORITY EMPLOYEES.—'';

(C) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (5) as subsections (a) through (e), respectively;

(D) in subsection (b) (as so redesignated)—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (C) as paragraphs (1) through (3), respectively; and

(ii) in paragraph (2) (as so redesignated)—

(I) by redesignating clauses (i) and (ii) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively; and

(II) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A) (as so redesignated), by striking ''clauses (i) and (ii)'' and inserting ''subparagraphs (A) and (B)'';

(E) in subsection (d) (as redesignated by subparagraph (C) of this paragraph), by striking ''subsection'' and inserting ''section''; and

(F) in subsection (e) (as redesignated by subparagraph (C) of this paragraph)—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (C) as paragraphs (1) through (3), respectively; and

(ii) by striking ''subsection,'' and inserting ''section''; and

(3) in section 507 (50 U.S.C. 3106)—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) by striking ''(1) The date'' and inserting ''The date'';

(ii) by striking ''subsection (c)(1)(A)'' and inserting ''subsection (c)(1)'';

(iii) by striking paragraph (2); and

(iv) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (F) as paragraphs (1) through (6), respectively;

(B) in subsection (c)(1)—

(i) by striking ''(A) Except'' and inserting ''Except''; and

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B); and

(C) in subsection (d)(1)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking ''subsection (a)(1)'' and inserting ''subsection (a)''; and

(II) by inserting ''and'' after ''March 1;'';

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B); and

(iii) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (B).

TITLE IV—MATTERS RELATING TO ELEMENTS OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

Subtitle A—National Security Agency

SEC. 401. APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY.

(a) DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY.—Section 2 of the National Security Agency Act of 1959 (50 U.S.C. 3602) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(b)'' before ''There''; and

(2) by inserting before subsection (b), as so designated by paragraph (1), the following:

''(a)(1) There is a Director of the National Security Agency.

''(2) The Director of the National Security Agency shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

''(3) The Director of the National Security Agency shall be the head of the National Security Agency and shall discharge such functions and duties as are provided by this Act or otherwise by law or executive order.''.

(b) POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may designate the Director of the National Security Agency as a position of importance and responsibility under section 601 of title 10, United States Code.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 402. APPOINTMENT OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY.

The Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

(1) in section 8G(a)(2), by striking ''the National Security Agency,''; and

(2) in section 12—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''or the Federal Cochairpersons of the Commissions established under section 15301 of title 40, United States Code;'' and inserting ''the Federal Cochairpersons of the Commissions established under section 15301 of title 40, United States Code; the Director of the National Security Agency;''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''or the Commissions established under section 15301 of title 40, United States Code,'' and inserting ''the Commissions established under section 15301 of title 40, United States Code, the National Security Agency,''.

SEC. 403. EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICABILITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as otherwise specifically provided, the amendments made by sections 401 and 402 shall take effect on October 1, 2014, and shall apply upon the earlier of—

(1) in the case of section 401—

(A) the date of the first nomination by the President of an individual to serve as the Director of the National Security Agency that occurs on or after October 1, 2014; or

(B) the date of the cessation of the performance of the duties of the Director of the National Security Agency by the individual performing such duties on October 1, 2014; and

(2) in the case of section 402—

(A) the date of the first nomination by the President of an individual to serve as the Inspector General of the National Security Agency that occurs on or after October 1, 2014; or

(B) the date of the cessation of the performance of the duties of the Inspector General of the National Security Agency by the individual performing such duties on October 1, 2014.

(b) EXCEPTION FOR INITIAL NOMINATIONS.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A) or (2)(A) of subsection (a), an individual serving as the Director of the National Security Agency or the Inspector General of the National Security Agency on the date that the President first nominates an individual for such position on or after October 1, 2014, may continue to perform in that position after such date of nomination and until the individual appointed to the position, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, assumes the duties of the position.

(c) INCUMBENT INSPECTOR GENERAL.—The individual serving as Inspector General of the National Security Agency on the date of the enactment of this Act shall be eligible to be appointed by the President to a new term of service under section 3 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Subtitle B—National Reconnaissance Office

SEC. 411. APPOINTMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) is amended by adding after section 106 the following:

''SEC. 106A. DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—There is a Director of the National Reconnaissance Office.

''(b) APPOINTMENT.—The Director of the National Reconnaissance Office shall be appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

''(c) FUNCTIONS AND DUTIES.—The Director of the National Reconnaissance Office shall be the head of the National Reconnaissance Office and shall discharge such functions and duties as are provided by this Act or otherwise by law or executive order.''.

(b) POSITION OF IMPORTANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The President may designate the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office as a position of importance

and responsibility under section 601 of title 10, United States Code.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—Paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 106 the following:

''Sec. 106A. Director of the National Reconnaissance Office.''.

SEC. 412. APPOINTMENT OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE.

The Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.)—

(1) in section 8G(a)(2), as amended by section 402, is further amended by striking ''the National Reconnaissance Office,''; and

(2) in section 12, as amended by section 402, is further amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by inserting ''or the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office;'' before ''as the case may be;''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''or the National Reconnaissance Office,'' before ''as the case may be;''.

SEC. 413. EFFECTIVE DATE AND APPLICABILITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The amendments made by sections 411 and 412 shall take effect on October 1, 2014, and shall apply upon the earlier of—

(1) in the case of section 411—

(A) the date of the first nomination by the President of an individual to serve as the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office that occurs on or after October 1, 2014; or

(B) the date of the cessation of the performance of the duties of the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office by the individual performing such duties on October 1, 2014; and

(2) in the case of section 412—

(A) the date of the first nomination by the President of an individual to serve as the Inspector General of the National Reconnaissance Office that occurs on or after October 1, 2014; or

(B) the date of the cessation of the performance of the duties of the Inspector General of the National Reconnaissance Office by the individual performing such duties on October 1, 2014.

(b) EXCEPTION FOR INITIAL NOMINATIONS.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1)(A) or (2)(A) of subsection (a), an individual serving as the Director of the National Reconnaissance Office or the Inspector General of the National Reconnaissance Office on the date that the President first nominates an individual for such position on or after October 1, 2014, may continue to perform in that position after such date of nomination and until the individual appointed to the position, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, assumes the duties of the position.

(c) INCUMBENT INSPECTOR GENERAL.—The individual serving as Inspector General of the National Reconnaissance Office on the date of the enactment of this Act shall be eligible to be appointed by the President to a new term of service under section 3 of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.), by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

Subtitle C—Central Intelligence Agency

SEC. 421. GIFTS, DEVISES, AND BEQUESTS.

Section 12 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50 U.S.C. 3512) is amended—

(1) by striking the section heading and inserting ''GIFTS, DEVISES, AND BEQUESTS'';

(2) in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) by inserting ''by the Director as a gift to the Agency'' after ''accepted''; and

(B) by striking ''this section'' and inserting ''this subsection'';

(3) in subsection (b), by striking ''this section,'' and inserting ''subsection (a),'';

(4) in subsection (c), by striking ''this section,'' and inserting ''subsection (a),'';

(5) in subsection (d), by striking ''this section'' and inserting ''subsection (a)'';

(6) by redesignating subsection (f) as subsection (g); and

(7) by inserting after subsection (e) the following:

''(f)(1) The Director may engage in fundraising in an official capacity for the benefit of nonprofit organizations that provide support to surviving family members of deceased Agency employees or that otherwise provide support for the welfare, education, or recreation of Agency employees, former Agency employees, or their family members.

''(2) In this subsection, the term 'fundraising' means the raising of funds through the active participation in the promotion, production, or presentation of an event designed to raise funds and does not include the direct solicitation of money by any other means.''.

TITLE V—SECURITY CLEARANCE REFORM

SEC. 501. CONTINUOUS EVALUATION AND SHARING OF DEROGATORY INFORMATION REGARDING PERSONNEL WITH ACCESS TO CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

Section 102A(j) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3024(j)) is amended—

(1) in the heading, by striking ''SENSITIVE COMPARTMENTED INFORMATION'' and inserting ''CLASSIFIED INFORMATION'';

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''; and'' and inserting a semicolon;

(3) in paragraph (4), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

''(5) ensure that the background of each employee or officer of an element of the intelligence community, each contractor to an element of the intelligence community, and each individual employee of such a contractor who has been determined to be eligible for access to classified information is monitored on a continual basis under standards developed by the Director, including with respect to the frequency of evaluation, during the period of eligibility of such employee or officer of an element of the intelligence community, such contractor, or such individual employee to such a contractor to determine whether such employee or officer of an element of the intelligence community, such contractor, and such individual employee of such a contractor continues to meet the requirements for eligibility for access to classified information; and

''(6) develop procedures to require information sharing between elements of the intelligence community concerning potentially derogatory security information regarding an employee or officer of an element of the intelligence community, a contractor to an element of the intelligence community, or an individual employee of such a contractor that may impact the eligibility of such employee or officer of an element of the intelligence community, such contractor, or such individual employee of such a contractor for a security clearance.''.

SEC. 502. REQUIREMENTS FOR INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY CONTRACTORS.

(a) REQUIREMENTS.—Section 102A of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3024) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(x) REQUIREMENTS FOR INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY CONTRACTORS.—The Director of National Intelligence, in consultation with the head of each department of the Federal Government that contains an element of the intelligence community and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, shall—

''(1) ensure that—

''(A) any contractor to an element of the intelligence community with access to a classified network or classified information develops and operates a security plan that is consistent with standards established by the Director of National Intelligence for intelligence community networks; and

''(B) each contract awarded by an element of the intelligence community includes provisions requiring the contractor comply with such plan and such standards;

''(2) conduct periodic assessments of each security plan required under paragraph (1)(A) to ensure such security plan complies with the requirements of such paragraph; and

''(3) ensure that the insider threat detection capabilities and insider threat policies of the intelligence community apply to facilities of contractors with access to a classified network.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to contracts entered into or renewed after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 503. TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS TO SECURITY CLEARANCE PROCESSING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Director of National Intelligence, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, shall conduct an analysis of the relative costs and benefits of potential improvements to the process for investigating persons who are proposed for access to classified information and adjudicating whether such persons satisfy the criteria for obtaining and retaining access to such information.

(b) CONTENTS OF ANALYSIS.—In conducting the analysis required by subsection (a), the Director of National Intelligence shall evaluate the costs and benefits associated with—

(1) the elimination of manual processes in security clearance investigations and adjudications, if possible, and automating and integrating the elements of the investigation process, including—

(A) the clearance application process;

(B) case management;

(C) adjudication management;

(D) investigation methods for the collection, analysis, storage, retrieval, and transfer of data and records; and

(E) records management for access and eligibility determinations;

(2) the elimination or reduction, if possible, of the use of databases and information sources that cannot be accessed and processed automatically electronically, or modification of such databases and information sources, to enable electronic access and processing;

(3) the use of government-developed and commercial technology for continuous monitoring and evaluation of government and commercial data sources that can identify and flag information pertinent to adjudication guidelines and eligibility determinations;

(4) the standardization of forms used for routine reporting required of cleared personnel (such as travel, foreign contacts, and financial disclosures) and use of continuous monitoring technology to access databases containing such reportable information to independently obtain and analyze reportable data and events;

(5) the establishment of an authoritative central repository of personnel security information that is accessible electronically at multiple levels of classification and eliminates technical barriers to rapid access to information necessary for eligibility determinations and reciprocal recognition thereof;

(6) using digitally processed fingerprints, as a substitute for ink or paper prints, to reduce error rates and improve portability of data;

(7) expanding the use of technology to improve an applicant's ability to discover the status of a pending security clearance application or reinvestigation; and

(8) using government and publicly available commercial data sources, including social media, that provide independent information pertinent to adjudication guidelines to improve quality and timeliness, and reduce costs, of investigations and reinvestigations.

(c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the analysis required by subsection (a).

SEC. 504. REPORT ON RECIPROCITY OF SECURITY CLEARANCES.

The head of the entity selected pursuant to section 3001(b) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (50 U.S.C. 3341(b)) shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report each year through 2017 that describes for the preceding year—

(1) the periods of time required by authorized adjudicative agencies for accepting background investigations and determinations completed by an authorized investigative entity or authorized adjudicative agency;

(2) the total number of cases in which a background investigation or determination completed by an authorized investigative entity or authorized adjudicative agency is accepted by another agency;

(3) the total number of cases in which a background investigation or determination completed by an authorized investigative entity or authorized adjudicative agency is not accepted by another agency; and

(4) such other information or recommendations as the head of the entity selected pursuant to such section 3001(b) considers appropriate.

SEC. 505. IMPROVING THE PERIODIC REINVESTIGATION PROCESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter until December 31, 2017, the Director of National Intelligence, in consultation with the Secretary of Defense and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, shall transmit to the appropriate committees of Congress a strategic plan for updating the process for periodic reinvestigations consistent with a continuous evaluation program.

(b) CONTENTS.—The plan required by subsection (a) shall include—

(1) an analysis of the costs and benefits associated with conducting periodic reinvestigations;

(2) an analysis of the costs and benefits associated with replacing some or all periodic reinvestigations with a program of continuous evaluation;

(3) a determination of how many risk-based and ad hoc periodic reinvestigations are necessary on an annual basis for each component of the Federal Government with employees with security clearances;

(4) an analysis of the potential benefits of expanding the Government's use of continuous evaluation tools as a means of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of procedures for confirming the eligibility of personnel for continued access to classified information; and

(5) an analysis of how many personnel with out-of-scope background investigations are employed by, or contracted or detailed to, each element of the intelligence community.

(c) PERIODIC REINVESTIGATIONS DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''periodic reinvestigations'' has the meaning given that term in section 3001(a) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (50 U.S.C. 3341(a)).

SEC. 506. APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.

In this title, the term ''appropriate committees of Congress'' means—

(1) the congressional intelligence committees;

(2) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

(3) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives.

TITLE VI—INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTIONS

SEC. 601. PROTECTION OF INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY WHISTLEBLOWERS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title XI of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3231 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

''SEC. 1104. PROHIBITED PERSONNEL PRACTICES IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY.

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) AGENCY.—The term 'agency' means an executive department or independent establishment, as defined under sections 101 and 104 of title 5, United States Code, that contains an intelligence community element, except the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

''(2) COVERED INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ELEMENT.—The term 'covered intelligence community element'—

''(A) means—

''(i) the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the National Reconnaissance Office; and

''(ii) any executive agency or unit thereof determined by the President under section 2302(a)(2)(C)(ii) of title 5, United States Code, to have as its principal function the conduct of foreign intelligence or counterintelligence activities; and

''(B) does not include the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

''(3) PERSONNEL ACTION.—The term 'personnel action' means, with respect to an employee in a position in a covered intelligence community element (other than a position excepted from the competitive service due to its confidential, policy-determining, policy-making, or policy-advocating character)—

''(A) an appointment;

''(B) a promotion;

''(C) a disciplinary or corrective action;

''(D) a detail, transfer, or reassignment;

''(E) a demotion, suspension, or termination;

''(F) a reinstatement or restoration;

''(G) a performance evaluation;

''(H) a decision concerning pay, benefits, or awards;

''(I) a decision concerning education or training if such education or training may reasonably be expected to lead to an appointment, promotion, or performance evaluation; or

''(J) any other significant change in duties, responsibilities, or working conditions.

''(b) IN GENERAL.—Any employee of an agency who has authority to take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action, shall not, with respect to such authority, take or fail to take a personnel action with respect to any employee of a covered intelligence community element as a reprisal for a lawful disclosure of information by the employee to the Director of National Intelligence (or an employee designated by the Director of National Intelligence for such purpose), the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, the head of the employing agency (or an employee designated by the head of that agency for such purpose), the appropriate inspector general of the employing agency, a congressional intelligence committee, or a member of a congressional intelligence committee, which the employee reasonably believes evidences—

''(1) a violation of any Federal law, rule, or regulation; or

''(2) mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety.

''(c) ENFORCEMENT.—The President shall provide for the enforcement of this section.

''(d) EXISTING RIGHTS PRESERVED.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to—

''(1) preempt or preclude any employee, or applicant for employment, at the Federal Bureau of Investigation from exercising rights provided under any other law, rule, or regulation, including section 2303 of title 5, United States Code; or

''(2) repeal section 2303 of title 5, United States Code.''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the National Security Act of 1947 is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

''Sec. 1104. Prohibited personnel practices in the intelligence community.''.

SEC. 602. REVIEW OF SECURITY CLEARANCE OR ACCESS DETERMINATIONS.

(a) GENERAL RESPONSIBILITY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 3001(b) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (50 U.S.C. 3341(b)) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by striking ''Not'' and inserting ''Except as otherwise provided, not'';

(B) in paragraph (5), by striking ''and'' after the semicolon;

(C) in paragraph (6), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(D) by inserting after paragraph (6) the following:

''(7) not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014—

''(A) developing policies and procedures that permit, to the extent practicable, individuals to appeal a determination to suspend or revoke a security clearance or access to classified information and to retain their government employment status while such challenge is pending; and

''(B) developing and implementing uniform and consistent policies and procedures to ensure proper protections during the process for denying, suspending, or revoking a security clearance or access to classified information, including the ability to appeal such a denial, suspension, or revocation, except that there shall be no appeal of an agency's suspension of a security clearance or access determination for purposes of conducting an investigation, if that suspension lasts no longer than 1 year or the head of the agency or a designee of the head of the agency certifies that a longer suspension is needed before a final decision on denial or revocation to prevent imminent harm to the national security.''.

(2) REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.—The policies and procedures for appeal developed under paragraph (7) of section 3001(b) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, as added by subsection (a), shall provide for the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, or the inspector general of the employing agency, to conduct fact-finding and report to the agency head or the designee of

the agency head within 180 days unless the employee and the agency agree to an extension or the investigating inspector general determines in writing that a greater period of time is required. To the fullest extent possible, such fact-finding shall include an opportunity for the employee to present relevant evidence such as witness testimony.

(b) RETALIATORY REVOCATION OF SECURITY CLEARANCES AND ACCESS DETERMINATIONS.—Section 3001 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (50 U.S.C. 3341) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(j) RETALIATORY REVOCATION OF SECURITY CLEARANCES AND ACCESS DETERMINATIONS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Agency personnel with authority over personnel security clearance or access determinations shall not take or fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take, any action with respect to any employee's security clearance or access determination in retaliation for—

''(A) any lawful disclosure of information to the Director of National Intelligence (or an employee designated by the Director of National Intelligence for such purpose) or the head of the employing agency (or employee designated by the head of that agency for such purpose) by an employee that the employee reasonably believes evidences—

''(i) a violation of any Federal law, rule, or regulation; or

''(ii) gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety;

''(B) any lawful disclosure to the Inspector General of an agency or another employee designated by the head of the agency to receive such disclosures, of information which the employee reasonably believes evidences—

''(i) a violation of any Federal law, rule, or regulation; or

''(ii) gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety;

''(C) any lawful disclosure that complies with—

''(i) subsections (a)(1), (d), and (h) of section 8H of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.);

''(ii) subparagraphs (A), (D), and (H) of section 17(d)(5) of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50 U.S.C. 3517(d)(5)); or

''(iii) subparagraphs (A), (D), and (I) of section 103H(k)(5) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3033(k)(5)); and

''(D) if the actions do not result in the employee or applicant unlawfully disclosing information specifically required by Executive order to be kept classified in the interest of national defense or the conduct of foreign affairs, any lawful disclosure in conjunction with—

''(i) the exercise of any appeal, complaint, or grievance right granted by any law, rule, or regulation;

''(ii) testimony for or otherwise lawfully assisting any individual in the exercise of any right referred to in clause (i); or

''(iii) cooperation with or disclosing information to the Inspector General of an agency, in accordance with applicable provisions of law in connection with an audit, inspection, or investigation conducted by the Inspector General.

''(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Consistent with the protection of sources and methods, nothing in paragraph (1) shall be construed to authorize the withholding of information from Congress or the taking of any personnel action against an employee who lawfully discloses information to Congress.

''(3) DISCLOSURES.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A disclosure shall not be excluded from paragraph (1) because—

''(i) the disclosure was made to a person, including a supervisor, who participated in an activity that the employee reasonably believed to be covered by paragraph (1)(A)(ii);

''(ii) the disclosure revealed information that had been previously disclosed;

''(iii) the disclosure was not made in writing;

''(iv) the disclosure was made while the employee was off duty; or

''(v) of the amount of time which has passed since the occurrence of the events described in the disclosure.

''(B) REPRISALS.—If a disclosure is made during the normal course of duties of an employee, the disclosure shall not be excluded from paragraph (1) if any employee who has authority to take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any personnel action with respect to the employee making the disclosure, took, failed to take, or threatened to take or fail to take a personnel action with respect to that employee in reprisal for the disclosure.

''(4) AGENCY ADJUDICATION.—

''(A) REMEDIAL PROCEDURE.—An employee or former employee who believes that he or she has been subjected to a reprisal prohibited by paragraph (1) may, within 90 days after the issuance of notice of such decision, appeal that decision within the agency of that employee or former employee through proceedings authorized by subsection (b)(7), except that there shall be no appeal of an agency's suspension of a security clearance or access determination for purposes of conducting an investigation, if that suspension lasts not longer than 1 year (or a longer period in accordance with a certification made under subsection (b)(7)).

''(B) CORRECTIVE ACTION.—If, in the course of proceedings authorized under subparagraph (A), it is determined that the adverse security clearance or access determination violated paragraph (1), the agency shall take specific corrective action to return the employee or former employee, as nearly as practicable and reasonable, to the position such employee or former employee would have held had the violation not occurred. Such corrective action may include back pay and related benefits, travel expenses, and compensatory damages not to exceed $300,000.

''(C) CONTRIBUTING FACTOR.—In determining whether the adverse security clearance or access determination violated paragraph (1), the agency shall find that paragraph (1) was violated if a disclosure described in paragraph (1) was a contributing factor in the adverse security clearance or access determination taken against the individual, unless the agency demonstrates by a preponderance of the evidence that it would have taken the same action in the absence of such disclosure, giving the utmost deference to the agency's assessment of the particular threat to the national security interests of the United States in the instant matter.

''(5) APPELLATE REVIEW OF SECURITY CLEARANCE ACCESS DETERMINATIONS BY DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE.—

''(A) APPEAL.—Within 60 days after receiving notice of an adverse final agency determination under a proceeding under paragraph (4), an employee or former employee may appeal that determination in accordance with the procedures established under subparagraph (B).

''(B) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.—The Director of National Intelligence, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of Defense, shall develop and implement policies and procedures for adjudicating the appeals authorized by subparagraph (A).

''(C) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—Consistent with the protection of sources and methods, at the time the Director of National Intelligence issues an order regarding an appeal pursuant to the policies and procedures established by this paragraph, the Director of National Intelligence shall notify the congressional intelligence committees.

''(6) JUDICIAL REVIEW.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit or require judicial review of any—

''(A) agency action under this section; or

''(B) action of the appellate review procedures established under paragraph (5).

''(7) PRIVATE CAUSE OF ACTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit, authorize, or require a private cause of action to challenge the merits of a security clearance determination.''.

(c) ACCESS DETERMINATION DEFINED.—Section 3001(a) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (50 U.S.C. 3341(a)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(9) ACCESS DETERMINATION.—The term 'access determination' means the determination regarding whether an employee—

''(A) is eligible for access to classified information in accordance with Executive Order 12968 (60 Fed. Reg. 40245; relating to access to classified information), or any successor thereto, and Executive Order 10865 (25 Fed. Reg. 1583; relating to safeguarding classified information with industry), or any successor thereto; and

''(B) possesses a need to know under such an Order.''.

(d) EXISTING RIGHTS PRESERVED.—Nothing in this section or the amendments made by this section shall be construed to preempt, preclude, or otherwise prevent an individual from exercising rights, remedies, or avenues of redress currently provided under any other law, regulation, or rule.

(e) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in section 3001 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (50 U.S.C. 3341), as amended by this title, shall be construed to require the repeal or replacement of agency appeal procedures implementing Executive Order 12968 (60 Fed. Reg. 40245; relating to access to classified information), or any successor thereto, and Executive Order 10865 (25 Fed. Reg. 1583; relating to safeguarding classified information with industry), or any successor thereto, that meet the requirements of paragraph (7) of section 3001(b) of such Act, as added by this section.

SEC. 603. REVISIONS OF OTHER LAWS.

(a) INSPECTOR GENERAL ACT OF 1978.—Section 8H of the Inspector General Act of 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) by inserting ''(1)'' after ''(b)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(2) If the head of an establishment determines that a complaint or information transmitted under paragraph (1) would create a conflict of interest for the head of the establishment, the head of the establishment shall return the complaint or information to the Inspector General with that determination and the Inspector General shall make the transmission to the Director of National Intelligence and, if the establishment is within the Department of Defense, to the Secretary of Defense. In such a case, the requirements of this section for the head of the establishment apply to each recipient of the Inspector General's transmission.'';

(2) by redesignating subsection (h) as subsection (i); and

(3) by inserting after subsection (g) the following:

''(h) An individual who has submitted a complaint or information to an Inspector General under this section may notify any

member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives or the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate, or a staff member of either such Committee, of the fact that such individual has made a submission to that particular Inspector General, and of the date on which such submission was made.''.

(b) CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.—Section 17(d)(5) of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50 U.S.C. 3517(d)(5)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B)—

(A) by inserting ''(i)'' after ''(B)''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) If the Director determines that a complaint or information transmitted under paragraph (1) would create a conflict of interest for the Director, the Director shall return the complaint or information to the Inspector General with that determination and the Inspector General shall make the transmission to the Director of National Intelligence. In such a case, the requirements of this subsection for the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency apply to the Director of National Intelligence''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(H) An individual who has submitted a complaint or information to the Inspector General under this section may notify any member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives or the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate, or a staff member of either such Committee, of the fact that such individual has made a submission to the Inspector General, and of the date on which such submission was made.''.

(c) NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947.—Section 103H(k)(5) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3033(k)(5)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(I) An individual who has submitted a complaint or information to the Inspector General under this section may notify any member of either of the congressional intelligence committees, or a staff member of either of such committees, of the fact that such individual has made a submission to the Inspector General, and of the date on which such submission was made.''.

SEC. 604. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES; NONAPPLICABILITY TO CERTAIN TERMINATIONS.

(a) COVERED INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ELEMENT DEFINED.—In this section, the term ''covered intelligence community element''—

(1) means—

(A) the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, and the National Reconnaissance Office; and

(B) any executive agency or unit thereof determined by the President under section 2302(a)(2)(C)(ii) of title 5, United States Code, to have as its principal function the conduct of foreign intelligence or counterintelligence activities; and

(2) does not include the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(b) REGULATIONS.—In consultation with the Secretary of Defense, the Director of National Intelligence shall develop policies and procedures to ensure that a personnel action shall not be taken against an employee of a covered intelligence community element as a reprisal for any disclosure of information described in 1104 of the National Security Act of 1947, as added by section 601 of this Act.

(c) REPORT ON THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF REGULATIONS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director of National Intelligence shall submit a report on the status of the implementation of the regulations promulgated under subsection (b) to the congressional intelligence committees.

(d) NONAPPLICABILITY TO CERTAIN TERMINATIONS.—Section 1104 of the National Security Act of 1947, as added by section 601 of this Act, and section 3001 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (50 U.S.C. 3341), as amended by section 602 of this Act, shall not apply if—

(1) the affected employee is concurrently terminated under—

(A) section 1609 of title 10, United States Code;

(B) the authority of the Director of National Intelligence under section 102A(m) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3024(m)), if the Director determines that the termination is in the interest of the United States;

(C) the authority of the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency under section 104A(e) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3036(e)), if the Director determines that the termination is in the interest of the United States; or

(D) section 7532 of title 5, United States Code, if the head of the agency determines that the termination is in the interest of the United States; and

(2) not later than 30 days after such termination, the head of the agency that employed the affected employee notifies the congressional intelligence committees of the termination.

TITLE VII—TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS

SEC. 701. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY ACT OF 1949.

Section 21 of the Central Intelligence Agency Act of 1949 (50 U.S.C. 3521) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(1)(D), by striking ''section (a)'' and inserting ''subsection (a)''; and

(2) in subsection (c)(2)(E), by striking ''provider.'' and inserting ''provider''.

SEC. 702. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY ACT OF 1947 RELATING TO THE PAST ELIMINATION OF CERTAIN POSITIONS.

Section 101(a) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 3021(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (5), by striking the semicolon and inserting ''; and'';

(2) by striking paragraphs (6) and (7);

(3) by redesignating paragraph (8) as paragraph (6); and

(4) in paragraph (6) (as so redesignated), by striking ''the Chairman of the Munitions Board, and the Chairman of the Research and Development Board,''.

SEC. 703. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS TO THE INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2013.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 506 of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112–277; 126 Stat. 2478) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Section 606(5)'' and inserting ''Paragraph (5) of section 605''; and

(2) by inserting '', as redesignated by section 310(a)(4)(B) of this Act,'' before ''is amended''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (Public Law 112–277).

SA 3239. Mr. HATCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2450, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. EXEMPTION OF MEDICAL DEVICES SOLD UNDER THE TRICARE FOR LIFE PROGRAM OR VETERAN'S HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS FROM THE MEDICAL DEVICE EXCISE TAX.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (2) of section 4191(b) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended—

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

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E), and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following new subparagraph:

''(D) any medical device which is sold to individuals covered under the TRICARE for Life program or the veteran's health care program under chapter 17 of title 38, United States Code, any portion of the cost of which is paid or reimbursed under either such program, and''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to sales after the date of the enactment of this Act.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 11, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 11, 2014, at 11 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 11, 2014, at 5:15 p.m. to hold a hearing entitled ''CLOSED/TS/SCI: The Situation in Ukraine.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 11, 2014, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 11, 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized

to meet during the session of the Senate, on June 11, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Department of Homeland Security.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on June 11, 2014, at 4 p.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE NOMINATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Thursday—that is tomorrow—June 12, at 11:30 a.m., the Senate proceed to executive session and consideration of Calendar No. 523, under the previous order; further, that following the disposition of that nomination, the Senate proceed to consideration and vote on Calendar Nos. 710, 782, and 776; further, that if any nomination is confirmed, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order to the nominations; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD; and that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 244, S. 1681.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1681) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. REID. I further ask unanimous consent that the substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended.

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

The amendment (No. 3238) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The bill was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

The bill (S. 1681), as amended, was passed.

CLARIFYING RESPONSIBILITY OF SENATE COMMITTEES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that S. Res. 470, which is at the desk, be placed on the calendar and that upon the enactment into law of the language of title IV of S. 1681, as amended, the Senate proceed to the consideration of the resolution; that the resolution 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.

HONORING FORMER PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH AND BARBARA BUSH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 471.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 471) honoring former President George H.W. Bush on the occasion of his 90th birthday and Barbara Bush on the occasion of her 89th birthday and extending the best wishes of the Senate to former President Bush and Mrs. Bush.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 471) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

HONORING DR. JAMES SCHLESINGER

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration S. Res. 472.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 472) honoring Dr. James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Energy, and Director of Central Intelligence.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 472) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 12, 2014; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 11:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first 30 minutes and the majority controlling the next 30 minutes; and that at 11:30 a.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 523, as provided for under the previous order; further, that upon disposition of the Batta nomination, the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business until 1:45 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees; that at 1:45 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 769, as provided for under the previous order; finally, upon disposition of the Fischer nomination, the Senate resume legislative session.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there will be a series of votes at noon tomorrow and another series at 1:45 p.m. tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:01 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 12, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

PROTECTING OUR OCEANS

HON. SUZAN K. DelBENE

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Ms. DELBENE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Capitol Hill Ocean Week to highlight the critical role our oceans play in our lives, our economy, and for so many marine species.

In 2012, the Pacific Region's seafood industry generated $7.5 billion in sales for Washington state while seafood processors and dealers accounted for 16,000 jobs.

The Magnuson Stevens Act, the law which governs sound stewardship and management of our fisheries is due for reauthorization. Unfortunately, the reauthorization bill moving through the House would take us backwards at a critical time.

The bill would roll back a number of conservation provisions at the expense of numerous efforts to increase fish populations. In fact, the bill would allow overfishing on already depleted populations. In my district, a commercial fishery disaster declaration was made for the Fraser River sockeye salmon fishery this year. Our tribes have been good stewards of the fishery, but due to a changing climate beyond their control, fish populations are decreasing.

This bill does not address our changing climate, such as the increasing acidification of our oceans. I urge my colleagues to instead pursue policies that will preserve our oceans for generations to come.

HONORING MR. DICK BUTLER

HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Richard (Dick) Butler on the occasion of his retirement celebration on June 5, 2014, after a long and distinguished career with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

Early in his service with NOAA, Dick spent several years as a tuna-porpoise observer and under difficult working conditions he and his fellow observers brought back new information about the magnitude of dolphin mortality, setting the stage for profound changes in fishing practices management of incidental marine mammal take.

While serving as the North Coast Branch Chief, Mr. Butler led several notable efforts such as addressing gravel mining in the Russian River, and he would go on to play an important role in the development of the Russian River Biological Opinion, leading to the successful establishment of Warm Spring hatchery and other key conservation actions in the Russian River. Mr. Butler also helped build a strong conservation partnership with the Sonoma County Water Agency resulting in direct conservation benefits on-the-ground.

Mr. Butler's leadership and expertise have greatly benefitted NOAA and USFWS and will have lasting impacts on our ecosystem and natural resources for years to come. Please join me in expressing deep appreciation to Dick Butler for his long and impressive career and his exceptional record of service to our community.

OPPOSITION TO H. AMDT. 757 TO H.R. 4660, COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to the amendment offered by my colleague and friend from Florida.

First, I want to commend the gentleman from Florida for his tireless efforts on behalf of his constituents. I recognize and appreciate the challenges many of his constituents are having with the Gulf of Mexico Council and the mismanagement issues plaguing the Red Snapper fishery.

As a member of the authorizing committee and someone who has spent decades dealing with fisheries issues, I am concerned about the implications of this amendment to fishermen in my district and in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Virginia Waterman's Association has contacted me to express their opposition to this amendment, which would limit future catch share programs. Fishing has always been a key component of Virginia's economy, and the health of the resource is vital to its future. There are enormous benefits to the proper management of fisheries.

Fisheries management, however, is a complex issue. It requires good science. It requires good analytics. And, more importantly, it requires good management tools. Catch shares can be a useful management tool, and they have proven to be an effective management program in many fisheries, including striped bass, surf clam, quahog, golden tilefish, and scallop. Additionally, in Virginia there is interest in new catch shares for tautog and blue crab.

But the decisions over whether to use them are best left to the regional fishery management councils, which were established by Congress for this very purpose. The participants on those regional fishery management councils have extensive knowledge of their local fisheries and are better equipped than Congress to make decisions on what management regimes to use in their regions.

I understand the concerns of my colleagues about the way some fisheries are managed in the United States. I share some of those concerns and look forward to continuing working through the House Natural Resources Committee to address them during reauthorization of Magnuson-Stevens. I do not believe that this amendment is the right approach to solving fishery management problems, nor is it good for the Commonwealth of Virginia. I am therefore opposed to the amendment.

HONORING BARBARA KELLEHER FITZGERALD

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the service and dedication of Mrs. Barbara Kelleher Fitzgerald, who is being honored as an integral part of the community at the 6th Annual Mount Mercy Academy 5K in Buffalo, New York.

Barbara is a Mount Mercy alumna from the class of 1978, and has since been completely committed to several volunteer event committees at Mount Mercy Academy and has served on the Mount Mercy Academy Alumnae Board.

As a teacher for over 30 years she has touched the lives of many. She began her career at St. Thomas Aquinas school. For the past 22 years she has worked as a Pre-K and Kindergarten teacher at Hamlin Park School #74. The dedication she shows to the children she serves is unmatched.

Among her many community action roles, Barbara has been the president of the Mercy League of Mercy Hospital, the St. Thomas Aquinas Home School Association, Bishop Timon St. Jude Parent Guild, Mount Mercy Academy Parent Guild, and continues to be an active member of the Notre Dame Academy Parent Guild and Sports Committee. Barbara has volunteered as a coach for St. Thomas Aquinas and Notre Dame Academy as well as the South Buffalo Soccer Association.

In addition to these great works, Barbara is a founding member of the Women's Conclave, a discussion group in the local community designed to empower women to handle their unique challenges of life.

Amid her involvement in these influential leadership positions, Barbara identifies her children as her greatest accomplishment. Their family—Barbara, Barry, Barry Jr., Kevin, and Mary Kate—resides in South Buffalo. Barb credits her commitment to community service to the example set by her parents, Patrick and Barb Massett Kelleher and her late aunt Sister Mary Annunciata Kelleher.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me a few moments to recognize the incredible legacy of Barbara Kelleher Fitzgerald. I am inspired by her boundless capacity to give of herself to the community and to her family. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mrs. Kelleher Fitzgerald for her years of service to

the Western New York community and wishing her and her family the best in all of their future endeavors.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. TULSI GABBARD

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2014

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4745) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes:

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Chair, I rise today in strong support of continued funding for the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant.

In 1921, Congress enacted the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA) to help Native Hawaiians who, after the overthrow and annexation of the Kingdom of Hawaii, were largely disenfranchised from their traditional homelands. HHCA sought to provide for the rehabilitation of the Native Hawaiian people through a homesteading program that would reconnect them with former Crown Lands.

In 1959, the State of Hawaii adopted the HHCA as a provision of its constitution in accordance with the Hawaii Statehood Admissions Act, Public Law 86–3. This reaffirmed the responsibility that this nation has to its indigenous people and forever embedded the mission of HHCA in Hawaii's modern history and society.

The Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant provides the financial means to support HHCA and its mission of promoting Native Hawaiian well-being through homesteading. This is an important step towards reconciliation for the historical injustices that underline the social and economic inequality of our Native Hawaiians.

Safe and affordable housing helps to empower families to be productive members of society. Housing fulfills physical needs by providing security and shelter from weather and climate. It fulfills psychological needs by providing a sense of personal space and privacy. It fulfills social needs by providing a gathering area and communal space for the family. These factors combine to help ensure the well-being of our future generations, and are why continued funding for the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant program is so important.

Homesteading provided through this program helps to ease Hawaii's high cost of living and allows Native Hawaiians to remain connected to their traditional homelands. I strongly urge funding for the Native Hawaiian Housing Block Grant program, and would like to express my support for the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act as well.

HONORING RABBI AVI AND TOBY WEISS

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, there is a saying that ''talent does what it can, while genius does what it must.'' The inner strength and spirit which moves Rabbi Avi Weiss and his wife Toby cannot be contained. The genius of their shared vision and commitment to social justice shines brightly and for all to see.

Rabbi Weiss' work isn't limited to the confines of any city or synagogue, nor has he shied away from raising his voice to lift the oppressed. He says that he is an activist because he has no other choice; it is something he must simply do.

I believe that my dear friend responds to the calling laid out by his faith. Rabbi Weiss is compelled to act in the service of others and to live by the spirit of tzedakcah. It is reflective in all that he has done and all that he strives to do.

It is why his voice will always be heard in support of the oppressed. It is why he participated in a hunger strike urging the release of Soviet dissident Natan Sharanskcy. It is why he protested for the right of Soviet Jews to leave their homeland and seek haven elsewhere and it is why he denounced horrendous acts of genocide in Darfur.

Rabbi Weiss founded Yeshivat Chovevei Rabbinical School in order to train a new generation of Orthodox rabbis to live with the spirit of openness that he himself exemplifies. Under Rabbi Weiss' guidance, students learn how to serve not just the Orthodox community, but also the larger Jewish diaspora. Yeshivat Chovevei Rabbinical School is a family that continues to grow as each graduate takes their place in the rabbinate. I have watched its legacy grow and pray for its continued prosperity.

Rabbi Weiss is so well-known, that whenever I tell people I am from the Bronx they immediately ask if I know Rabbi Weiss. I cannot be any more pleased to say that not only does he live in my District, but he is also my neighbor and dear friend.

I would be remiss if I neglected to say that behind every good Rabbi is an equally strong woman who supports him. Toby Weiss has been both his guiding light and the foundation that gives him the strength to carry forth his work.

Religious leaders embody our hopes, aspirations and even our trepidations and fears. We look to them for guidance—for a path in which to follow—so that we might overcome the challenges before us in our own lives.

Rabbi Avi Weiss and his wife Toby are truly exemplary individuals and leaders within the Bronx community. Please join me in celebrating their legacy as Yeshivat Chovevei Rabbinical School honors them for their service and enduring commitment to making the world a better place to live.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I inadvertently voted ''no'' on rollcall vote No. 277, the Nadler Amendment to H.R. 4745. As a strong supporter of this amendment, my intent was to vote ''yes.''

IN MEMORY OF DON DAVIS AND HIS REMARKABLE IMPACT ON THE GREATER DETROIT COMMUNITY

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of a great citizen of the State of Michigan, Mr. Don Davis, a pioneer in music and business. Mr. Davis passed away on Thursday, June 5, 2014, at the age of 75. He is survived by his wife, Kiko, and his three children.

A three-time Grammy winner, Don knew that he had a passion for music at an early age and once told the Detroit News, ''The music industry chose me. If there is a gene for music, I had one.''

Don began his music career as a session musician in the early sixties for Detroit based Motown Records. He played guitar on their hits, ''Money (That's What I Want)'' by Barrett Strong, a song that would later be covered by The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, and The Doors, and ''Bye Bye Baby'' by Mary Wells, reaching number 45 on the Billboard Charts.

As a songwriter, Don experienced his first major hit in 1968 with Johnnie Taylor's ''Who's Making Love,'' which peaked at number 5 on the Billboard Charts. In 1976, he collaborated with Johnnie Taylor again, producing the song ''Disco Lady'', the first single to be certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America.

Twenty years later, Don would expand beyond his outstanding music career to become the CEO and Chairman of the First Independence Bank, the only African-American owned bank in Michigan.

First Independence Bank, which operates a number of Detroit branches, has been named by Black Enterprise Magazine as one of the top 15 African-American owned banks in the country. In 2012, coming out of the Great Recession, First Independence Bank was able to record the most profitable year in its history and increase its total assets to $185 million.

As CEO, Don took his responsibility to his community seriously. In his 18 years as CEO, Don made it a priority to improve his community by focusing on its housing needs and providing excellent banking services to small business owners and families in Southeast Michigan.

Over many years, Don grew First Independence Bank into a trusted financial institution with loyal customers. Don believed that First Independence Bank could provide quality services to communities and customers who were previously overlooked by other banks. He was successful in advancing this mission.

Mr. Speaker, I will miss Don greatly and I know he will be missed by many in our community. I ask that you all join me in honoring his lifetime achievements and service. He will remain in our thoughts and his legacy will live on in Michigan and across our Nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIM MURPHY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 254, had I been present, I would have voted "no."

IN RECOGNITION OF SCHUYLKILL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE 2014 AWARD WINNERS CINDY PETCHULIS, BOB GREENE, MARIA ROWLANDS, THERESA POTHERING, JOSEPH JONES, SR., THE COTLER GROUP, AND THE SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCE & COUNSELING CENTER OF SCHUYLKILL COUNTY (SARCC)

HON. MATT CARTWRIGHT

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. CARTWRIGHT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce 2014 Award Recipients. Each year the Chamber selects several individuals and organizations that have contributed to economic and community development in Schuylkill County. The honorees this year are Cindy Petchulis, Bob Greene, Maria Rowlands, Theresa Pothering, The Cotler Group, and the Sexual Assault Resource & Counseling Center of Schuylkill County.

Cindy Petchulis of the Providence Place Retirement Community is the 2014 Business Woman of the Year. Cindy was critical in helping expand the Providence Place Facility, and is well known for her positive attitude and love of community. A caring people-person, Cindy excellently maintains Providence Place as a peaceful community where its patients can live and its employees can be productive.

Bob Greene of Pioneer Pole Buildings, Inc. is the 2014 Business Man of the Year. Bob treats all his employees as family, which encourages retention and helps the company grow. He strives to be on the cutting edge of his business and wants his company to be the best. Bob is always willing to help the people of Schuylkill County. He is a sponsor for Big Brothers/Big Sisters, the Wounded Warrior Project, Pottsville Lions Car Cruise, 4–H, and his local community Easter Egg hunt. Under his leadership, his company has been recognized by the National Frame Builders Association with the Building of the Year award.

Theresa Pothering and Maria Rowlands are the Entrepreneurs of the Year, as they established an accounting firm, Rowlands and Pothering. With their strong leadership skills and expertise, they were able to turn a dream into a successful business. Clients enjoy that Rowlands and Pothering is a place where "everybody knows your name," and clients do not hesitate to recommend them.

The Cotler Group is the 2014 For Profit Organization of the Year. The Cotler Group has been family-owned for over 60 years and has contributed significantly to Schuylkill County's quality of life and economic vitality. Through its various holdings, the multifaceted business group provides employment for many in the County. The Cotler Group is well known for the development and expansion of one of Schuylkill County's premier golf courses, Mountain Valley. Their ventures bring out-of-county businesses and individuals into the area, enhancing sales for many local vendors. This company and its owner, Steve Cotler, work quietly behind the scenes and are involved with a wide and varied number of organizations and charities.

The Sexual Assault Resource & Counseling Center of Schuylkill County (SARCC) is the 2014 Non-Profit Organization of the Year. This non-profit engages all individuals, families, and communities in healing from sexual violence plus advocates and educates to eliminate sexual violence. It has served approximately 7,500 individuals within Schuylkill County who turned to them for support. SARCC works hard to make Schuylkill County a better and safer place to live. This organization serves its clients on a person-to-person basis and is instrumental in prevention education in schools throughout the county. All of their services are available for free to all men, women, and children in Schuylkill County.

Lastly, the 2014 James Stine Lifetime of Service Award honoree is Joseph Jones, Sr. Mr. Jones exhibits outstanding commitment and achievement, and his efforts have dramatically benefited Schuylkill County. After graduating from the Shamokin public schools, Mr. Jones served three years in the Navy during World War II as a Lieutenant, JG in the Pacific Theater. He then went to Ursinus College, Dickinson School of Law, and New York University law school for an LLM. He served as the editor-in-chief of the Dickinson Law Review and graduated first in his J.D. class. Mr. Jones was admitted in 1950 into the Pennsylvania Bar Association and moved to Pottsville where he began practicing law with Hicks, Williamson & Friedberg. He is now a senior partner with the firm, which is now known as Williamson, Friedberg & Jones, LLC.

Mr. Jones has also chaired successful capital fund raising campaigns for the Schuylkill United Way, Greater Pottsville Industrial Development Corporation, Salvation Army, Boy Scouts of America, Pottsville Free Public Library, Good Samaritan Hospital, Pennsylvania State University—Schuylkill Campus, Ursinus College, Hawk Mountain Council B.S.A., Pottsville Hospital, Pottsville Area Development Corporation, and Schuylkill Economic Development Corporation.

It is a great honor to recognize the Schuylkill County Chamber of Commerce 2014 Award Recipients. These leaders are creating opportunity and raising the quality of life for others in Schuylkill County. May they continue to flourish for many years to come, and may they continue giving back to the community that supports them.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. BRUCE L. BRALEY

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, June 9, 2014

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4745) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes:

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the provision within the Transportation Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations legislation to fund the contract tower program, which includes the tower at the Dubuque Regional Airport, and for funding of the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program. While I voted against the THUD legislation, I do support these provisions. Unfortunately, the overall bill cuts important transportation and housing programs, and on balance, the bill is not a win for Iowa.

The contract tower at the Dubuque Regional Airport is extremely important to commercial air service in the Dubuque region, and helps ensure the safety of passengers flying in and out of the Dubuque airport. The tower is also an important training tool for students at the University of Dubuque's professional pilot training program. Additionally, the Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program provides important services to our veterans including housing services for homeless veterans. I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that these programs are fully funded, while working to improve the other transportation and housing components of the bill which need significant improvement.

HONORING RABBI DR. JONATHAN AND TZIPPORAH ROSENBLATT

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, the Riverdale Jewish Center has fostered spiritual development and sought to nurture strong bonds between the Shul and the greater Riverdale community for 60 years. Anchored by his wife Tzipporah, Rabbi Dr. Jonathan Rosenblatt has been at the helm of the RJC for nearly 30 years, and their guidance can be felt throughout the lives of those whom they have touched.

Rabbi Rosenblatt is a true scholar. He was ordained by the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University in 1982 after having studied at Yeshivat Har Etzion in Israel. Rabbi Rosenblatt earned both a B.A. and M.A. in Comparative Literature from Johns Hopkins and a PhD in Modern British Literature from Columbia University.

Rabbi Rosenblatt has invested in the next generation of Jewish leaders, by training and mentoring young Rabbis. Under this direction,

RJC is now a major training center for Rabbinic interns. Rabbi Rosenblatt is also an instructor at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS), as well as programs in Israel that train Rabbis to serve in Jewish communities throughout the world.

He was the first Orthodox Rabbi to serve on the UJA-Federation National Young Leadership Cabinet, and has lectured widely in the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel, and South Africa. Rabbi Rosenblatt also directs Spiritual Care at the Jack and Mollie Zicklin Jewish Hospice in Riverdale.

Tzipporah Twersky Rosenblatt developed a love and passion for Jewish faith and culture at a very young age. Her late father Isadore Twersky was a renowned rabbinical scholar who later taught at his alma mater, Harvard University. Tzipporah is a noted trusts and estates attorney who is very active in the RJC community. Together, the Rosenblatts have four children.

My connection to the Rosenblatts is personal. Rabbi Rosenblatt is a dear friend who was a great comfort to both me and my family after my mother passed away. Rabbi Rosenblatt is truly one of the kindest and most sensitive people whom I have met. He has never proven otherwise, in each and every encounter we have had.

The Riverdale Jewish Center is fortunate to have Rabbi Rosenblatt at the helm of the Shul, and I am fortunate to call him my friend.

DOROTHY IRENE HAWKINS FRYSON

HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mrs. CAPITO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember the life of Dorothy Irene Hawkins Fryson, and to honor the many contributions to her family and community throughout her 102 years here with us on Earth.

Dorothy was born on November 28, 1911 in Belmont, West Virginia to Will and Cora Ross. The family later relocated to Charleston, West Virginia, where Dorothy would spend most of her life. Affectionately known to those who loved her as ''Big Momma,'' Dorothy was renowned for her cooking, which included specialties such as blackberry cobbler, sweet potato pie, and pineapple upside down cake. Remembered for her hard work, Mrs. Fryson was the first black female taxi cab driver in Charleston and worked as a popular elevator operator for several retail establishments and the State Capitol. She remained active throughout her life; taking the mound as a pitcher in baseball games, learning to swim at the age of 47, driving her own car until 96 years old, and living independently until 2013.

Dorothy not only left her mark on her family and all who knew her, but she impacted the lives of many people throughout the community who might not have known her at all. Everyone from the communities of Dunbar, Nitro, and Institute are familiar with the I–64 entrance and exit underpass, but not many know the interstate almost passed up their communities. When Dorothy heard her community would be left without immediate access to the new interstate, she went all the way to the top, writing President Johnson to express the concerns of her community. Sure enough, the construction plan was altered to include direct access to the interstate through an underpass at Institute, which her husband Sim affectionately referred to as ''Dot's Tunnel.'' Dorothy continued to give back to her community throughout her life and at the age of 80 volunteered to teach reading at Dunbar Elementary School.

She had been a member of multiple community churches, including Ferguson Baptist, Young Street Baptist, and finally the Berea Seventh-day Adventist in South Charleston, West Virginia.

On Sunday, April 23, 2014, Dorothy Irene Hawkins Fryson passed away at the age of 102. She is survived by daughters Janice Corbett, Cora Heath and her husband Harry; sons John Hawkins and his wife Barbara, Sim Fryson and his wife Susan, Paul Fryson, and David Fryson and his wife Joy. In addition, Dorothy leaves behind a host of extended family, including 31 grandchildren, 61 great grandchildren, and 77 great great grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, the state of West Virginia owes Dorothy Irene Hawkins Fryson a debt of gratitude for her devotion to her family and community. It is caring people like Dorothy who make serving West Virginia's Second Congressional District such an honor!

HONORING JEFFERY M. CONRAD

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Jeffery M. Conrad, who will be recognized at the 6th annual Mount Mercy Academy 5k in Buffalo, New York for his tireless commitment to the local community.

Jeff Conrad has been involved in community service since the age of 19, when he gave his time to serve on the Connor-Kait-Harrity Race Committee. This experience led to his founding of the Jack's 5k. He has served as a dedicated committee member of the Mount Mercy 5k since its inception. Jeff has also played a vital role as coach of both Varsity Cross County and Track and Field teams at Mount Mercy.

In addition to his invaluable volunteer work, Jeffery is a former South District Councilmember in the City of Buffalo, and served as a valuable member of my staff when I served as a Member of the NYS Assembly.

Currently, Jeffery is the Western New York Regional Director for the Center for Employment Opportunities, which assists individuals on parole and probation to find employment. He also holds the position of the Chair of the Erie County Legislature's Safe Neighborhood Committee.

In addition to these great works, Mr. Conrad has been recognized many times over by community organizations. In 2011, he was selected to the 20th Anniversary Business First ''40 Under 40'' class for his work within the public and in government. In 2008, Jeffery was awarded the Tom Sands Community Service Award and the Goin' South Civic Pride Award for his efforts with Mount Mercy, Bishop Timon-St. Jude School, and myriad other worthy regional groups.

A lifelong resident of Buffalo, Jeff is married to Lisa (Nasca) Conrad, and they are raising two wonderful children together—Jeffrey and Giada.

Mr. Speaker, Jeffery Conrad is an exemplary citizen and his service is worthy of our highest recognition. I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Mr. Conrad and thanking him for his utmost dedication and continuing service to our local community.

A WELL-DESERVED RETIREMENT FOR KATHRYN DUNBAR—A FELLOW COASTIE

HON. HOWARD COBLE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. COBLE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the retirement of Coast Guard Commander Kathryn Dunbar. Commander Dunbar, or KD as we affectionately call her, is a native of Columbia, South Carolina, and was graduated from the University of the South and entered Officer's Candidate School in 1992.

A true sailor, she is a Coast Guard Cutterman, having served aboard three Buoy Tenders including USCGC *Sweetgum* in Mobile, Alabama, and USCGC *Red Birch* in Baltimore, Maryland. She also served as the commanding officer of Coast Guard Cutter *William Tate* in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from 2001–2003.

I was privileged to travel to the City of Brotherly Love to attend her Change of Command when she assumed command of the cutter in 2001. I was pleased to be accompanied by my staffers Missy Branson and Ed McDonald at the ceremonies. Missy and KD were such good friends that they climbed Mount Everest together all the way to the base camp on the Nepal side.

CDR Dunbar also served in the Coast Guard Recruiting Command, the Office of Cutter Forces at Coast Guard Headquarters, and at both the National and District Seven Director of Auxiliary Offices. She is best known in Washington, DC, for her exceptional performance of duty in the Coast Guard House of Representatives Liaison Office from 1997–2001. This is where many of my colleagues, my staff and I, came to know KD.

She is a true friend, an outstanding Coastie, and as fine a representative of our service as I have seen. On behalf of the citizens of the Sixth District of North Carolina, we wish KD, Commander Dunbar, fair winds and following seas.

TRIBUTE TO HONOR FLIGHT OF EASTERN OREGON AND HONOR FLIGHT OF PORTLAND, OREGON

HON. GREG WALDEN

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. WALDEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the 50 World War II veterans from Oregon who will be visiting their memorial this Friday in Washington, DC through Honor Flight of Eastern Oregon and Honor Flight of

Portland, Oregon. On behalf of a grateful State and country, we welcome these heroes to our Nation's capital.

The veterans on this flight from Oregon are: Eldon Ashmore, U.S. Army; Joseph Bakkensen, U.S. Army; Elvin Ballou, U.S. Army; Marceline Clark, U.S. Army; William C. Eggiman, U.S. Army; William Gaddie, U.S. Army; Clarence Giebelhouse, U.S. Army; Donald Gourley, U.S. Army; Roy Haley, U.S. Army; Harold Johnston, U.S. Army; Edward Lapp, U.S. Army; Phillip Leveque, U.S. Army; Charles Marshall, U.S. Army; Jack Morse, U.S. Army; Vernon Charles Newton, U.S. Army; Charles B. Wilkins, U.S. Army; Robert Blomquist, U.S. Army Air Corps; Atlee Hawes, U.S. Army Air Corps; Donald Manwiller, U.S. Army Air Corps; Gustave Mohr, U.S. Army Air Corps; Robert Perrin, U.S. Army Air Corps; Harold Pickrell, U.S. Army Air Corps; Robert Schuberg, U.S. Army Air Corps; Norman Bailow, U.S. Army Signal Corps; John F. Kramer, Jr., U.S. Marine Corps; Robert Wing Eisenhart, U.S. Marine Corps; Ellery Marvel, U.S. Marine Corps; George Vukich, U.S. Marine Corps, William Adams, U.S. Merchant Marine; Charles Bergseng, U.S. Navy; William Copp, U.S. Navy; Robert Goss, U.S. Navy; Richard Graham, U.S. Navy; George Hamlin, U.S. Navy; James Holland, U.S. Navy; James Hurd, U.S. Navy; Robert Jurgens, U.S. Navy; Melvin Leak, U.S. Navy; Jack Marsicano, U.S. Navy; Clarence William McDonnell, U.S. Navy; Leo Miner, U.S. Navy; John Orloff, U.S. Navy; Richard M. Page, U.S. Navy; Harlie Peterson, U.S. Navy; Arthur Ragan, U.S. Navy; John Ervin Rice, U.S. Navy; Jack Royle, U.S. Navy; Benjamin C. Webb, U.S. Navy; Jack Yaggie, U.S. Navy; Carl Duyn, U.S. Navy; Lois Raftshol, U.S. Navy Wave.

These 50 heroes join more than 81,000 veterans from across the country who, since 2005, have journeyed from their home states to Washington, DC to reflect at the memorials built in honor of our Nation's veterans.

Mr. Speaker, each of us is humbled by the courage of these brave Americans who put themselves in harm's way for our country and way of life. As a nation, we can never fully repay the debt of gratitude owed to them for their honor, commitment, and sacrifice in defense of the freedoms we have today.

My colleagues, please join me in thanking these veterans and the volunteers of Honor Flight of Eastern Oregon and Portland, Oregon for their exemplary dedication and service to this great country. I especially want to recognize U.S. Army veteran Dick Tobiason and the Bend Heroes Foundation, whose tireless work will result in over 100 World War II veterans from Oregon visiting the memorials and U.S. Capitol.

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

HON. JON RUNYAN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. RUNYAN. Mr. Speaker, this week marks the 20th anniversary of National Men's Health Week (NMHW), which was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton in 1994. NMHW was legislation sponsored by Senator Bob Dole and Congressman Bill Richardson and is celebrated each year during the week that ends on Father's Day.

Recognizing that many health problems that affect men can be prevented, the week was designed to encourage men, boys and their families to develop positive health attitudes, engage in preventive behaviors, lead healthy lifestyles, and seek timely medical advice and care.

As co-chair of the Congressional Men's Health Caucus, I am proud to celebrate this week and help raise awareness of health issues that affect men, boys, and their families.

This week I participated in the Men's Health Network's health screenings that were being offered to Members and their staff. It is so important that we encourage men to be proactive about their health so that they can live longer and healthier lives. I applaud the Men's Health Network for helping to raise awareness right here on Capitol Hill.

As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of National Men's Health Week, we are reminded of how far our country has come in improving the health and well-being of men and boys, but there is still a lot of work left to be done.

Mr. Speaker, this week, along with the entire month of June (Men's Health Month), provides an excellent opportunity to focus on ways that we and our loved ones can live healthier, longer lives.

COMMENDING MALAYSIA & WELCOMING AMBASSADOR AWANG ADEK HUSSIN

HON. ENI F.H. FALEOMAVAEGA

OF AMERICAN SAMOA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, on April 26, 2014, President Barack Obama arrived in Malaysia—the first American President to visit since 1966. President Obama's visit to Malaysia is indicative of Prime Minister Najib Razak's leadership in building a nation which has become a pivotal player globally and regionally.

Malaysia's growing contributions to security and prosperity cannot be underestimated, and I am pleased that the United States and Malaysia have formalized a comprehensive partnership to include trade, defense and maritime cooperation.

With Malaysia set to chair ASEAN in 2015, the nation is set to propel itself further in the region. Malaysia has a good human rights record and a stable government and, given that ASEAN member countries are looking forward to Malaysia assuming the chair, Malaysia will be in a strong position to bring multilateral parties together to address very serious issues, including South China Sea disputes.

As a major U.S. trading partner, Malaysia is one of 12 nations negotiating the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), a potential trade agreement that is a high priority for the U.S. and Asia. Malaysia is a strong partner for U.S. security and economic initiatives. Malaysia works closely with the United States on counter-terrorism, participated in stabilization efforts in Afghanistan, and also supports United Nations' peacekeeping missions, many of which are led by America. Malaysia is also a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, a member of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation, and an advocate of moderation.

I am pleased to associate myself with Malaysia, and I am proud to welcome Malaysia's new Ambassador to the United States. Prime Minister Najib personally appointed Ambassador Awang Adek Hussin ahead of President Obama's visit to Malaysia to bolster the U.S.-Malaysia partnership. Progress stalled between the two nations in the absence of a Malaysian ambassador to the United States since August 2013, and particularly when former Ambassador Jamaluddin Jarjis completed his term. With the presence of Ambassador Awang to fill the void left by Ambassador Jamaluddin Jarjis, I have every confidence relations will improve significantly.

Ambassador Awang Adek Hussin holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business. He has served as Deputy Finance Minister, Senator, Assistant Governor, and in other notable positions. His first son was born in the United States. He is married to Madam Latifah Mohd Yusof and they have five children—Abd Aziz, Norjasara, Ahmad Azran, Nur Ain and Nur Nadira—and one grandchild, Lora. Lora accompanied her grandparents for the Ambassador Credentialing Ceremony on May 21, 2014 in the Oval Office where President Obama received the credentials from His Excellency Awang Adek bin Hussin. Three-year old Lora won the hearts of those in attendance with an impromptu dance and a playful back-and-forth exchange with President Obama in which she exclaimed "you rock" while the President kept saying "no, you rock."

Without a doubt, Ambassador Awang will carry forward the work of Prime Minister Najib and President Obama in pushing for greater economic and business ties with the United States, and I look forward to working closely with him as he does so. Once more, I welcome Ambassador Awang to the United States, and I commend Prime Minister Najib for his leadership in bringing about growth, development, investment—and a visit from the President of the United States.

HONORING MARY V. LAURO

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, Mary V. Lauro was a wonderful example of someone who had continually given back to her community over the course of her 87 years. Her commitment to her Bronx neighborhood was nothing short of inspirational.

Mary was born on May 4, 1926 and spent 50 years of her life living on Matilda Avenue in the Bronx. She graduated from Hunter College in 1947 and later went to work for Adhesive Products Corporation where she co-invented Monzini; a synthetic casting compound used by many museums in dinosaur skeletons as well as by sculptors and makeup artists.

During her employment, she also found time to be an influential and prominent figure in her community. She was the president of the Wakefield Taxpayers and Civic League (WTCL) for 25 years and wrote about the community in a weekly column for The Bronx News.

The WTCL is one of the oldest community organizations in the city and under the strong leadership of Ms. Lauro the organization took on a variety of pressing issues facing the community. These included fighting for more police officers—a 10 year battle to shut down a drug and prostitution infested OTB parlor—and the completion of a study that resulted in new zoning regulation for motels in residential areas.

Mary established strong relationships with neighboring communities and worked closely with the Woodlawn Taxpayers Association. In addition, Mary was a former member of Community Board 12, an active parishioner at Saint Francis of Rome, a member of the Wakefield Civilian Patrol and the Safe Way/Safe Home Program, and a participant in the 47th Precinct Community Council who held multiple positions throughout her membership.

Although we lost Mary last year to her battle with lung cancer, my wife and I will fondly remember Mary, as she was truly one of a kind. I remember her from the beginning of my career, over 40 years ago. She was a constant in the community—it was her whole life, and the community was like her own family. She lived a full life and will be sorely missed.

Last December the New York City Council voted to honor Mary Lauro by re-naming the street she used to live on for more than 50 years as "Mary V. Lauro Way."

Mary's dedication to improving the community and the lives of its inhabitants through her various public service efforts will hopefully inspire and remind residents of her legacy and I am proud to be a part of the celebration of a woman who had brought so much progress to a community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GARY C. PETERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. PETERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, June 9, 2014 I was not present for 3 votes. I wish to submit my intentions had I been present to vote.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 272, I would have voted "yea"; had I been present for rollcall No. 273, I would have voted "no"; had I been present for rollcall No. 274, I would have voted "no."

HONORING SHANNON MATHEW

HON. THEODORE E. DEUTCH

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Shannon Mathew, a graduating senior from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School who has received the Miami VA Healthcare System's James H. Parke Memorial Fund Youth Scholarship for her commitment to the veterans of South Florida. As a public servant and the son of a World War II veteran whose bravery motivated me to serve in Congress, I am so proud of Shannon's dedication to our community.

Shannon has devoted every summer of high school volunteering at the Physical Medicine and Rehab Unit of the William "Bill" Kling VA Clinic. In addition to providing encouragement, emotional support and a warm smile to all the veterans receiving treatment at the clinic, Shannon also assists administratively in keeping the physical therapy department running smoothly. Her supervisors describe her as spirited and helpful and veterans seeking treatment at the center have said that her presence encourages them to push through their pain. Shannon will begin her undergraduate career at the University of Florida this fall and plans to volunteer at the VA clinic in Gainesville in her spare time.

Representing a district home to veterans of every major conflict since World War II, I know very well the sacrifices that our military men and women and their families have made for our country and the importance of honoring them. Shannon Mathew's passion for serving our veterans is an inspiration to me and my district, and I have no doubt that she has a bright future in store.

RECOGNIZING MILITARY APPRECIATION NIGHT AT ROGER DEAN STADIUM

HON. PATRICK MURPHY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. MURPHY of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Military Appreciation Night at Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter, Florida. This event serves to honor and recognize all those who serve and who have served in our military to protect our great nation. The event will be held the day before Independence Day when we celebrate our nation's freedom, which we owe to the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces. The Stadium will hold a ceremony recognizing veterans on the field and present a special color guard for the occasion. This event allows us to demonstrate our respect for the men and women who serve in our military and all that they do for us and our country, and to honor those who sacrificed everything and lost their lives in the line of duty. This event allows us not only to celebrate our nation's freedom and independence but also to remember all those who don a uniform signifying the protection of our country's citizens by means of protecting our freedoms.

Over Memorial Day weekend, I was humbled to have had the opportunity to spend this most solemn holiday with our troops stationed in Afghanistan. A few weeks later, I was honored to greet local veterans at the World War II Memorial while they were on their Honor Flight to D.C. for the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. From active duty to WWII veterans, our country is forever indebted to the sacrifices they have made in service to our nation. From an unacceptable benefits claim backlog, mistreatment at the VA, and the disgraceful high rates of unemployment, homelessness, and suicide among our nation's heroes, it is clear that our nation has been failing these heroes once they return home. We must—and will—do better.

That is why I have been pleased to see bipartisan support for my efforts to help reduce the backlog and increase mental health and suicide prevention efforts for our veterans. I hope to see the same support for my recent proposals to reduce the appeals claims backlog and expand educational opportunities for veterans and military families. Our nation's heroes should not have to wait years to receive the benefits they have earned or have to fight for a job after fighting for our nation and these common sense proposals will help address these serious issues, reassuring our veterans, troops, and their families that we will be there for them as they have been there for our nation.

While we rededicate ourselves to better serving our veterans, troops, and military families, we must do so always remembering the ultimate sacrifice that many of their comrades, friends, and families made for our nation. This is one of the best ways we can pay tribute to our fallen heroes, including the 18th District's own Marine Corps Corporal Ian T. Zook of Port St. Lucie, Army Captain Adam P. Snyder of Fort Pierce, Marine Corps Lance Corporal Justin J. Wilson of Palm City, Army Specialist Jordan C. Schumann of Port St. Lucie, Navy Chief Petty Officer Aaron C. Vaughn of Stuart, and Army Sergeant Justin R. Johnson of Hobe Sound. All of these men were selfless heroes whose sacrifices will never be forgotten.

Mr. Speaker, as Military Appreciation Night is recognized at Roger Dean Stadium, I encourage my colleagues to join me and the residents of Jupiter, Florida in pausing to appreciate all that these brave men and women have done for our country by encouraging similar local events of recognition across the nation.

HONORING JOHN H. GLOSE, JR.

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize John H. Glose, Jr., who will be honored at the 6th annual Mount Mercy Academy 5K Race in Buffalo, New York for his admirable community involvement and dedication to Mount Mercy Academy.

John has played sports since grammar school, and pursued soccer, volleyball, and track through high school and college teams. After earning his bachelor's degree in 2005 and a master's degree in 2010, John translated his passion to volunteer coaching and cultivating the talents of young people.

John serves as a vital part of the Erie II BOCES Baker Road Alternative High School as a Physical Education and Health teacher. Here, John founded the Goodwill Transition Basketball League that gives the students at alternative high schools a chance to be a part of a school basketball team and learn the life lessons that team sports can teach them.

In addition to these commitments, John was the Head Coach of the varsity soccer, basketball and tennis teams at Mount Mercy Academy. At Mount Mercy, he conceived of and implemented the Wounded Warrior Game to raise awareness of the sacrifices of members of the armed forces. This endeavor has raised over $5,000 for the Wounded Warrior Project Foundation.

Among the teams lucky enough to receive his guidance are the travel soccer teams of the South Buffalo Soccer Club, Mount Mercy basketball teams' summer leagues, and Mount

Mercy basketball summer camp. John runs the Councilman Chris Scanlon Summer Basketball and Soccer Camps as a community outreach program for South Buffalo boys and girls.

John continues to be very active playing in adult basketball, soccer, kickball, football, and volleyball leagues; he is an avid runner and participates in many road races across WNY.

In addition to John's good works, I am proud to call this tireless educator, coach, mentor, and rising leader in the community my nephew. John is the son of my sister Trish Glose and her husband John Glose of West Seneca, New York.

John helps students and athletes develop their full potential in sports, in academics, and in life. He promotes excellence in all aspects of life, expecting sportsmanship, a strong work ethic, community service, and a commitment to education from his team members.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few moments to recognize the incredible and relentless work of John Glose, Jr. His dedication is inspiring, and I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing our deepest thanks for his efforts and accomplishments.

CONGRATULATING THE 2014 LEADERSHIP JACKSON SCHOLARS

HON. STEPHEN LEE FINCHER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate three high school seniors from the 8th District of Tennessee who have been named Leadership Jackson scholars as a result of their academic success and commitment to excellence.

I am so proud of Wyatt Woeltje, Jennifer Cantrell, and Leland Williamson who have been selected for this honor. I commend the three of them for being positive influences to young people across our state and our nation through their academia and honorable actions. Both Woeltje and Cantrell completed high school with a grade point average of 4.0.

The Leadership Jackson Alumni Association selected the three recipients based on academic achievement and community service. More than fifty students applied for the award, but only two were selected as recipients.

Once again, congratulations to Mr. Woeltje, Miss Cantrell, and Mr. Williamson for their outstanding achievements. I am very proud of all of you.

HONORING SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF NAPA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Soroptimist International of Napa, which on June 12, 2014, is holding its Diamond Anniversary to commemorate 75 years of service to the women and girls of Napa County.

''Soroptimist'' is a term derived from Latin that means ''best for women.'' As such, the mission of Soroptimist International is to improve the lives of women and girls through programs that aim to empower women and girls economically.

Soroptimist International of Napa has awarded $250,000 in grants to programs that support, protect and empower women and girls throughout Napa County over the past 20 years alone. Such programs include Napa Emergency Women's Services, Community Resources for Children, Girls on the Run, and the Mariposa Project. The collective impact of these programs has expanded opportunities and enriched the lives of countless women and girls in Napa County.

Mr. Speaker, for the past 75 years Soroptimist International of Napa has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of women and girls in Napa County. On behalf of a grateful community, I honor and thank Soroptimist International of Napa today for their important work.

HONORING RIVERDALE JEWISH CENTER

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, religious institutions often play a major role in our communities, by fostering spiritual development and offering solace to those in need. I am pleased to recognize Riverdale Jewish Center, one of the leading Modern Orthodox synagogues in my Congressional district as they celebrate their 60th Anniversary.

Riverdale Jewish Center was founded under the auspices of the Yeshiva University as its first suburban outreach. Founding Rabbi Jack Sable raised the money to build the Center, brick by brick, until it was completed.

Over 700 families have chosen Riverdale Jewish Center as their spiritual home. Steeped in tradition, Riverdale Jewish Center provides a welcome and supportive to all those who walk through their doors.

It serves as an anchor in the community in many important respects. Members inspire one another to deepen their understanding of the Jewish faith, and raise money to assist others as well as show their support for Israel.

Riverdale Jewish Center is fortunate to have Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblatt at the helm of the Shul, and I am fortunate to call him my friend. Rabbi Rosenblatt is an educator and community builder who has served as Senior Rabbi for nearly 30 years.

I congratulate the Riverdale Jewish Center for 60 years of devoted service to its members and the greater community. I have visited the Shul several times and have always felt inspired by its warmth and welcoming spirit. It has truly served as a guiding light in the Riverdale community.

RECOGNIZING FOSTER FARMS

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleagues, Mr. DENHAM and Mr. VALADAO to honor Foster Farms, a poultry company with 75 years of business experience in California's Central Valley. Foster Farms is not only a significant employer in the community but also a national leader in high quality poultry production.

Foster Farms was founded in 1939 by Max and Verda Foster, a couple who dreamed of selling better, safer farm products to consumers. By taking out a small loan the young couple invested in an 80-acre farm near Modesto, California, and their business quickly grew. The Fosters' commitment to raising high quality poultry led to their purchase of a feed mill in 1950. By 1959, Max and Verda added a processing plant in nearby Livingston.

The expansion of Foster Farms continued into the 1960s when the company consolidated its corporate headquarters in the small Central California town of Livingston, where it still resides today. Increasing demand for fresh poultry led Foster Farms to continue its expansion into southern California. By 1973, consumers across the state from Del Norte County to San Diego could access Foster Farms' high quality fresh poultry.

Today, Foster Farms' poultry and dairy operations employ more than 9,000 hardworking Americans. The company has sales in excess of $1 billion, and their profits have made possible significant financial contributions to agricultural education in the state of California. Foster Farms has given grants to UC Davis, Fresno State, and California Polytechnic State University. Foster Farms' efforts have been recognized throughout the state's educational system. The company's Chief Executive Officer, Ron Foster, was awarded the Distinguished Service Award for 15 years of leadership as an educational advisor, fundraiser, benefactor, and collaborator.

Since 2005, Foster Farms has consistently received the highest animal welfare ratings from various independent auditors. In 2013, Foster Farms became the first major poultry producer to be certified by the American Humane Association, which is the nation's first national humane organization for children and animals. The company continued to demonstrate their appreciation for high quality chicken through their ''Say No to Plumping'' campaign, which began in 2009. Thanks in large part to Foster Farms, plumping is no longer found in retailers on the West Coast.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great respect that I ask my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representatives to join Mr. DENHAM, Mr. VALADAO, and myself in recognizing Foster Farms for 75 successful years in business.

IN MEMORY OF COLONEL BERRY LIVINGSTON GAMBRELL

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, on June 8, 2014, the following obituary was published by The State of Columbia, South Carolina, honoring the memory of an American hero, Colonel Berry Livingston Gambrell.

Berry Livingston Gambrell LEXINGTON—A memorial service for Berry Livingston Gambrell, 63, will be held at 3:00 p.m. Tuesday, June 10, 2014 at Mt. Tabor Lutheran

Church with inurnment to follow in the church cemetery. The family will receive friends from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday, June 9, 2014 at Caughman-Harman Funeral Home, Lexington Chapel. Pastor Wade Roof and Colonel Steve Shugart will conduct the services. Honorary Pallbearers are members of the South Carolina Army National Guard and the Lands End Gang. Mr. Gambrell was born October 26, 1950 in Columbia, SC and passed away at his home surrounded by his loving family on Friday, June 6, 2014. He was a son of the late Berry Humphrey and Kathryn Livingston Gambrell. Berry was a graduate of The University of South Carolina with a BS in Business and Finance in 1973 and later received his MBA. He was a member of the SC Army National Guard for 34 years, retiring as a Colonel in 2004. Some of his distinguished honors include the Meritorious Service Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal and the Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal. He excelled in many areas throughout his career and was highly regarded for his accomplishments as the state's Recruiting and Retention Manager. He was a member of the Palmetto Military Academy Hall of Fame. Berry was an active member of Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church where he served on Church Council, drove the bus for the children's programs, and lovingly cooked with Chuck for his church family. He always looked forward to his fishing trips with his Lands End Gang. Berry always said he had three families: His family, church family and work family; however to him, his greatest accomplishment in life was his family. He is survived by his girls, including his loving bride of 39 years, Patsy Riddle Gambrell, their two daughters with husbands; Summer and Peter Insabella of Charleston, Whitney and Ricky Glass of West Columbia. He was a loving Gam-B to his granddaughters, Brooklyn Layne Glass and Everly Kathryn Insabella. He is also survived by his sister, Vicki Witt and brother, Greg Gambrell, both of North, SC. He was dearly beloved by his in-laws, including special nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his parents and his loving Uncle Floyd Livingston. The family has been deeply moved by the outpouring of love and support they have received during Berry's illness and death. The family would like to extend a special thanks to his loving sister-in-law, Lynn Cain, who nursed him throughout his illness and was among those by his side during his final hours. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Mt. Tabor Lutheran Church Capital Fund Family Life Center, 1000 B Avenue, West Columbia, SC 29169.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY OF MAYFIELD AND FAYE ROBERTSON

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to a very special occasion today—the 50th wedding anniversary of Mayfield and Faye Robertson.

Mayfield Robertson and Faye Bowling met on September 8, 1963. Mayfield Robertson, who had returned home from serving in Germany just two years earlier, was playing baseball that day, and Faye Bowling was in attendance.

On June 11, 1964, Mayfield and Faye got married. Together, Mayfield and Faye Robertson raised three children, Ryan, Lana, and Chad. They have six grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Mayfield is now retired from the Anniston Army Depot, and Faye is retired from Sewell Manufacturing. The Robertsons have been very blessed.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the Robertsons on 50 years together.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TED POE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 295 on H.R. 4745, I voted "yes." My recorded vote should reflect my intention to vote "no."

HONORING RICHARD OUYANG

HON. STEPHEN LEE FINCHER

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. FINCHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Richard Ouyang from Collierville, Tennessee on being selected to attend the 31st annual Research Science Institute sponsored by the Center for Excellence in Education as a result of his outstanding academic performance.

I am particularly proud of Mr. Ouyang, a senior in high school, for being chosen as one of fifty top academic achievers and also for representing the top one percent of high school students in the United States. I commend him for being a positive role model to young people across our great state and the country through his commitment to academic excellence.

The Center for Excellence in Education has a mission to nurture students into the best careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and to encourage international collaboration among leaders in the global community.

Once again, congratulations to Mr. Ouyang for his outstanding accomplishment. I am very proud of him and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

REMEMBERING ALBERT COVELLI

HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the career and exemplary life of Mr. Albert Covelli who passed away at 94-years-old at his home in Florida.

Mr. Covelli was a pillar in our community. He was a giant in the city of Warren, Ohio, and a great and generous benefactor of John F. Kennedy High School and his beloved church, Blessed Sacrament Parish. Mr. Covelli was involved in many other worthy endeavors known by few and for which he sought no credit.

Albert proudly served his nation during World War II and was decorated as a lieutenant. Mr. Covelli was the founder of Covelli Enterprises the nation's largest franchisee of Panera Bread and the 4th largest restaurant franchisee in the country. Before his acquisition of Panera franchises Covelli Enterprises had been the largest franchisee of McDonald's restaurants in the nation.

A dedicated philanthropist, Albert donated millions of dollars over the years to hundreds of charitable organizations. Albert helped organize the Ronald McDonald house and he was our community's largest local sponsor of the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots. He served on numerous boards of banks, hospitals, universities, and nonprofit organizations.

Albert lived the American dream and is a reminder that one man can make a difference. He started his business from scratch and built an empire. He is a magnificent example to the rest of us that hard work and determination can change a community for the better.

Albert is survived by his wife Josephine, his daughter, Annette Ford, his son, Sam Covelli, six grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. It gives me great pride to honor the life of Albert Covelli. I extend my most sincere condolences to Albert's entire family. His contributions to our community will not be forgotten. Northeast Ohio is a better place because of his service, his dedication, and his life.

CELEBRATING TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND THE TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITIES IT PROVIDES TO COUNTLESS CHILDREN IN THE COMMUNITY

HON. CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mrs. McMORRIS RODGERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to celebrate Trinity Catholic School in Spokane, Washington, and the new opportunities made available by the generosity of Dr. and Mrs. Edmund and Beatriz Schweitzer in honor of Mrs. Schweitzer's mother, Ms. Lupita Sandoval.

Trinity Catholic School has impacted the lives of countless children in the Spokane community, be it by fostering an environment rooted in academics, values, faith, and service, or by providing encouragement and structure to those boys and girls who need it most. Their mission to serve students and their families with a community rich in opportunity and possibility is moving. Ms. Sandoval shared Trinity Catholic's vision for education and determination leading the path to a better life, and is an inspiration to all of us. She educated herself and encouraged all four of her children to not only pursue an education, but absorb all that it had to offer.

Like Trinity Catholic School, Ms. Sandoval shared a great esteem for the limitless value of the power of knowledge, and knew meaningful education was the best investment for a better future. The endowment made possible by the Schweitzers will bring new opportunity to the boys and girls of Trinity Catholic School, and further enriches our community's own

quest for knowledge and for doing good by others.

Regardless of their own circumstances, the Trinity Catholic community, led by Father José Millan and Ms. Sandra L. Nokes, gives back to our community at times of Thanksgiving and Christmas year after year, and they have raised funds to help ensure our veterans could travel to Washington, DC to see the monuments dedicated to their sacrifice. This school teaches students not only to love thy neighbors, but to help them through difficult times. Through the generosity of the Schweitzers, and through Ms. Sandoval's belief in the power of education, Trinity Catholic will continue to thrive and change the lives of so many of our children.

Again, I applaud Father José, Ms. Nokes, and the entire Trinity Catholic community for their tireless dedication to bringing new opportunities to their students.

HONORING BISHOP C. NATHAN EDWERS

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, religious institutions often play a major role in inspiring communities to provide comfort for its most vulnerable residents and to serve all of mankind. Religious leaders such as Bishop C. Nathan Edwers do more than say prayers—they offer a path to practice one's faith in the community through social justice.

Bishop Edwers first answered God's call to serve when he was a just a teenager, preaching his first sermon at age 16. Bishop Edwers has followed in the footsteps of his father, showing an exemplary level of commitment to lead on the frontlines of social justice. There can be no greater honor than serving your community and Bishop Edwers and his family should be commended for the generations of service they have provided.

Beginning in 1983, Bishop Edwers served at Calvary UFW Baptist Church. Since this time Bishop Edwers has responded to the call for further responsibility within the church community. Bishop Edwers was elected by members of the Middle Atlantic Annual Conference of the Unified Freewill Baptist Church to follow his father's path and succeed him as Presiding Bishop. It is clear that Bishop Edwers is motivated to serve the community through the love and support of his family, a trait he no doubt learned from his father.

Religious service often goes hand in hand with social justice, and Bishop Edwers is no exception. Bishop Edwers has led his congregation in confronting and responding to social injustices within the community. He has opened the doors of his church to house numerous community organizations, such as the BOCES Alternative Special Needs School. The Bishop continues to serve as a member and former Vice President of the United Black Clergy of Westchester and is the current President of the Mount Vernon, New York Civil Service Commission. He is also a former member of the Mount Vernon Hospital Advisory Board.

Bishop Edwers has built a legacy of continual social engagement and support. He embraces the challenges within the Mount Vernon community and inspires others to embody their religious values through practice. So long as Bishop Edwers recognizes social injustices, we can be certain he will not rest until he has reconciled such inequalities. The Bishop even has his sights set on bridging the gaps between communities around the world, through developing global community oriented projects.

His devotion to his congregation and to the community is more than admirable; it is inspiring. I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognize Bishop Edwers' legacy and leadership. I want to thank the Bishop for all he has given in the name of service and I look forward to hearing about his continued success.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JIM F. KILCUR

HON. PATRICK MEEHAN

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, James F. Kilcur, 62, of West Chester, Pennsylvania died Wednesday, February 19, 2014. Born in Northeast Philadelphia, Jim was a proud Philadelphia native and pillar of his community.

Jim was a labor lawyer admired for his trusted counsel and respected by all for his ability to broker a deal. Jim stood out at Saul Ewing LLP, as partner, and at South Eastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority or SEPTA, as General Counsel for nearly a decade. Then, just as now, everyone knew Jim.

I had the pleasure to work with Jim during his time at SEPTA. Jim was a confident, intelligent man, and while tolerant of others positions, was steadfast in his own. He was decisive, and there was no waffling or ambiguity in his thinking.

Jim was chairman of the board of trustees of his alma mater, DeSales University in Center Valley and proud alumni of Cardinal Dougherty High School.

Last week I attended the Transportation Management Association of Chester County for their annual legislative breakfast. At breakfast, the Transportation Management Association of Chester County posthumously named Jim as Executive Director Emeritus. I cannot think of someone more deserving of this distinction than Jim and I join the Transportation Management Association of Chester County in honoring Jim's service.

I would like to commend Jim on his devoted service to the Catholic Church, impressive career history, and life of love and caring concern for his family especially his wife Maria Theresa; three sons, James Francis III, wife Kristen and granddaughter Annabel Katherine; Patrick and fiancé Julie; and Matthew.

Let me end by suggesting we remember that Jim left us too soon. But we know—because this was Jim—he left a lasting legacy. Jim's spirit, and example of a good life, well lived, helping others, will always be with us.

REGARDING THE MAGNUSON-STEVENS ACT REAUTHORIZATION

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today during Capitol Hill Ocean Week to highlight the importance of oceans to our country and to my state of California.

Important industries in California rely on a healthy ocean ecosystem. In California alone, more than 145,000 jobs are supported by the commercial and recreational fishing industry, which generate more than $25 billion in sales annually.

Proper management is critical to ensuring the survival and success of these industries, and the Magnuson-Stevens Act plays an important role in conserving and managing our fishery resources.

Unfortunately, the current legislation to reauthorize the Magnuson-Stevens Act, H.R. 4742, rolls back key conservation provisions that have been working to increase fish populations and improve our coastal communities. Further, this bill does nothing to address the emerging challenges facing our fisheries.

I join my colleagues in urging the House to pursue a reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act that is based on the best available science, builds on the progress that we have already made, and will preserve the health of our oceans and fisheries for years to come.

RECOGNIZING THE HONOREES OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION'S ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON

HON. MICHAEL H. MICHAUD

OF MAINE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the honorees of the Small Business Administration's Annual Awards Luncheon. Each year, the Maine District Office of the Small Business Administration recognizes businesses and business leaders who make significant contributions to the business environment and economy of our region.

This year's award recipients include: Alan Spear and Mary Allen Lindeman of Coffee By Design, recipients of the Maine Small Business Persons of the Year Award; Brian and Kimberly Plavnick of G-Force Laser Tag Corp., recipients of the Maine Micro-Enterprise of the Year Award; Cyndi Price of LooHoo LLC, the Home-Based Small Business Champion for Maine and New England; Mitch and Ray DeBlois of DeBlois Electric, Inc., recipients of the Jeffrey Butland Award; Terry Trickey of Bangor Savings Bank, the Financial Services Champion; Peter McVety of McVety's Hearth and Home, the Maine Veteran Small Business Champion; Amy Bouchard of Isamax Snacks, Inc., the Maine Woman in Business Champion; Joshua Davis and Bruno Tropeano of Gelato Fiasco, the Young Entrepreneurs of the Year for Maine and New England; and Eric J. Smith of EJ Drywall, the Region 1 Prime Contractor of the Year.

The following businesses are also recognized for receiving District Director Awards for

Fiscal Year 2013: Bangor Savings Bank, Overall Top Performing SBA lender; Katahdin Trust Company, Top 7(a) Dollar Volume Lender; People's United Bank, Top Performing 3rd Party Lender; Granite State Economic Development Corp., Top Performing 504 Lender; NorState Federal Credit Union, Top Performing Credit Union; CEI, Top Performing Microlender; and Eastern Maine Development Corp., Top Community Advantage Lender.

These recipients are among the best that Maine and New England have to offer. Through their leadership and incredible commitment to their communities, Maine and New England are better places in which to live and do business.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating the honorees of the Small Business Administration's Annual Awards Luncheon on their outstanding service and achievement.

RECOGNIZING DIA DE PORTUGAL

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today along with my colleagues Mr. NUNES of California, Mr. CICILLINE of Rhode Island, Mr. VALADAO of California, Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas, Ms. LOFGREN of California, and Mr. HONDA of California to recognize Dia de Portugal. On this day, we celebrate the heritage of the Portuguese people and underscore the importance of the strong relationship between the United States and Portugal.

From California to Massachusetts and Rhode Island to Hawaii, Portuguese Americans have made positive contributions to our communities for many years. According to the U.S. Census, more than one million individuals living in the United States are of Portuguese ancestry. These vibrant Portuguese communities are a reflection of the ties that bind our two nations.

Since the founding of our nation, the United States has had few allies as reliable as Portugal, which was among the first countries to recognize the United States following the Revolutionary War. The oldest continuously operating U.S. Consulate in the world is located in Ponta Delgada on the island of Sao Miguel in the Azores. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry recently said, "The strong partnership between our two countries is more vital than ever." We wholeheartedly agree.

Mr. Speaker, on this Dia de Portugal, we reaffirm our commitment to strengthening the economic, cultural, and security relationship between Portugal and the United States, and we join with the people of Portugal and our Portuguese American constituents in wishing everyone a joyous Dia de Portugal.

INTRODUCTION OF THE "BUSINESS SUPPLY CHAIN TRANSPARENCY ON TRAFFICKING AND SLAVERY ACT OF 2014"

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to introduce bipartisan legislation along with my colleagues on the Human Trafficking Caucus, Rep. CHRIS SMITH.

Very few Americans are aware that many of the goods they use everyday are tainted by human trafficking or the worst forms of child labor. According to the U.S. Department of Labor's 2012 List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, 134 goods from 74 countries were made by forced and child labor. This bill will increase transparency in supply chains in order to remove slavery from business operations and products.

The Business Supply Chain Transparency on Trafficking and Slavery Act doesn't tell businesses what to do, but rather to tell consumers what they are doing to end human slavery.

This bill will give consumers the tools they need to know where and how their goods are being made. While there are good actors, there are businesses operating in parts of the world that rely on enslaved humans to produce their products. We believe American consumers have a right to know who these companies are.

This legislation creates a market-based solution rather than relying on prescriptive action by the federal government. Large global companies already reporting to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) simply need to include what they are doing to rid their supply chains of human slavery. This information will then be posted on the company, SEC, and Department of Labor (DOL) websites for easy public access. Consumers will be able to research a company and determine their purchasing decisions based on the information provided. Very simply, this bill creates competition to improve practices to end slavery by providing the public with information about what companies are doing to address slavery.

Human trafficking is the 21st century slavery. It is estimated that over 20 million people are working in some form of forced labor worldwide. We must use every tool available to help men, women, and children around the world who fall victim to the scourge of human trafficking, forced labor, and the worst forms of child labor.

HONORING MARTI MICHAEL

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, the Riverdale YM-YWHA is fortunate to have had Marti Michael at its helm. Deeply rooted in Jewish culture, the Riverdale Y is open to all within the community and promotes an environment of inclusion and diversity.

Marti's involvement with the Riverdale Y started long before she became its Executive Director and even before the first bricks were laid. While working at UJA-Federation in the early 1980s, Marti worked with the Riverdale community to raise the necessary capital to build the Y.

Marti has worked for the Riverdale Y for 28 years, and since taking the helm as Executive Director, she oversees a thriving community center that offers athletic, artistic and enrichment for children, adults and seniors. The Riverdale Y also offers after-school programs at PS24 and Kinneret, and Marti wants to expand that scope even farther.

The Riverdale Rising Stars' Broadway Gala will honor Marti for all that she has done at the Riverdale Y, particularly her dedication to the performing arts. There is something magical about the theater. Audiences become enraptured by the performances as actors make their characters come to life.

Children and teens who participate in theater programs through the Riverdale Y grow too. Marti enjoys watching once-shy children and timid teens develop greater confidence in themselves. There is indeed magic in the theater and all that Marti does to encourage our youth to flourish.

Her devotion to the Riverdale Y and the greater community is inspiring. I am pleased to have the opportunity to recognize Marti Michael's leadership and achievements. We are saddened that she is leaving but I wanted this opportunity to thank her for all that she has done and continues to do in our beloved community.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday, June 10th, 2014, I mistakenly voted "no" on rollcall vote No. 277. I meant to vote "aye" on the Nadler Amendment to H.R. 4745 to increase funding for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program (HOPWA) by $29.1 million. HOPWA is a program that I have supported throughout my tenure in Congress. HOPWA provides much needed housing assistance to low-income persons with HIV/AIDS in my Congressional District and throughout the Country. I will continue to work with my colleagues as this bill moves through the Senate and onto the Conference process to advocate for increased funding for HOPWA.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE RETIREMENT OF MR. BYRON PIGG

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask for the House's attention today to recognize Byron Pigg who is retiring from the position of Public Safety Director with the East Alabama Water, Sewer and Fire Protection District.

Mr. Pigg is retiring after 33 years and 10 months of service. Prior to his service as a full-time employee, Byron served as a volunteer firefighter. He served as fire chief for 25 years of his full-time employment.

During his tenure as fire chief, Byron worked to significantly upgrade the fire department. In 2005, he oversaw the construction of a new headquarters fire station. He received over $1 million in grant money to help improve the fire department. He also has served in numerous local, regional and statewide organizations.

Mr. Speaker, we join his family and friends in celebrating Mr. Pigg's retirement and wish him the very best.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOE WILSON

OF SOUTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I submit the following remarks regarding my absence from votes which occurred on June 9, 2014 and June 10, 2014 as I participated in a primary election on June 10th. Listed below is how I would have voted had been present.

Roll Number 272—H.R. 4412—To authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes—''aye.''

Roll Number 273—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Broun of Georgia Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 274—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Chabot of Ohio Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 276—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Gohmert of Texas Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 277—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Nadler of New York Amendment—''nay.''

Roll Number 278—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Capito of West Virginia Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 279—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Broun of Georgia First Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 280—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Broun of Georgia Second Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 281—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Broun of Georgia Third Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 282—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Hartzler of Missouri Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 283—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Daines of Montana Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 284—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Gosar of Arizona First Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 285—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Gosar of Arizona Second Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 286—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Fleming of Louisiana Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 287—H.R. 4810—To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts for the provision of hospital care and medical services at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities for Department of Veterans Affairs patients with extended waiting times for appointments at Department facilities and for other purposes—''aye.''

Roll Number 288—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Denham of California Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 289—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Blackburn of Tennessee Amendment No. 1—''aye.''

Roll Number 290—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Schock of Illinois Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 291—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Gosar of Arizona First Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 292—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Gosar of Arizona Second Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 293—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Schiff of California Amendment—''nay.''

Roll Number 294—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Sessions of Texas Amendment—''aye.''

Roll Number 295—H.R. 4745 on agreeing to the Gingrey of Georgia Amendment No. 29—''aye.''

Roll Number 296—H.R. 4745 on Motion to Recommit with Instructions—''nay.''

Roll Number 297—H.R. 4745—Making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes—''aye.''

HONORING AL AND DEE DELBELLO

HON. ELIOT L. ENGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, countless communities across our great nation thrive thanks in part to the selfless service and dedicated commitment of individuals like Al and Dee DelBello. The DelBellos epitomize the very meaning of the words ''public service.''

I have known Al and Dee for many years. Al is a distinguished public servant who represented our community with dignity and integrity. His record of hard work and commitment to ensuring that government serves all is truly remarkable; he's a leader whom I have strived to emulate.

Al started serving our country in the National Guard after graduating from Fordham Law School. He returned to New York once he completed his service, and later ran for City Council in Yonkers. His sense of civic duty did not end there. He was elected as Mayor of Yonkers in 1970, served as the Westchester County Executive for three consecutive terms, and then became Lieutenant Governor in 1982.

While serving in public office, Al worked together with those on both sides of the aisle to the benefit of his constituents. Al was fundamental in building a medical center in Westchester, creating the first State Office for the Disabled and an Office for Women, and establishing a countywide bus system, among other things. Al continues to serve his fellow New Yorkers as the Chairman Emeritus of the Westchester County Association.

Dee DelBello joins her husband in being an exemplary public servant, dedicating her life to lend a helping hand. Dee received her Master's Degree from Seton Hall University, and while her husband was in office, she advanced the cultural aspects of Westchester County through her amazing work advocating for the arts.

Dee impressively served as Commissioner of the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct for 17 years, and continuously breaks the glass ceiling for women with her service on the advisory board of The Women's Business Development Center, her membership in The National Association for Female Executives, and as a co-founder of Women in Communications.

Al and Dee DelBello have both won numerous awards throughout the years for their immense work on behalf of all New Yorkers, and I want to continue recognizing them by expressing my gratitude and appreciation for all of the contributions they have made.

HONORING ANDY AND BETTY BECKSTOFFER

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Andy and Betty Beckstoffer, the recipients of the Land Trust of Napa County's Acre by Acre Award. Andy and Betty have dedicated their lives to the preservation and conservation of land in Napa County, which is both honorable and deserving of recognition.

Andy is the founder and owner of Beckstoffer Vineyards and its subsidiaries, which own approximately 1,000 acres of vineyard land in Napa County, 1,000 acres in Mendocino County, and 1,000 acres in Lake County. Andy and Betty have permanently preserved over 400 acres of Napa County land by placing nine separate properties in conservation easements with the Land Trust. From the 44-acre Carneros Creek and Las Amigas conservation easements, which protect rural viewshed and watershed areas in the Carneros area, to 181 acres of their Georges III vineyard in prime Agricultural Preserve area, the Beckstoffers have provided us with outstanding examples of the use of conservation easements to preserve the natural values of land. Andy once said of his work, ''we started as farmers, then became grape growers, and now are stewards of the land.''

Andy and Betty Beckstoffer are the recipients of numerous awards for their grapegrowing, including Grower of the Year from Napa Valley Grapegrowers and Agriculturist of the Year from the Napa County Farm Bureau. They were also awarded the Award for Wine Industry Leadership by the U.S. Congressional Wine Caucus, and the Wine Award from Copia, the American Center for Food, Wine and the Arts. Andy and Betty Beckstoffer have five children together, David, Dana, Tuck, Kristin, and Steven.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we honor and thank Andy and Betty Beckstoffer for their commitment to our community and to preserving our beautiful lands. Their unyielding dedication to philanthropy and land conservation is inspirational and a testament that two people can make a significant difference in our community.

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

SPEECH OF

HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 10, 2014

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4745) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes:

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition of the proposed cuts to the Transportation Infrastructure

Generating Economic Recovery Program (TIGER) and the policy rider to TIGER included in the Fiscal Year 2015 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) appropriations bill.

One of the primary objectives of TIGER is to invest in transportation projects that better connect communities to centers of employment, education, and services and that hold promise to stimulate long-term job growth, especially in economically distressed areas. TIGER has been traditionally open to all governmental entities from cities and counties to port and rail authorities and universities.

The House FY15 THUD bill includes $100 million for TIGER grants. This is an 80% decrease from current funding levels. In the current (FY14) grant application round, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has received nearly 800 applications requesting a total of $9.5 billion, with only $600 million to invest—that's a request of more than 15 times what can be awarded.

The House FY15 THUD bill also includes a worrisome policy rider, with language that would restrict TIGER eligibility to roads/highways, bridges, freight rail and ports. This would be a major change to the grant program, which has traditionally attracted a wide variety of innovative projects including public transportation and passenger rail, bicycle and pedestrian projects.

These policy riders and severe cuts to TIGER are troubling. From the Durfee Avenue rail-highway grade separation project in Pico Rivera, to Artesia's proposal to build a public parking structure and expand sidewalks in the city's commercial district, to the City of Cerritos' request to facilitate the reconstruction of the Del Amo Boulevard Bridge, which is outdated and presents significant capacity, safety and accessibility problems. Substantial funding for TIGER grants is crucial for my District.

I ask that my colleagues join me in opposing the 80% cuts to TIGER grants and language restricting TIGER eligibility in the House FY15 THUD bill. Providing funding for these and other TIGER projects are about the safety, economic development, and services that communities deserve.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $17,555,165,805,212.20. We've added $6,928,288,756,299.20 to our debt in 5 years. This is over $6.9 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO RABBI SANDY EISENBERG SASSO FOR 36 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE INDIANAPOLIS COMMUNITY

HON. SUSAN W. BROOKS

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Rabbi Sandy Sasso for her 36 years of service to the Indianapolis community. The people of the Fifth Congressional District and the entire City of Indianapolis are forever grateful for Rabbi Sasso's nearly 4 decades of community leadership and spiritual guidance.

Over the years, Rabbi Sasso's leadership has been a critical part of so many people's religious journey. Her dedication in guiding Congregation Beth-El Zedeck is a model for community and religious leaders everywhere. As the first female to be ordained from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, Rabbi Sasso has been a trailblazer for women of faith all over the country. Her journey proves to young women everywhere that through hard work and discipline, their dreams can become reality.

Rabbi Sasso's path to becoming an accomplished theologian wasn't without critics. Many thought that the traditional role of men in the rabbinate should be upheld. However, Rabbi Sasso never let the naysayers deter her from fulfilling a lifelong dream. After completing both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Temple University, she continued to relentlessly pursue her goal, eventually becoming just the second female ever to be ordained in the United States.

However, Rabbi Sasso's accomplishments are not just limited to her admirable work in the synagogue. She is also a mother, an award-winning children's book author, a major organizer for the Indianapolis Spirit and Place Festival, and so much more. While her time as the leader of Beth-El Zedeck may be coming to a close, I am certain that her tenure as a pillar in the Indianapolis community is nowhere near its end.

On behalf of the grateful constituents of Indiana's Fifth Congressional District, I congratulate Rabbi Sasso on the occasion of her retirement. Thank you, Rabbi, for your decades of dedicated leadership with Beth-El Zedeck. Best wishes to you as you pursue new challenges in the many bright years ahead of you.

HONORING TRAVIS TAYLOR FOR HIS ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE LOGGING INDUSTRY

HON. VANCE M. McALLISTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. McALLISTER. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to honor Travis Taylor of Winn Parish for his numerous accomplishments and contribution to the logging industry.

Mr. Taylor, a Louisiana native, became a successful logging contractor after earning a degree in forestry from Louisiana Tech University.

Mr. Taylor's devotion of time and effort to the logging industry is second to none having been recognized at the national level for his progressive influence in the United States Forest Service. Aside from being the founder of Southern Loggers Cooperative and Wood Products Development Foundation, Travis has also been recognized as "Louisiana Logger of the Year," served as President of the Louisiana Logging Council, and served on the board of directors of The Timbermen's Self-Insurance Fund.

Mr. Taylor exemplifies a strong character of leadership, hard work and dedication. He has earned the respect and admiration of everyone he has met along his journey. I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Mr. Taylor and his years of commitment and achievements.

IN MEMORY OF DON DAVIS

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 11, 2014

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a trailblazer in business, music, and philanthropy from the great City of Detroit: Mr. Don Davis.

Mr. Davis—who passed away on Thursday, June 5—at the age of 75, was the CEO of the First Independence Bank as well as a Grammy-winning record producer and a celebrated musician. He brought both joy and prosperity to his community and to all those around him.

Mr. Davis started his career as a session guitarist for Motown in the 1960's and eventually rose to become owner of the legendary studio known as United Sound. While his musical career spanned numerous studios and labels, Mr. Davis's musical legacy will forever be associated with Motown. This musical legacy includes guitar work in Barrett Strong's "Money (That's What I Want)" and Mary Wells' "Bye Bye Baby". Since its founding, Motown has been a cultural cornerstone of the United States, and it has been an honor to call Mr. Davis—one of Motown's original musicians—a friend.

As a Detroiter and a public servant, I have admired Mr. Davis not only for his music but also for his trailblazing accomplishments in business and philanthropy. After retiring from his career as a professional guitarist in 1970, he founded what would become Michigan's only African-American owned and operated commercial bank: the First Independence Bank. Over time, this institution would rise to become the 12th largest African-American owned bank in the nation, holding nearly 5 percent of all assets in the nation's African-American banking community.

Mr. Davis never saw business as a means to advance personal interests. Instead, he led his business to maximize the expansion of economic opportunity for underserved people. He was a fervent believer in bringing entrepreneurial prospects and quality jobs to people in desperate need. A renaissance man, Mr. Davis brought the passion he displayed as a Motown musical artist to the fields of finance and economic development.

I am deeply saddened to learn of the death of my dear friend, Mr. Don Davis. He will live

on through his exceptional music and his extraordinary investments in the Detroit community.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, June 12, 2014 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JUNE 17

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
To hold hearings to examine conflicts of interest, investor loss of confidence, and high speed trading in the United States stock markets.
SH–216

10 a.m.
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
To hold hearings to examine creating jobs through bio based manufacturing.
SR–328A

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Julian Castro, of Texas, to be Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and Laura S. Wertheimer, of the District of Columbia, to be Inspector General of the Federal Housing Finance Agency.
SD–538

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, and Insurance
To hold hearings to examine protecting consumers from false and deceptive advertising of weight-loss products.
SR–253

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To receive a closed briefing on the major threats facing Navy forces and the current and projected capabilities of the Navy to meet those threats.
SVC–217

3 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Jonathan Nicholas Stivers, of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, and Joan A. Polaschik, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Department of State.
SD–419

4 p.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs
Business meeting to markup proposed legislation making appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Agencies.
SD–138

JUNE 18

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Defense
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Department of Defense.
SD–192

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment
To hold hearings to examine high frequency trading's impact on the economy.
SD–538

Committee on Environment and Public Works
Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety
To hold hearings to examine climate change, focusing on the need to act now.
SD–406

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine the intelligence community, focusing on keeping watch over its contractor workforce; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session.
SD–342

2 p.m.
Joint Economic Committee
To hold hearings to examine empowerment in the workplace.
SH–216

2:15 p.m.
Committee on Foreign Relations
To hold hearings to examine United States policy in Afghanistan and the regional implications of the 2014 transition.
SD–419

Special Committee on Aging
To hold hearings to examine the reduction in face-to-face services at the Social Security Administration.
SD–562

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold hearings to examine e-cigarette marketing and potential consequences for youth.
SR–253

Committee on Indian Affairs
To hold hearings to examine S. 1948, 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. 1998, to amend the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act to reserve funds for American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Tribal College or University adult education and literacy, and S. 2299, to amend the Native American Programs Act of 1974 to reauthorize a provision to ensure the survival and continuing vitality of Native American languages.
SD–628

3 p.m.
Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship
To hold hearings to examine growing small business exports, growing United States Jobs.
SR–428A

JUNE 19

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Laura Junor, of Virginia, to be a Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Personnel and Readiness, Gordon O. Tanner, of Alabama, to be General Counsel of the Department of the Air Force, Debra S. Wada, of Hawaii, to be Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, and Miranda A. A. Ballentine, of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment, and Energy, all of the Department of Defense, and Monica C. Regalbuto, of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management.
SH–216

JUNE 25

2:15 p.m.
Special Committee on Aging
To hold hearings to examine brain injuries and diseases of aging.
SD–562

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
To receive a closed briefing on United States nuclear deterrence policy.
SVC–217

Committee on Indian Affairs
To hold an oversight hearing to examine economic development, focusing on encouraging investment in Indian country.
SD–628

Daily Digest

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate passed H.R. 3230, Pay Our Guard and Reserve Act, as amended. (The legislative vehicle entitled, "Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act"

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S3553–S3620

Measures Introduced: Six bills and five resolutions were introduced, as follows: S. 2461–2466, S. Res. 469–472, and S. Con. Res. 37. **Page S3604**

Measures Passed:

Authorizing Use of the Capitol Rotunda: Senate agreed to S. Con. Res. 37, authorizing the use of the rotunda of the United States Capitol in commemoration of the Shimon Peres Congressional Gold Medal ceremony. **Page S3557**

Pay Our Guard and Reserve Act: By 93 yeas to 3 nays (Vote No. 187), Senate passed H.R. 3230, to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, after striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof, the text of S. 2450, Senate companion measure, as amended, after taking action on the following amendment and motion proposed thereto: **Pages S3564–93**

Adopted:

Tester Amendment No. 3237, to amend the title. **Page S3593**

During consideration of this measure today, the Senate also took the following action:

By 75 yeas to 19 nays (Vote No. 186), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to waive all applicable sections of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, and waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions with respect to H.R. 3230, as amended by S. 2450 (listed above). Subsequently, the point of order that the emergency designation provision contained in Section 802(b) of H.R. 3230, as amended by S. 2450, pursuant to Section 403(e)(1) of S. Con. Res. 13, Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Resolution, fell. **Pages S3591, S3592–93**

Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014: Senate passed S. 1681, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2014 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, after agreeing to the following amendment proposed thereto: **Page S3620**

Reid (for Feinstein/Chambliss) Amendment No. 3238, in the nature of a substitute. **Page S3620**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that S. Res. 470, be placed on the calendar and upon the enactment into law of the language of Title IV of S. 1681, as amended, Senate proceed to the consideration of the resolution; that the resolution be agreed to. **Page S3620**

Honoring former President George H.W. Bush and Mrs. Barbara Bush: Senate agreed to S. Res. 471, honoring former President George H.W. Bush on the occasion of his 90th birthday and Barbara Bush on the occasion of her 89th birthday and extending the best wishes of the Senate to former President Bush and Mrs. Bush. **Page S3620**

Honoring Dr. James Schlesinger: Senate agreed to S. Res. 472, honoring Dr. James Schlesinger, former Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Energy, and Director of Central Intelligence. **Page S3620**

Measures Considered:

Federal Student Loans: Senate continued consideration of the motion to proceed to consideration of S. 2432, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans. **Pages S3553–64**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 56 yeas to 38 nays (Vote No. 185), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, not having voted in the affirmative, Senate rejected the motion to close further debate on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill. **Page S3557**

Senator Reid entered a motion to reconsider the vote by which cloture was not invoked on the motion to proceed to consideration of the bill.

Page S3557

Nix-Hines, McCord, Chu, and Batta Nominations—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that at 11:30 a.m., on Thursday, June 12, 2014, Senate begin consideration of the nomination of Crystal Nix-Hines, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, under the previous order of Monday, June 9, 2014; that following disposition of the nomination, Senate begin consideration of and vote on confirmation of the nominations of Michael J. McCord, of Ohio, to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), R. Jane Chu, of Missouri, to be Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts, and Todd A. Batta, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture; and that no further motions be in order to the nominations. **Page S3620**

Messages from the House: **Pages S3603–04**

Measures Referred: **Page S3604**

Measures Placed on the Calendar: **Page S3604**

Executive Communications: **Page S3604**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S3604–05**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S3605–08**

Additional Statements: **Pages S3601–03**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S3608–19**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Pages S3619–20**

Record Votes: Three record votes were taken today. (Total—187) **Pages S3557, S3592–93**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:15 a.m. and adjourned at 7:01 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 12, 2014. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S3620.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Committee on Appropriations: On Tuesday, June 10, 2014, Subcommittee on Legislative Branch approved for full committee consideration H.R. 4487, making appropriations for the Legislative Branch for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, with an amendment.

APPROPRIATIONS: MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2015 for the Missile Defense Agency, after receiving testimony from Vice Admiral James D. Syring, USN, Director, Missile Defense Agency, Department of Defense.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Shaun L.S. Donovan, of New York, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, after the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Victor M. Mendez, of Arizona, to be Deputy Secretary, and Peter M. Rogoff, of Virginia, to be Under Secretary for Policy, both of the Department of Transportation, Bruce H. Andrews, of New York, to be Deputy Secretary, who was introduced by Senator Rockefeller, and Marcus Dwayne Jadotte, of Florida, to be Assistant Secretary for Industry and Analysis, International Trade Administration, who was introduced by Senator Nelson, both of the Department of Commerce, and Robert S. Adler, of the District of Columbia, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Stuart E. Jones, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq, Robert Stephen Beecroft, of California, to be Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt, Dana Shell Smith, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the State of Qatar, James D. Nealon, of New Hampshire, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Honduras, and Gentry O. Smith, of North Carolina, to be Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, and to have the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service, all of the Department of State, after the

nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Shaun L.S. Donovan, of New York, to be Director of the Office of Management and Budget, after the nominee, who was introduced by Senators Landrieu and Collins, testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

BUSINESS MEETING

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee ordered favorably reported the following business items:

S. 919, to amend the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act to provide further self-governance by Indian tribes, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 1447, to make technical corrections to certain Native American water rights settlements in the State of New Mexico, with amendments;

S. 1574, to amend the Indian Employment, Training and Related Services Demonstration Act of 1992 to facilitate the ability of Indian tribes to integrate the employment, training, and related services from diverse Federal sources, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute;

S. 2041, to repeal the Act of May 31, 1918, with an amendment; and

S. 2188, to amend the Act of June 18, 1934, to reaffirm the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for Indian tribes, with an amendment.

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR AMERICAN INDIAN STUDENTS

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine Indian education, focusing on higher education for American Indian students, after receiving testimony from Jamienne Studley, Deputy Under Secretary of Education; Billie Jo Kipp, Blackfeet Community College, Browning, Montana, on behalf of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium; Cheryl Crazy Bull, American Indian College Fund, Denver, Colorado; Thomas Purce, The Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington; and Melvin Monette, American Indian Graduate Center, Inc., Albuquerque, New Mexico.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY OVERSIGHT

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Department of Homeland Security, after receiving testimony from Jeh Charles Johnson, Secretary of Homeland Security.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 15 public bills, H.R. 4834–4848; and 4 resolutions, H. Con. Res. 101; and H. Res. 619–621, were introduced. **Pages H5318–19**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H5319–20**

Reports Filed: There were no reports filed today.

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Smith (MO) to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H5251**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:43 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H5255**

Chaplain: The prayer was offered by the guest chaplain, Rabbi Eytan Hammerman, Temple Beth Shalom, Mahopac, New York. **Page H5256**

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2015: The House began consideration of H.R. 4800, making appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015. Further proceedings were postponed. **Pages H5265–95, H5296–H5312**

Agreed to:

Lee amendment that increases funding, by offset, for Child Nutrition Programs by $8,150,000 for the establishment, maintenance, or expansion of the school breakfast program; **Pages H5287–88**

Thompson (CA) amendment that increases funding, by offset, for the Office of the Inspector General by $1,000,000 for meat safety inspections; **Page H5288**

Hinojosa amendment that increases funding, by offset, for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service by $2,500,000 for the eradication of specialty crop pests; **Page H5289**

Gosar amendment that increases funding, by offset, for the Office of the Inspector General by $220,000; **Pages H5289–90**

Gosar amendment that reduces funding for the Office of the General Counsel by $2,181,000 and applies the savings to the spending reduction account; **Pages H5290–91**

Cohen amendment that increases funding, by offset, for Child Nutrition Programs by $3,000,000 for the summer food service program; **Pages H5291–92**

Schiff amendment that redirects $1,000,000 in funding within the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for the study of captive marine mammals; **Page H5294**

Gardner amendment that increases funding, by offset, for Distance Learning, Telemedicine, and Broadband Program by $3,461,000 for telemedicine and distance learning services in rural areas; **Page H5296**

McNerney amendment that redirects $11,000,000 in funding within the Farm Service Agency; **Pages H5297–98**

Speier amendment that redirects $1,000,000 in funding within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program to expand eligibility for veterans; and **Page H5304**

Royce amendment (No. 7 printed in the Congressional Record of June 10, 2014) that reduces funding for the Agricultural Marketing Service by $15,500,000 and increases funding for the Foreign Agricultural Service by $10,000,000 (by a recorded vote of 223 ayes to 198 noes, Roll No. 302). **Pages H5294–95, H5308–09**

Rejected:

Broun (GA) amendment that sought to reduce each Under Secretary account by $5,000 and apply the $40,000 in savings to the spending reduction account (by a recorded vote of 178 ayes to 243 noes, Roll No. 300); **Pages H5290, H5307–08**

Broun (GA) amendment that sought to reduce funding for the Economic Research Service by $7,726,000 and apply the savings to the spending reduction account (by a recorded vote of 130 ayes to 290 noes, Roll No. 301); **Pages H5292–93, H5308**

Grayson amendment that sought to increase funding, by offset, for the Food Safety and Inspection Service by $5,500,000 (by a recorded vote of 150 ayes to 272 noes, Roll No. 303); **Pages H5296–97, H5309–10**

Garamendi amendment that sought to allocate $50,000,000 within the Farm Service Agency for the emergency conservation program under the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978 (by a recorded vote of 148 ayes to 276 noes, Roll No. 304); **Pages H5298, H5310**

Duncan (TN) amendment that sought to reduce funding for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program by $10,000,000 and apply the savings to the spending reduction account (by a recorded vote of 119 ayes to 303 noes, Roll No. 305); **Pages H5300–01, H5310–11**

Broun (GA) amendment that sought to eliminate funding for the Watershed Rehabilitation Program and apply the $25,000,000 in savings to the spending reduction account (by a recorded vote of 62 ayes to 358 noes, Roll No. 306); and **Pages H5299–H5300, H5311–12**

DeLauro amendment that sought to reduce funding for the Commodity Futures Trading Commission for information technology by $17,578,000 (by a recorded vote of 194 ayes to 227 noes, Roll No. 307). **Pages H5305–07, H5312**

Withdrawn:

Gallego amendment that was offered and subsequently withdrawn that would have eliminated $3,869,000 in funding for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Congressional Relations. **Pages H5288–89**

H. Res. 616, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 4800), (H.R. 4457), and (H.R. 4453), agreed to by a recorded vote of 227 ayes to 189 noes, Roll No. 299, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 224 yeas to 194 nays, Roll No. 298. **Pages H5259–65**

Recess: The House recessed at 4:04 p.m. and reconvened at 4:51 p.m. **Page H5295**

Meeting Hour: Agreed that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, June 12th. **Page H5312**

Senate Messages: Message received from the Senate by the Clerk and subsequently presented to the House today and messages received from the Senate today appear on pages H5295, H5265, and H5312.

Senate Referral: S. Con. Res. 37 was referred to the Committee on House Administration. **Page H5317**

Quorum Calls—Votes: One yea-and-nay vote and nine recorded votes developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H5264, H5264–65, H5307–08, H5308, H5308–09, H5309–10, H5310, H5310–11, H5311–12, and H5312. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Appropriations: Full Committee held a markup on Homeland Security Appropriations Bill FY 2015; and Revised Report on the Suballocation of Budget Allocations for FY 2015. The bill was ordered reported, as amended. The Revised Report on

the Suballocation of Budget Allocations for FY 2015 passed.

THE MAY 31, 2014 TRANSFER OF FIVE SENIOR TALIBAN DETAINEES

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The May 31, 2014 Transfer of Five Senior Taliban Detainees''. Testimony was heard from Chuck Hagel, Secretary, Department of Defense; and Stephen Preston, General Counsel, Department of Defense.

21ST CENTURY CURES: EXAMINING THE ROLE OF INCENTIVES IN ADVANCING TREATMENTS AND CURES FOR PATIENTS

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Health held a hearing entitled ''21st Century Cures: Examining the Role of Incentives in Advancing Treatments and Cures for Patients''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Committee on Energy and Commerce: Subcommittee on Communications and Technology held a hearing entitled ''Media Ownership in the 21st Century''. Testimony was heard from William Lake, Chief, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee concluded markup on the following legislation: H.R. 4697, the ''Small-Cap Access to Capital Act''; H.R. 2629, the ''Fostering Innovation Act of 2013''; H.R. 4809, the ''Defense Production Act''; H.R. 3770, the ''CFP–G Act of 2013''; H.R. 4262, the ''Bureau Advisory Commission Transparency Act''; H.R. 4383, the ''Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection Small Business Advisory Board Act''; H.R. 4539, the ''Bureau Research Transparency Act''; H.R. 4604, the ''CFPB Data Collection Security Act''; H.R. 4811, the ''Bureau Guidance Transparency Act''; H.R. 3389, the ''CFPB Slush Fund Elimination Act''; H.R. 4662, the ''Bureau Advisory Opinion Act''; H.R. 4804, the ''Bureau Examination Fairness Act''. The following bills were ordered reported as amended: H.R. 4383; H.R. 4604; H.R. 3389; H.R. 4539; and H.R. 4662. The following bills were ordered reported without amendment: H.R. 4262; H.R. 4697; H.R. 2629; H.R. 4604; H.R. 4539; H.R. 3770; H.R. 4804; H.R. 4811; and H.R. 4809.

PRODUCTION AND CIRCULATION OF COINS AND CURRENCY

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade held a hearing entitled ''The Production and Circulation of Coins and Currency''. Testimony was heard from Larry R. Felix, Director, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Department of Treasury; Richard A. Peterson, Deputy Director, United States Mint, Department of Treasury; Lorelei St. James, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, Government Accountability Office; and public witness.

ASSESSING ENERGY PRIORITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa held a hearing entitled ''Assessing Energy Priorities in the Middle East and North Africa''. Testimony was heard from Amos J. Hochstein, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Energy Diplomacy, Bureau of Energy Resources, Department of State.

ONGOING STRUGGLE AGAINST BOKO HARAM

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled ''The Ongoing Struggle Against Boko Haram''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Homeland Security: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 3202, the ''Essential Transportation Worker Identification Credential Assessment Act''; H.R. 3488, to establish the conditions under which the Secretary of Homeland Security may establish preclearance facilities, conduct preclearance operations, and provide customs services outside the United States, and for other purposes; H.R. 3846, the ''United States Customs and Border Protection Authorization Act''; H.R. 4263, the ''Social Media Working Group Act of 2014''; H.R. 4289, the ''Department of Homeland Security Interoperable Communications Act''; H.R. 4802, the ''Airport Security Enhancement Act of 2014''; H.R. 4803, the ''TSA Office of Inspection Accountability Act of 2014''; and H.R. 4812, the ''Honor Flight Act''. The following bills were ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 3488; H.R. 3203; H.R. 3846; H.R. 4263; H.R. 4802; and H.R. 4803. The following bills were ordered reported, without amendment: H.R. 4289 and H.R. 4812.

OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Federal Bureau of Investigation''. Testimony was heard from James B. Comey, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION OVERSIGHT: EXAMINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE DISABILITY DETERMINATION APPEALS PROCESS

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Social Security Administration Oversight: Examining the Integrity of the Disability Determination Appeals Process, Part II''. Testimony was heard from Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner, Social Security Administration.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Energy markup on committee print, the Department of Energy and Research and Development Act of 2014. The markup was adjourned prior to the bill being considered.

FAA'S 2020 NEXTGEN MANDATE: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES FOR GENERAL AVIATION

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''FAA's 2020 NextGen Mandate: Benefits and Challenges for General Aviation''. Testimony was heard from Michael P. Huerta, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration; and public witnesses.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CLEAN WATER ACT JURISDICTIONAL RULE

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment held a hearing entitled ''Potential Impacts of Proposed Changes to the Clean Water Act Jurisdictional Rule''. Testimony was heard from Robert W. Perciasepe, Deputy Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency; Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army, for Civil Works; and public witnesses.

ADVANCING THE U.S. TRADE AGENDA: BENEFITS OF EXPANDING U.S. AGRICULTURE TRADE AND ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO U.S. EXPORTS

Committee on Ways and Means: Subcommittee on Trade held a hearing entitled ''Advancing the U.S. Trade Agenda: Benefits of Expanding U.S. Agriculture Trade and Eliminating Barriers to U.S. Exports''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

U.S.-AZERBAIJAN RELATIONS

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: Commission received a briefing on the security, economic and human rights dimensions of United States-Azerbaijan relations from Tom Melia, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, and Eric Rubin, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, both of the Department of State; and Miriam Lanskoy, National Endowment for Democracy, and Brenda Shaffer, Georgetown University Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies, both of Washington, DC.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D596)*

H.R. 724, to amend the Clean Air Act to remove the requirement for dealer certification of new light-duty motor vehicles. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–109)

H.R. 1036, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 103 Center Street West in Eatonville, Washington, as the ''National Park Ranger Margaret Anderson Post Office''. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–110)

H.R. 1228, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 123 South 9th Street in De Pere, Wisconsin, as the ''Corporal Justin D. Ross Post Office Building''. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–111)

H.R. 1451, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14 Main Street in Brockport, New York, as the ''Staff Sergeant Nicholas J. Reid Post Office Building''. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–112)

H.R. 2391, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 5323 Highway N in Cottleville, Missouri as the ''Lance Corporal Phillip Vinnedge Post Office''. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–113)

H.R. 2939, to award the Congressional Gold Medal to Shimon Peres. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–114)

H.R. 3060, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 232 Southwest Johnson Avenue in Burleson, Texas, as the ''Sergeant William Moody Post Office Building''. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–115)

H.R. 3658, to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Monuments Men, in recognition of their heroic role in the preservation, protection, and restitution of monuments, works of art, and artifacts of cultural importance during and following World War II. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–116)

H.R. 4032, to exempt from Lacey Act Amendments of 1981 certain water transfers by the North Texas Municipal Water District and the Greater

Texoma Utility Authority. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–117)

H.R. 4488, to make technical corrections to two bills enabling the presentation of congressional gold medals. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–118)

S. 611, to make a technical amendment to the T'uf Shur Bien Preservation Trust Area Act. Signed on June 9, 2014. (Public Law 113–119)

H.R. 1726, to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the 65th Infantry Regiment, known as the Borinqueneers. Signed on June 10, 2014. (Public Law 113–120)

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. Signed on June 10, 2014. (Public Law 113–121)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2014

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry: to hold hearings to examine the importance of child nutrition programs to our nation's health, economy and national security, 10 a.m., SR–328A.

Committee on Armed Services: to receive a closed briefing on the security situation in Iraq, 10:30 a.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Foreign Relations: to hold hearings to examine regional implications of a nuclear deal with Iran, 10 a.m., SD–419.

Full Committee, to receive a closed briefing on politics in Thailand, 3 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine securing radiological materials, 10:30 a.m., SD–342.

Committee on the Judiciary: business meeting to consider S. 1799, to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990, and the nominations of Andre Birotte, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California, Geoffrey W. Crawford, to be United States District Judge for the District of Vermont, John W. deGravelles, to be United States District Judge for the Middle District of Louisiana, Randolph D. Moss, to be United States District Judge for the District of Columbia, Robin L. Rosenberg, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida, Ronnie L. White, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Missouri, Julie E. Carnes, of Georgia, and Jill A. Pryor, of Georgia, both to be a United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit, Leslie Joyce Abrams, Mark Howard Cohen, Leigh Martin May, and Eleanor Louise Ross, all to be a United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, and Nancy B. Firestone, of Virginia, Lydia Kay Griggsby, of Maryland, and Thomas L. Halkowski, of Pennsylvania, all to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims, 10 a.m., SD–226.

Select Committee on Intelligence: closed business meeting to consider pending calendar business, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''The President's Health Care Law Does Not Equal Health Care Access'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Financial Services, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, hearing to consider a resolution to authorize and issue subpoenas to compel the appearance and testimony of Ali Naraghi, Examiner, Southeast Region, Division of Supervision, Fair Lending and Enforcement, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; and Kevin Williams, former Quality Monitor, Office of Consumer Response, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, 9:30 a.m., 2128 Rayburn.

Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources, hearing entitled ''American Energy Jobs: Opportunities for Innovation'', 9:30 a.m., 1334 Longworth.

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Oversight; and Subcommittee on Research and Technology, hearing entitled ''Reducing the Administrative Workload for Federally Funded Research'', 9 a.m., 2318 Rayburn.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''An Examination of Bureaucratic Barriers to Care for Veterans'', 9:15 a.m., 334 Cannon.

House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Full Committee, hearing entitled ''Ongoing Intelligence Activities'', 9 a.m., 304–HVC. This is a closed hearing.

Next Meeting of the **SENATE**

9:30 a.m., Thursday, June 12

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond 11:30 a.m.), Senate will begin consideration of the nomination of Crystal Nix-Hines, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. At approximately 12:00 noon, Senate will vote on confirmation of the nominations of Crystal Nix-Hines, of California, for the rank of Ambassador during her tenure of service as the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Michael J. McCord, of Ohio, to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), R. Jane Chu, of Missouri, to be Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts, and Todd A. Batta, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.

At 1:45 p.m., Senate will vote on confirmation of the nominations of Lael Brainard, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and Stanley Fischer, of New York, to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

Next Meeting of the **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

9 a.m., Thursday, June 12

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Consideration of H.R. 4453—Permanent S Corporation Built-in Gains Recognition Period Act of 2014 (Subject to a Rule), H.R. 4457—America's Small Business Tax Relief Act of 2014 (Subject to a Rule), and H. Res. 617—Condemning the abduction of female students by armed militants from the terrorist group known as Boko Haram.

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