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Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Majestic God, forever wise, we are grateful this day and thankful for new mercies. We are invigorated by Your love, patience, and grace. We praise You even for the trials that draw us closer to You.

Help our lawmakers to remember that without You they will labor in vain. As they seek to serve You today, give them Your peace. O God, receive honor, glory, praise, and thanksgiving from our mortal lips, for You are worthy. And, Lord, comfort the families of the five American soldiers killed in Afghanistan.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

BANK ON STUDENTS EMERGENCY LOAN REFINANCING ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 409, S. 2432, the Warren college affordability legislation.

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to the consideration of S. 2432, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, if any, there will be a rollcall vote on the confirmation of Hannah Lauck, who will serve in the State of Virginia. Following that vote the time until noon will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

At noon there will be two rollcall votes on confirmations that come from the Judiciary Committee. One is a judge who will preside in Massachusetts by the name of Sorokin, and one will preside in the State of Nevada by the name of Boulware.

Following the vote on the Boulware nomination, the Senate will recess until 2:15 p.m. for our weekly caucus meetings. At 2:30 p.m. there will be three cloture votes on Federal Reserve nominations: first, cloture on the nomination of Lael Brainard to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, then cloture on the nomination of Jerome H. Powell to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and finally, cloture on the nomination of Stanley Fischer, who is already a member of the Federal Reserve but he will be elevated to be Vice Chair of the Board of Governors.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 2450

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand S. 2450 is at the desk and due for a second reading.

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

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2450) to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I object to any further proceedings at this time.

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this is landmark legislation. I so compliment Senators SANDERS and MCCAIN for coming to this agreement. I hope we can move this bill expeditiously.

BOULWARE NOMINATION

Later today the Senate will vote to confirm a man by the name of Richard Boulware to be a district court trial judge for the State of Nevada. A remarkable man he is, extremely smart, and he is a very talented lawyer from Las Vegas. His father was the first neurologist to come to Las Vegas—a fine man—and his mom was very politically active in a lot of matters for so many years.

Richard F. Boulware has impeccable credentials. He grew up in Las Vegas and attended Harvard University. He went out on his own after graduating from Harvard. He had a consultancy, and he was watching the impeachment proceeding that took place of President Clinton and he said to himself: I should be involved in understanding this stuff more. So he applied to Columbia. It wasn't a walk in the park for him to go. It was extremely expensive. But he is so smart. He got scholarships almost all the way. He graduated very high in his class at Columbia.

Upon graduation, he worked at Covington & Burling in New York, one of the premier law firms in the country. He also became a Federal public defender in New York. Since 2007 he has been a Federal public defender in Nevada. If confirmed, Richard Boulware will become the first African American man to serve on the U.S. district court in Nevada.

I had the pleasure and good fortune to put the first woman on the Federal bench in Nevada. She was a black woman. She was so good. Her name is Johnnie Rawlinson. She was so good that in a very short period of time she was elevated to become a member of

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

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the Ninth Circuit. During Obama's presidency, she has always been on the short list.

Richard Boulware will be just as good as any member of that bench we have in Nevada. I am impressed with his dedication to the State of Nevada. He has already distinguished himself as a public servant. So I look forward to his confirmation today.

STUDENT LOANS

Mr. President, we have all seen the old cowboy western movies that saw some unfortunate character getting into quicksand—either pushed or fallen—and they try everything they can to get him out. It is always the same scene in the movies. An unsuspecting person winds up in quicksand, panics, flails around, and each time he does that he gets deeper and deeper into this earthy liquid.

Fortunately, a hero always comes to the rescue. Sometimes it is with a rope or branch or something to pull him out of the quicksand to safety. That happens once in a while but not very often in real life.

In America today millions of Americans are caught in financial quicksand and looking for a helping hand to pull them to safety. About 45 million Americans have student loans. As their debt mounts, they sink deeper and deeper into financial hardship. There is more student debt today than there is credit card debt.

These Americans who have these loans are trying their best to make good on their student loans. They are working multiple jobs, pinching pennies. But even the slightest hiccup can plunge them into financial ruin.

The Bank on Student Emergency Loan Refinancing Act, introduced by Senators ELIZABETH WARREN and AL FRANKEN, is a lifeline. Just like people being stuck in the quicksand in those movies, people are stuck in the quicksand in real life with student debt. The bill would provide graduates who are now beholden to higher interest rates with a 2-year period to refinance current student loans at 3.86 percent.

This legislation would allow more than 25 million Americans to refinance expensive student loans. In Nevada, more than 250,000 student loan borrowers would save thousands and thousands of dollars in interest rate fees by refinancing at current rates.

But the problem of mounting student loans is not limited to individual borrowers. It is a problem that threatens our entire economy. I had a call yesterday with a bunch of college students in Nevada. They can't get married, they are living with their parents, and they are struggling. Is it worth it for me to go to college? I spent time trying to convince them that it was and it is.

Student loan debt now exceeds far more than $1 trillion—approaching $1.3 trillion. That is more than credit card or auto loan debt. As of last September, 40 percent of student loan borrowers were in default, forbearance or deferment. Yet even as many Americans make loan payments on time, the staggering amount of those installments precludes young Americans from buying houses, beginning families or going into business. The legislation before the Senate will give borrowers a fair shot in investing in their families and their financial well-being. As young Americans are able to purchase new homes and invest in their futures, it will inject much-needed capital into our economy.

Unfortunately, not all Senators agree that allowing borrowers to refinance their student loans is a good idea. I was disappointed to learn my colleague the Republican leader doesn't support this legislation. It wasn't long ago that he referred to this proposal we are taking up here today dealing with student loan debt—$1.2 trillion or $1.3 trillion debt and 45 million people it affects—he called it a fake fight.

For 25 million Americans, or even more, who stand to benefit from this bill, I assure my friend there is nothing fake about helping working families pay off debt and save money.

I so admire what the President did yesterday. He said that if you are continuing to refuse to legislate—and we know there has been obstruction after filibuster after obstruction after filibuster. The President said before the American people he was going to do everything he could administratively. Yesterday he did. What he did isn't as good as what we are doing, but he did what he could to help 5 million students with their debt. So to a single mother working two jobs just to take care of her family, make a student loan payment on time, this legislation is real. But instead, the Republican leader has reaffirmed his commitment to the status quo. Why reform today when he and his tea party-driven members said they will reform next year or maybe the next year?

We Democrats aren't standing around waiting for a new year or a new Congress to tackle the problem of student loan debt. It is real. We are anxious to extend a helping hand to the more than 40 million Americans who are fighting to keep their heads above water, trying to get out of the quicksand.

So let's come to the aid of those individuals struggling with student loan debt and keep them from sinking deeper and deeper into financial quicksand.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Mr. President, would the Chair note the business of the day.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF M. HANNAH LAUCK TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

NOMINATION OF LEO T. SOROKIN TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS

NOMINATION OF RICHARD FRANKLIN BOULWARE II TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA

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

The bill clerk read the nominations of M. Hannah Lauck, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, Leo T. Sorokin, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, and Richard Franklin Boulware II, of Nevada, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nevada.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, today we vote to confirm nominees to District Courts in Virginia, Massachusetts, and Nevada.

Although I will be supporting the nominees from Virginia and Massachusetts, unfortunately I will be unable to support the nomination of Richard Boulware II when the Senate considers his nomination and wanted to explain the reasons for my vote. As an initial matter, Mr. Boulware received a partially ''not qualified'' rating from the American Bar Association. Some of us on this side of the aisle have raised concerns over the years with what we view as an inconsistent application of the ABA's rating system. I have viewed the ABA's ratings with suspicion for many years. They always seemed to be harder on Republican Presidents than Democrats. Because of that, I tend to consider their ratings with a grain of salt. On the other hand, given their history, in my view, of treating Republican nominees more harshly, it gives me pause when I see a partial ''not qualified'' rating from the ABA for a nominee from an administration the ABA has been so aligned with on many issues.

Of course, ABA ratings are only one factor in my assessments of nominees. Unfortunately, there are other aspects of Mr. Boulware's record that concern me.

He has limited legal experience, especially in comparison to other nominees. He has only been practicing law since 2002, and that includes a clerkship. Additionally, his entire career has been in criminal law. He has no experience in any of the complex civil matters that would come before him if he is confirmed.

I am also concerned that over the course of his career he has taken very aggressive policy positions on a number of different issues in testimony before the Nevada Legislature. For example, he has spoken against updating the antiquated paper-based pool book system to a more efficient system of processing voters because he believes voter identification laws unfairly impact poor and minority communities. He has testified that solitary confinement is a reduction of due process rights for prisoners. He has opposed taking DNA samples from arrested persons. And he has joined the American Civil Liberties Union in writing letters to the legislature on several issues relating to police conduct.

If Mr. Boulware had more experience, it would be easier to give him the benefit of the doubt. But when I consider the entirety of his record, his lack of experience as an attorney and his zealous advocacy for many controversial policy positions, it is with reluctance that I will vote no on his nomination. I anticipate Mr. Boulware will be confirmed, and it is my sincere hope that he proves me wrong.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today, the Senate will vote on three nominees to serve on the U.S. district courts. This includes Judge Hannah Lauck, to serve in the Eastern District of Virginia; Judge Leo Sorokin, to serve in the District of Massachusetts; and Richard Boulware, to fill an emergency vacancy in the District of Nevada. The Senate Judiciary Committee favorably reported two of these nominees unanimously to the full Senate and the third nominee with bipartisan support. All of these nominees are qualified to serve on the Federal bench, and the nominations of both Judge Lauck and Judge Sorokin unanimously received the American Bar Association's highest rating of ''well qualified.''

Yesterday, the Senate was once again forced to invoke cloture on these qualified judicial nominees, all of whom have demonstrated legal excellence during their already impressive careers. With yesterday's votes, the Senate will have voted for cloture on 47 judicial nominees so far this year. During all 8 years of the Clinton administration, the Senate voted four times for cloture on circuit and district court nominees. During all 8 years of the Bush administration, the Senate voted 29 times for cloture on circuit and district court nominees. After today, we will have already voted 47 times for cloture in just the last 6 months. These votes do nothing to further what should be our collective goal of an efficient and fair justice system, accessible to all. I can only hope that Senate Republicans soon put an end to this obstruction. Today, we will vote on the confirmation of the following judicial nominees.

Judge Hannah Lauck has been nominated to fill a judicial vacancy on the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. She has served since 2005 as a U.S. magistrate judge for the Eastern District of Virginia. During her judicial service, she has handled hundreds of criminal and civil cases and has presided over 150 bench trials. She has served as an adjunct professor of law at the University of Richmond from 1996 to 2006 and from 2010 to 2013. She worked in private practice as a supervising attorney at Gentworth Financial from 2004 to 2005 and previously served as an assistant U.S. attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia from 1994 to 2004, where she worked in both the Criminal and Civil Divisions. She worked as an associate at Anderson, Kill, Olick & Oshinsky from 1992 to 1994. After graduating from law school, she served as a law clerk to Judge James Spencer of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Her nomination unanimously received the American Bar Association's highest rating of ''well qualified.'' She has the support of her home State Senators, Senator WARNER and Senator KAINE. The Judiciary Committee reported her nomination favorably by voice vote to the full Senate on March 27, 2014.

Judge Leo Sorokin has been nominated to fill a judicial vacancy on the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. He has served since 2005 as a U.S. magistrate judge in the District of Massachusetts and as the chief magistrate judge since 2012. During his judicial service, he has presided over 60 criminal and civil cases that have gone to verdict or judgment and 15 cases that have gone to trial. He has served since 2013 as an adjunct professor at Boston University Law School and previously served as an assistant Federal public defender in Boston from 1997 to 2005 and as an assistant attorney general in the Office of the Attorney General of Massachusetts from 1994 to 1997. He worked in private practice as an associate at Mintz Levin from 1992 to 1994. After graduating from law school, he served as a law clerk to Judge Rya Zobel of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts. Judge Sorokin's nomination unanimously received the American Bar Association's highest rating of ''well qualified.'' He has the support of his home State Senators, Senator WARREN and Senator MARKEY. The Judiciary Committee reported his nomination favorably by voice vote to the full Senate on March 27, 2014.

Richard Boulware has been nominated to fill a vacancy on the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada that has been designated as a judicial emergency vacancy by the nonpartisan Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts. Since 2003, Mr. Boulware has served as a Federal public defender for the District of Nevada. Following law school, he served as a law clerk to Judge Denise Cote of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York and as a litigation associate at Covington & Burling in New York City.

Mr. Boulware's nomination has the strong bipartisan support of both his home State Senators, the majority leader, and Senator HELLER. There is no question that the Senate should confirm Mr. Boulware. However, some in committee raised concerns about his qualifications, citing his minority ''not qualified'' rating by the ABA's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary. I note he received a rating by a substantial majority of the ABA Committee of ''qualified.'' I also note that Mr. Boulware's ABA rating is higher than or on par with 33 of President Bush's nominees who were confirmed despite partial ''not qualified'' ratings, including two nominees to the Eastern District of Kentucky who received majority ''not qualified'' ratings by the ABA's Standing Committee but were nevertheless confirmed by the Senate by voice vote.

I support Mr. Boulware's nomination without reservation and hope that Senators from both sides of the aisle will join me in voting to confirm this worthy nominee. If confirmed, he will be the first African-American man to serve as a Federal judge in the District of Nevada. I am proud to be a part of this important historic milestone and am glad that the majority leader continues to make judicial nominations a priority.

There are seven additional judicial nominees reported by the Judiciary Committee currently pending on the Senate Executive Calendar. Five of these nominees are nominated to fill judicial emergency vacancies, and I hope the Senate will act quickly to confirm these nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of M. Hannah Lauck, of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. CARPER), the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU), and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Tennessee (Mr. CORKER), 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 Tennessee (Mr. CORKER) would have voted ''yea.''

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

The result was announced—yeas 90, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 179 Ex.]

YEAS—90

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

NOT VOTING—10

Begich	Corker	Moran
Blunt	Graham	Scott
Carper	Landrieu	
Cochran	McCaskill	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon shall be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

Who yields time? If neither side yields time, both sides will be equally charged.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Republican leader is recognized.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, Americans across the Nation have been truly shocked by the way our veterans have been mistreated. The fact that 18 veterans died in Phoenix alone while waiting for care is, as we all know, a national tragedy. This should be reason enough for Washington to take decisive action to reform a system that has allowed this tragedy to occur and action to hold those responsible accountable.

Yet, as we know, the scandal extends well beyond Phoenix. In the words of the government's own inspector general report, the kind of problems we saw there are systemic and extend throughout the administration's facilities.

A new internal audit released just yesterday found that the scandal has spread to 76 percent of the VA facilities that were surveyed. It also found that about 100,000 veterans continue to wait for VA appointments and that many veterans have already had to wait 3 months or more. This is a national disgrace.

I recently received a message from a disabled veteran who lives in West Liberty, KY. He said he has experienced delay after delay in the VA system, and he is understandably fed up. He said every time he thinks he is getting somewhere, he finds that some VA employee has changed a date in his file or posted a ''no show'' for appointments he was not aware of.

''I suppose I will become a casualty of the war with the VA,'' he wrote, ''before I ever receive a decision on my appeal or ever receive proper treatment.''

We know this is not right. That is not the promise this country made to our veterans, and there is no good reason to make veterans wait another day longer. There is no reason for the majority leader to prioritize partisan bills aimed at boosting Democratic turnout in November over bipartisan legislation that is aimed at fixing the problems at the VA.

We will have a vote tomorrow on one of these partisan bills that is going nowhere, when we know the Sanders-McCain bill is ready. It has been filed and that is what we ought to be moving to. Veterans have been made to wait long enough at these hospitals. Congress should not keep them in the waiting room by putting partisan games ahead of solutions. Fixing this problem is where the Senate's focus should be right now.

As the Acting VA Secretary recently said, the extent of the problems at the VA ''demand immediate actions.'' He is certainly right about that.

I know the majority leader is going to have us turn to another one of these political show votes tomorrow, written by people over at the campaign committee, but we will have plenty of time to consider bills designed to fail later. Instead, now is the time for the Senate to act like the Senate again—to be serious and more than just a campaign studio for one political party.

Senators BURR, COBURN, and MCCAIN have been working extremely hard on the issue, along with the chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee. We all know there is no one in this Chamber better suited to tackle this crisis than JOHN MCCAIN. He understands the experience and needs of our veterans.

We should give Senator MCCAIN and the rest of this group the space and support they need to get effective and bipartisan reform through the Senate. Given that their legislation contains provisions similar to a bill that has already passed the House overwhelmingly, I think we will get there as well, but we need to give the effort the attention it deserves first, and that means putting the designed-to-fail bills off to the side for a minute because, look, this is what the American people actually sent us to do—to legislate.

I am calling on the majority leader and the President to hit the pause button on the never-ending campaign. Veterans have been denied care. Veterans have actually died. This is an issue that deserves the Senate's immediate attention.

If our colleagues are serious about getting to the bottom of the scandal, holding the perpetrators accountable, and enacting reform to fix it, then they will actually focus on helping our veterans instead of worrying about saving their own seats this November.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank the Republican leader for his comments on the veterans situation. I believe everybody in this body agrees, on a bipartisan basis, that we should move this bill forward as quickly as possible and address the real crisis. This is an issue I have been talking about for a long time. No one who serves our country should wait in line to get the health care they need when they come home.

I am delighted both sides are working very expeditiously to move this legislation forward, and I hope we can take that up as soon as possible and move it without it becoming political on either side.

HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

Having said that, I come to the floor to talk about a different topic; that is, about the highway trust fund. As we know, right now States across the country are working on transportation projects to repair bridges and relieve traffic on our Nation's roads and highways.

Kentucky, for example, has started to widen Interstate 65 between Bowling Green and Elizabethtown. Local officials tell us it is an important project to ease their traffic and help ambulances and firetrucks get to the scene of emergencies quickly, but earlier this year Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear said that project might be at risk because of a shortfall in our highway trust fund.

A crisis in the highway trust fund could jeopardize thousands of important transportation projects—such as the example I gave in Kentucky—around the country if Congress doesn't act. So I am on the floor again to call on our colleagues to work together to avert a crisis in the highway trust fund.

I wish to call attention to specific wasteful tax loopholes that Congress could eliminate to actually shore up the trust fund—loopholes that actually both Democrats and Republicans have in the past said we should close.

There can be no question that the highway trust fund is facing a revenue problem. The Department of Transportation has been warning us for months that it expects the trust fund to reach critically low levels as early as this summer. If that happens, the Department might have to delay reimbursements to our States.

This crisis is no longer a hypothetical. It has already caused States to plan for a construction shutdown if Congress does not act. In Georgia, more than 70 transportation projects could be delayed indefinitely, according to their State officials. In North Carolina, an engineer from the State's department of transportation says, if the trust fund runs dry, ''that essentially stops our construction program.''

This crisis is having a serious impact on construction jobs. If States are not

able to enter into new construction contracts, as many as 700,000 jobs could be at risk, according to the Department of Transportation.

The construction industry was particularly hard hit during the economic downturn. Allowing the highway trust fund to reach critically low levels would be another blow to an industry that has already seen more than its fair share of job loss and uncertainty.

For all of these reasons, Congress must act to avoid a potential construction shutdown this summer.

In the past few weeks I have been very encouraged that Members on both sides of the aisle agree we do need to replenish the highway trust fund with revenue. Allowing the trust fund to run dry is not an option. Putting construction jobs at risk is not an option. Failing to make much needed investments in our roads and bridges is not an option.

House Republicans have offered a proposal to cut mail delivery down to a modified 5-day delivery system to temporarily fund the highway trust fund, but I believe that is the wrong way to go. There are better ways to address both Postal Service reform and the highway trust fund shortfall.

But I do think there is now an opportunity to solve this looming crisis in a way that actually should have bipartisan support. We all know our Tax Code is riddled with wasteful tax loopholes that benefit the wealthiest Americans and biggest corporations, and many of those loopholes that both Democrats and Republicans have proposed closing are available for this fund.

For example, Republican Congressman DAVE CAMP, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, Senator REED of Rhode Island, and Senator LEVIN of Michigan have all proposed eliminating the so-called stock option loophole. Right now corporations claim the largest tax breaks by compensating their executives with stock options instead of a regular paycheck. That is so the corporation can skirt a tax rule that limits deductible cash compensation to $1 million per year for each of a handful of corporate officers. Closing that loophole alone would save us as much as $50 billion over the next 10 years.

Another loophole allows some wealthy business owners to mischaracterize their income as business profits instead of salary to avoid paying their fair share of payroll taxes. Putting a stop to that unfair practice, as both Republican Chairman CAMP and Democrats have proposed, could save us more than $15 billion over the next 10 years.

Those are just two wasteful and unfair tax loopholes that both Democrats and Republicans have proposed closing. The list of loopholes goes on and on. We can use that kind of revenue generated by closing just a few of them to avoid an unnecessary crisis, shore up our highway trust fund, and make the critical investments we need in our roads and bridges across the country.

I know that for many people around the country this looming highway trust fund crisis is all too familiar. For them it is just another example of Congress lurching from crisis to crisis. Just last week the director of the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department said he reminds people that just last year Congress shut down the entire Federal Government. That is how he knows there is a real threat that Congress will shut down investments in our roads and bridges. So States such as Arkansas aren't taking any chances. State officials there recently delayed 10 highway projects, and they said they might have to delay even more if we—Congress—don't act.

So I believe our States need certainty in the highway trust fund. Commuters are counting on transportation projects to ease congestion. Construction workers are counting on jobs to repair roads and bridges. I believe we should build some common ground that Democrats and Republicans share to replenish the highway trust fund. Let's work together to show commuters and businesses and workers and States that Congress can come together to solve this crisis. I hope we will work together to prevent a construction shutdown this summer.

Mr. President, before I yield, I ask unanimous consent that the time during any quorum calls prior to noon be charged equally to both sides.

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

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Mr. President.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, life is about choices. We make them all the time, the choice about where you are going to school, what you are going to study, what you are going to do with the rest of your life, what kind of job you want, your car, a lot of other choices we make.

Tomorrow the Senate gets to make a choice. It is going to affect some people. Here is the choice: We have in this country a serious problem with college loan debt. It has grown dramatically over the last several decades. Now we estimate the total amount of college loan debt in America is over $1.2 trillion. What does that mean? How big is that?

More college loan debt than the sum total of all credit card debt in America. More college debt than the sum total of all automobile debt in America. The only other debt larger—mortgage debt.

This is growing, the college student loan debt. Forty million families are affected by student loan debt out of a nation of 300 million. So we are dealing with somewhere in the range of 14, 15 percent of America making payments on college student loans.

The amount of debt has grown dramatically. I will not come to the floor and tell you what I borrowed to go to school because it makes me sound ancient. But I will tell you this: When I graduated from law school, my student debt equaled one-half of my gross income the first year, just to put it in perspective. Not so anymore.

What we are finding is that most students are so deeply in debt coming out of college that they are making life decisions based on their debt. I get emails in my office from young men and women who always wanted to be teachers. They love teachers. They want to be a teacher. They tell me they cannot be a teacher, because the cost of getting an education to become a teacher is so high, that the starting pay of a teacher is so low, and so they are going to do something else. What a loss for this country, when someone who desperately wants to teach does not get that chance.

Now 25 million of the 40 million Americans with student loan debt can get a break tomorrow morning, because we have a bill coming to the floor which will allow 25 million of these student loanholders to refinance their debt. Ever own a home with a mortgage? I have. You heard there was a lower interest rate available. You called the bank and said: Hey, can I knock that interest rate down from 8 percent to 6 percent? Yes, let's do it, because a lower interest rate means a lower monthly payment, or the same monthly payment is going to pay off more principal on your debt.

So we are going to give college students tomorrow an opportunity, 25 million of them, to refinance their college student loans to lower interest rates at 3.8 percent for undergraduate education. Currently many of these students are paying 6 percent, 7 percent, 8 percent, 10 percent, and higher. Is this a good thing? You bet it is. For many of these students, this is the lifeline they have been looking for.

That is one possibility. That is one of the choices: Help 25 million in debt. But to pay for this, if we are responsible, we had to come up with a source of revenue to make up for the lost interest payments to the Federal Government when the debts are refinanced. We came up with it. It is called the Buffett rule. It is named after Warren Buffett, this seer of Berkshire Hathaway, a fellow I have come to know a little bit through his family. He came to us a few years ago and he said, something is wrong with the Tax Code. Here I am, Warren Buffett said, one of the wealthiest men in America, and my income tax rate is lower than my secretary's income tax rate. How can that be? Why would my secretary pay a

higher income tax rate than me, a billionaire? So we created what we called the Buffett rule. It said: If you are one of the fortunate few in America who makes over $1 million a year, you are going to have a minimum income tax rate of 30 percent, which at least puts you on par with the people who work for you. You are going to pay an income tax rate at least as high as they do, 30 percent.

How many Americans are like Warren Buffett, making over $1 million a year? How many would have to pay this new income tax rate? Twenty-two thousand Americans make over $1 million a year in 2009 and paid less than a 15 percent effective tax rate. Okay, Senate, here is your choice: Do you help 25 million students refinance their college debt and reduce their loan payments by an average of $2,000, or do you protect 22,000 millionaires from paying more in income tax? That is our choice tomorrow. I think it is a pretty easy choice.

I do not have anything against wealthy people. If they made their money honestly, God bless them. But I do not think it is unreasonable to say to the wealthiest people in America: Count your blessings, buddy. You are living in the greatest Nation in the world that gave you a chance to get rich. Now give something back to that country. Give something back to that next generation that wants to build this country even to a higher standard and more success for more people. That is what we face tomorrow.

I go around my State. I have had hearings at college campuses. Some of these are worth repeating. Casey Graham Barrette at North Central College up near Chicago graduated in 2010, got married, has an infant boy she is very proud of. She and her husband both have jobs. His paycheck pays living expenses, her paycheck pays student loans. She is working to pay the student loans in her household. She worries about the future of her family until she gets these loans paid off.

Joshua Schipp. I recently met him. He told me he graduated with a student loan debt of $80,000—from a good school, do not get me wrong. But $80,000. His interest rates on his debt range from 4¼ percent to 9¼ percent. They could come down to as low as 3.8 percent under our bill coming up tomorrow. That is the range of his current interest rates on a variety of loans he has.

Joshua, at one point, said his student loan payment was $700 a month. Now stick with me for basic math and forgive me if I miss this a little bit but I think I have got it. Joshua has got a job making $11 an hour—$11 an hour, 40 hours a week, $440 a week, 50 weeks a year. I know there are 52, but let's assume 50 weeks a year. He is making somewhere in the range of $22,000 a year.

His gross pay of $440 times four makes that right at $1,800—I am rounding it off, $1,800. Let's assume after you take the taxes and all of that out, he has about $1,200 net that he makes each month. Do you remember what I said he paid in student loans? Seven hundred dollars a month. Twelve hundred dollars net, seven hundred dollars on your student loan. How could you possibly make it? That is Joshua, who stuck it out, finished with his college diploma, did what he was told to do. Now there he sits with that debt hanging over his shoulder.

Here is a story I know well because I met this young lady several times, Hannah Moore from the city of Chicago. Hannah got off to a great start. She was not sure what she wanted to do, so she went to a community college. Affordable community colleges, I recommend them to everybody. The hours can be transferred to universities. You have a lot of different courses you can take, and it is affordable. That is where Hannah started.

Everything was going well. Then she stumbled and made a bad decision and did not even know it. She transferred from community college to a for-profit college. For-profit colleges are different than public universities. They are different than private schools. They are different than not-for-profit schools. They are out to make money. Hannah did not know it. She thought she was signing up for a real college and a real education.

She went to something called the Harrington College of Design in Chicago. Their parent company, Career Education Corporation, is under investigation by 17 different State attorneys general. They have got big problems. They create big problems for people such as Hannah.

So Hannah went to this Harrington College of Design and got her ''degree.'' Do you know, when it was all over, how much student debt she had for her time at Harrington College of Design, the for-profit school? It was $124,570. She cannot keep up with the payments. She has fallen behind. And the debt from the interest keeps adding up. She is now up to $150,000, lives in her parents' basement. Her dad came out of retirement to try to help her pay off her college loans.

This for-profit college and university issue is a separate one I will save for another day. But this outrageous sector of our higher education economy accounts for 46 percent of all student loan default. They overcharge their students and provide them with diplomas and degrees which, in many cases, are worthless. But having said that, there sits Hannah. Did I mention she is 32 years old and $150,000 in debt, with a worthless diploma from a for-profit college run by the Career Education Corporation? That is what she is up against.

This bill will help her some. It is not going to eliminate her problem, because there is one point you cannot overlook when it comes to college student loans. This is not like the mortgage on your home. This is not like the money you borrow to buy a car. It is not like a line of credit you might take out to start a business. A college student loan is in a rare category of debt and loans in America, a rare category of debts that cannot be discharged in bankruptcy, no matter how bad things get for you, no matter how terrible your circumstances, your economic circumstances. You go into court and say: I have got to declare bankruptcy. They will help you with everything, but they cannot do anything about your college student loan. It is with you for a lifetime.

We are hearing the horror stories. Grandma decides her granddaughter needs to go to college, cannot get the money to go through. Grandma says: Let me cosign the note with you, honey. I want you to finish college. The granddaughter finishes school, defaults on the loan. They levy grandmother's Social Security check. That is the reality.

I just left a press conference where a young woman who was trying to pay off her college student loan fell behind. Then she said: Well, at least I have got my income tax refund coming back. It was claimed. She did not get any of it. That is what these loans do to you. That is what the collection agencies do to you.

So the question tomorrow morning for the Senate is: Whose side are you on? Take your pick here. Are you on the side of 22,000 or so millionaires in America? Do you want to protect them from paying a penny more in taxes, or are you on the side of 25 million college students and their families who are struggling, just like the ones I have told you about? The choice is pretty clear to me. A college diploma ought to open the door of opportunity.

It shouldn't open the door to debtors' prison, and that is what is happening to thousands of students across America right now.

The first step here is to pass this bill. There is more to do, but the first step is to pass this bill.

The President helped us yesterday. The President said he was going to give 5 million of those paying off college student loans a chance to really organize their debts and to limit the amount of money they had to pay out to 10 percent of their income. That gives some relief to 5 million, but we can do more. We can help 25 million, and that is what we ought to do tomorrow.

When you go back home and talk to people around the Senate, a lot of them start gazing at the ceiling and saying: I don't know about you politicians in the Senate. All you do is give speeches, put out press releases, and take up valuable time on television. What do you do to help us? What are you doing for working families?

Well, I have a speech—and it is pretty good—about what we try to do with minimum wage and making sure people—women and men—are paid fairly in the workplace, but this college student

loan thing haunts me. It haunts me to think that these young people, who are convinced they are doing the right thing, who are borrowing money for the right reason—higher education—are getting so trapped in debt that their lives are compromised. People make speeches about, well, it affects the economy. If you have a lot of student debt, you may not buy a new car, a new home, get married, or have children once married because of your debt. That is all true. That looks at the big picture. But I can't get away from those smaller photographs in my mind of the people I have met in Chicago and all over my State who are trying to pay off these debts.

It comes down to this: We have 55 Democrats and there are 45 Republicans in the Senate. My job is to count votes. I think we are going to get all of the Democrats. I think every one of them will vote for it. But that is not enough. Fifty-five out of one hundred is not enough. Tomorrow we need at least five Republicans to join us—five. None of them have cosponsored the bill yet to refinance college student loans, but they can get into this conversation and join us tomorrow in an effort to help. If five will cross the aisle to make this a bipartisan effort, we can get this moving.

I know the House of Representatives has been a dead end. So many things have gone over there to die—immigration reform and a long list—but I sense this is different. I sense that Members of the House of Representatives in both political parties, if they go home, wherever they live, if they have a real town meeting, if they invite real people, real families, they are going to hear about this issue. Forty million Americans are living with this issue.

Let's do our job in the Senate. Let's pass this college refinance bill. Let's give these students a break, a chance. Let's do the right thing for them. They did the right thing and went to school. Their debt should not compromise their future.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I rise this morning to discuss the very pressing challenge that too many of our young people are facing; that is, the issue of college affordability.

As I travel throughout New Hampshire, I continue to hear young people and their families express their deep concerns about the high cost of college and about their student loans.

In New Hampshire this problem is especially significant because New Hampshire ranks second highest in the Nation for the proportion of students who are graduating from college with debt and also for the average amount of debt per graduate. Seventy-four percent of students in New Hampshire graduate with debt, and that debt is an average of $33,000 per student. I have talked to some young people who worry that they are never going to be able to get out from under that student debt burden.

We all know that obtaining a college education has been viewed as a step that can propel Americans into the middle class, allowing them to pursue goals such as starting a family, opening a business, or purchasing a home.

Unfortunately, education costs have increased at four times the rate of inflation from 1985 to 2011. This is a problem that has both short-term and long-term implications for our citizens who want to continue their education after high school. It is also a problem that has serious implications for the Nation's economy. According to the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, approximately 40 million Americans hold more than $1.2 trillion in student loan debt. The agency also indicates that student loan debt has exceeded credit card debt in the country and is exceeded only by home mortgages in terms of total amount of debt. So we have more student loan debt than credit card debt, and only home mortgages exceed the student loan debt.

While Americans are struggling to pay back this staggering debt, it is projected that the Federal Government will earn $66 billion in profits from its role in student lending between 2007 and 2012. That is just not right.

Clearly it is time for Congress to take action to help individuals with student debt. It is time to help them reclaim their American dream, to help them have a chance at pursuing the goals that drove them to college in the first place.

To this end I am very pleased to join with so many of my colleagues in supporting the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. This legislation would allow eligible borrowers who took out student loans before July 1, 2013, to refinance those loans at rates currently being offered to new borrowers.

It is clear that Congress needs to come together to work to reduce the cost of college for aspiring students throughout the country, but we also need to provide relief to those who have already borrowed to pursue their education, many of whom have interest rates for their student loans that are much higher than they would be if they were purchasing a home or a car.

This action is also way overdue. The extent to which young people are feeling this pressure really came home to me when I visited a veteran from New Hampshire named Calvin, who served in Afghanistan. I first met Calvin at Walter Reed Medical Center, where he was recovering after losing his leg from stepping on an IED. He was married, had a young child, and he was talking about the challenges he faced after he recovered from his injuries. But what impressed me the most was his No. 1 concern was how he and his wife were going to repay their student loans. That is why I think we have to do something about this problem. We have to make sure young people such as Calvin don't spend their professional lives worrying about how to pay back student loans.

I plan to file an amendment today as we take up the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act that will address the challenge young people have as they look at how to keep track of their student loans. I think they need to have a portal that gives them a one-stop shop so they can view all of their student loan information, public and private, in one central online location.

I have heard stories from young people in New Hampshire about this concern, from people like Kim, who is from Nashua. She is a 30-year-old woman, and she has student debt from obtaining her bachelor's and two master's degrees. Her student loan payments cost her more per month than a home mortgage. She recently found a job that is helping her make her loan payments, but before she got that offer she felt overwhelmed by her debt and she found it difficult to communicate and work with her lenders.

By providing a one-stop online shop for debt management, the amendment I will be offering will give people like Kim an easier way to track and understand their loans and their repayment options.

I am pleased that just yesterday the President announced a number of initiatives to help borrowers, including plans similar to the provisions in my Simplifying Access to Student Loan Information Act, so we can encourage the use of innovative methods to communicate with borrowers, but as we all know, we need to do more in this Congress to ensure that we can help borrowers who are struggling to repay their student loans.

I thank my colleague from Massachusetts, Senator WARREN, for her work on this bill. I look forward to continuing to work with her and my other colleagues to ensure that student loan borrowers finally see some relief.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, as every Member of Congress knows, Americans are hurting, and after 5½ years of the Obama economy, they are getting pretty discouraged, as a recent CNN poll reported.

That ''pessimism,'' Erin Currier, director of the Economic Mobility Project at the Pew Charitable Trusts, stated in a recent CNNMoney article, ''is reflective of the financial realities a lot of families are facing. They are treading water, but their income is not translating into solid financial security.''

Unfortunately, Senate Democrats have responded to the economic instability facing so many Americans by essentially doing nothing. Instead of legislation to create jobs and expand opportunity, Democrats have tied up the Senate this year with politically motivated show votes designed to go nowhere.

Back in March the New York Times reported that Democrats planned to spend the spring and summer on messaging votes ''timed to coincide with campaign-style trips by President Obama.''

The Times reported:

> . . . Democrats concede that making new laws is not really the point. Rather, they are trying to force Republicans to vote against them.

Democrats have certainly been following that playbook. This week, in their latest election-year political stunt, they will take up a designed-to-fail student loan bill. According to plan, it will be accompanied by some ''campaign-style'' stops by President Obama.

The Democrats' bill would do nothing to make college more affordable or reduce the amount of money students have to borrow, and it would do nothing to address the real problem facing recent college graduates; that is, the lack of jobs.

The Democrats' student loan bill would provide some former students with old loans a taxpayer subsidy which, based on Congressional Research data, would be worth about $1 a day. To provide this, their bill would raise income taxes by $72 billion.

Meanwhile, Democrats have conveniently ignored the fact that student loan repayment plans that could lower monthly payments by more than their proposal are already available to all students with Federal loans.

Republicans have student debt solutions, such as simplifying the student loan process so more students can take advantage of the affordable repayment options that already exist in current law, but young Americans need a lot more than student debt solutions. The best thing we can do for graduates is to help create jobs.

Young people in particular are suffering in the Obama economy. The current unemployment rate for those 16 to 24 years old is 13.2 percent—more than twice the national average. Unemployment among those 16 to 34 years old is 9.2 percent—significantly higher than the overall unemployment rate of 6.3 percent. Nationally, 6.1 million 18- to 24-year-olds are living below the poverty line, and 36 percent of young adults are living at home with their parents.

It is no wonder that CNNMoney reports that ''young adults, age 18 to 34, are most likely to feel the [American] dream is unattainable.''

What young people need is not a government subsidy but access to jobs, good-paying, full-time jobs with the opportunity for advancement, but those jobs are few and far between in the Obama economy.

While young people may be having the hardest time finding jobs, no one in the Obama economy is doing well. Nationwide, nearly 10 million Americans are unemployed, almost one-third of them for 6 months or longer.

The unemployment rate has hovered at recession-level highs for the entire Obama Presidency. Since the President took office, the average length of unemployment has increased from 19.8 weeks to 34.5 weeks. Approximately 14 million Americans have been forced to join the Food Stamp Program since President Obama took office, bringing the total number of Americans receiving food stamps to more than 46 million.

Meanwhile, everywhere families look prices are going up. Gas prices have almost doubled during the Obama Presidency. Food prices have increased, and the President's policies are just making things worse. Chief among the President's policy disasters, of course, is ObamaCare, which has driven up the price of everything from premiums to pacemakers.

The President told the American people his health care law would drive down health care premiums by $2,500. Instead, prices have risen by almost $3,700, and they are still going up.

ObamaCare has meant new burdens for just about everyone: higher premiums and deductibles, more expensive medications, fewer doctors and hospitals from which to choose, lost jobs, and increased taxes on businesses both large and small. Millions of Americans were forced off their health plans—the plans they were promised they could keep—and into the health exchanges, where they were frequently forced to pay more for plans they liked less.

Not content with the high health care bills, now the President is adding insult to injury by putting in place EPA regulations that will drive up electricity bills for all American families. The President's de facto energy tax will hit low-income families and seniors on fixed incomes the hardest. It will also slash tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of jobs. Coal plants will close, leaving their workers unemployed, and manufacturers will send jobs in America overseas to countries with more affordable energy.

The worst part is that President Obama's EPA regulations will devastate family budgets and the economy for nothing because the President's proposals will do almost nothing to reduce the concentration of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. As long as our country is acting unilaterally, there will be no meaningful effect on global emissions, but the President is pressing on anyway and apparently Americans will have to get used to their massive new energy bills.

The President's policies are having a devastating effect on American students, families, and the middle class, but instead of trying to make things better, the Democratic leadership in the Senate has chosen to take up gimmicky legislation, not to help Americans but to get Democrats reelected.

Yesterday a bipartisan veterans bill, which would address the systemwide VA crisis, was introduced in the Senate. The failures at the VA are a national embarrassment and a betrayal of our compact with our veterans. Congress has an obligation to make sure nothing like this ever happens again.

Today we could be discussing the best ways to fix our VA system. Instead, we are going to be discussing a bill designed not to improve things for Americans but to win the Democrats a few votes. Instead of proceeding to a student loan bill that was designed to fail, we should proceed directly to the VA reform bill.

The House of Representatives acted decisively to bring greater accountability to the VA 3 weeks ago. Today they are moving forward on a VA reform bill that includes many of the provisions of the bill that was introduced in the Senate last night. Now that we have a bipartisan VA reform bill in the Senate, we should be acting with the same sense of urgency.

If Democratic leaders in the Senate truly wanted to make things better for American families, they wouldn't be focused on gimmicky show votes. Instead, they would be working with Republicans to fix the VA crisis. They would back a repeal of the ObamaCare medical device tax, which has already cost tens of thousands of jobs and will cost many more if it isn't repealed. They would support Republican efforts to repeal the ObamaCare 30-hour workweek rule, which has resulted in lost hours and decreased wages for way too many workers in this country, and they would embrace legislation to halt the devastating EPA rules the President has proposed and protect millions of American families from crippling energy bills.

They would push—they would push for job-creating measures such as the Keystone XL Pipeline and the 42,000 jobs it would support or trade promotion authority for the President to open new markets to American farmers, workers, and businesses, and create those good-paying jobs.

We throw around a lot of statistics in the Congress—1 million people this, 10 million people that. It is important for us to remember the faces behind the numbers: the parents trying to figure out how they will afford to pay both their daughters' tuition and their new ObamaCare premiums, the college graduate who can't find a job and is currently living in his parents' basement, the single mother whose working hours have suddenly been cut because her employer can't afford to pay the ObamaCare mandate, a father who has been out of a job for months and can't get an interview anywhere.

These Americans need help, and the President's policies are not helping. The good thing is it doesn't have to

stay that way. We can get America working again, but it is going to take something different than the policies of the last 5½ years.

I challenge my Democratic colleagues to join us in passing real jobs legislation, the kind of legislation that will open a future of opportunity and economic security for all American families.

What college graduates don't need are political gimmicks. What college graduates need more than anything else are good-paying jobs with opportunities for advancement. That is what we should be focused on, not political show votes, not election-year sloganeering but real meaningful policies that will grow and expand our economy in this country and create the good-paying jobs our young college graduates need and that will lift more lower income families into the middle class.

That is what this Senate ought to be focused on. We can change to that focus, and we can start doing some things that will make this country stronger and provide a better and more prosperous and a more secure future for middle-income families.

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

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

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

VOTE ON SOROKIN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Leo T. Sorokin, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Court Judge for the District of Massachusetts?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) would vote ''aye.''

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), 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 result was announced—yeas 91, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 180 Ex.]

YEAS—91

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

NOT VOTING—9

Chambliss	Graham	Moran
Cochran	Kaine	Scott
Feinstein	McCaskill	Warner

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON BOULWARE NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Richard Franklin Boulware II, of Nevada, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nevada?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), and the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) would vote ''aye.''

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 result was announced—yeas 58, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 181 Ex.]

YEAS—58

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

NAYS—35

Alexander	Enzi	McConnell
Barrasso	Fischer	Portman
Blunt	Flake	Risch
Boozman	Grassley	Roberts
Burr	Hatch	Rubio
Chambliss	Hoeven	Sessions
Coats	Inhofe	Shelby
Coburn	Isakson	Thune
Corker	Johanns	Toomey
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	Vitter
Crapo	Lee	Wicker
Cruz	McCain	

NOT VOTING—7

Cochran	McCaskill	Warner
Graham	Moran	
Kaine	Scott	

The nomination was confirmed.

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

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

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:48 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. BALDWIN).

ORDER OF BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 2:30 shall be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Rhode Island.

BANK ON STUDENT EMERGENCY LOAN REFINANCING ACT

Mr. REED. Madam President, I rise in strong support of the Bank on Student Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. I urge my colleagues to work with us to brighten our Nation's future by turning the tide against the student loan debt burden that threatens to hold back this generation of Americans.

Since 2003, student loan debt has quadrupled. It has surpassed credit card debt, and it is only second to mortgage debt for American households. We know that borrowers are struggling with this debt. Delinquency rates are substantially higher for student loans than for other types of debt. Default rate have risen. The Federal Reserve Bank, the National Association of Realtors, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, the Pew Research Center, and others have begun to sound the alarm about the broader impacts of student loan debt on our economy.

Home ownership among young people has fallen. Young households with student loan debt have accumulated seven

times less wealth than their debt-free peers. The interest rate on undergraduate student loans was 3.86 percent this year, yet many borrowers are locked into loans at 6.8 percent with no way to refinance. The Government Accountability Office estimated the Federal Government would earn an estimated $66 billion from student loans originated between 2007 and 2012.

Surely we can afford to give these borrowers a break and reduce their interest rates to at least that which was agreed to in the Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act that was signed into law last year, which still sets rates too high in light of the fact that the Congressional Budget Office estimates show that student loans will still generate revenue for the government even at these lower rates.

That is the simple premise behind the Bank on Student Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. I am a proud cosponsor with Senator WARREN. I salute her for her leadership, for her insight, and for her advocacy for students and families across this country.

The other side may deny that student loan debt is an urgent problem that requires Senate action. But for the estimated 25 million Americans who could benefit from refinancing, including 88,000 in my home State of Rhode Island, that is cold comfort indeed. We can provide real relief for student loan borrowers, and let them put their hard-earned money to work for building a better life for their families and a stronger economy for our Nation.

Looking forward, we need to work together to tackle the drivers in student loan debt—rapidly rising college costs and the rollback of State investment in higher education in public colleges throughout this country. We need to renew our commitment to the core principle of the Higher Education Act, that no American should be denied the ability to go to college because their family lacks the means to pay.

We need to get back to the idea that educating Americans is fundamentally in our national interest and that we have a shared responsibility at the Federal, State, local, institutional, and individual levels for investing in our people. My generation benefited from this kind of investment. This and future generations should have similar opportunities to develop their talents and pursue their dreams in order to secure a brighter future for them and for our country.

Tomorrow, we begin voting to move forward on legislation that could provide relief to as many as 25 million Americans struggling under the weight of student loan debt. For those people, this is not a political stunt. The legislation would enable student loan borrowers to lower their interest rates, reducing their payments and ultimately reducing the amount they will have to repay overall. When rates go down, we can refinance other types of debt. Student loans should not be an exception.

This student debt relief is fully paid for by addressing an inequity in our Tax Code that allows millionaires and billionaires to pay lower rates than regular middle-class Americans. Student loans are supposed to help people finance their education so they can get ahead, not serve as a ball and chain that weighs them down for years and years and years.

I urge all my colleagues to support the Bank on Student Emergency Loan Refinancing Act.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BOXER. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to report 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 nomination of Lael Brainard, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

Harry Reid, Tim Johnson, Christopher A. Coons, Tim Kaine, Brian Schatz, Ron Wyden, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Elizabeth Warren, Bill Nelson, Robert Menendez.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Lael Brainard, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, 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 Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) would vote ''yea.''

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 59, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 182 Ex.]

YEAS—59

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

NAYS—35

Ayotte	Fischer	Portman
Barrasso	Flake	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Heller	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	Sanders
Chambliss	Inhofe	Sessions
Coats	Isakson	Shelby
Coburn	Johanns	Thune
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Crapo	Lee	Vitter
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Enzi	Paul	

NOT VOTING—6

Cochran	Kaine	Moran
Graham	McCaskill	Scott

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 59, the nays are 35. The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, 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 nomination of Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

Harry Reid, Tim Johnson, Christopher A. Coons, Tim Kaine, Brian Schatz, Ron Wyden, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Elizabeth Warren, Bill Nelson, Robert Menendez.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) would vote ''yea.''

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 (Mr. MANCHIN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 58, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 183 Ex.]

YEAS—58

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

NAYS—36

Ayotte	Grassley	Paul
Barrasso	Hatch	Portman
Blunt	Heller	Risch
Boozman	Hoeven	Roberts
Burr	Inhofe	Rubio
Chambliss	Isakson	Sanders
Coburn	Johanns	Sessions
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	Shelby
Crapo	Kirk	Thune
Cruz	Lee	Toomey
Enzi	McCain	Vitter
Fischer	McConnell	Wicker

NOT VOTING—6

Cochran	Kaine	Moran
Graham	McCaskill	Scott

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the ayes are 58, the nays are 36. The motion is agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Stanley Fischer, of New York, to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

Harry Reid, Tim Johnson, Christopher A. Coons, Tim Kaine, Brian Schatz, Ron Wyden, Richard Blumenthal, Benjamin L. Cardin, Jack Reed, Tom Harkin, Richard J. Durbin, Tom Udall, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Elizabeth Warren, Bill Nelson, Robert Menendez.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Stanley Fischer, of New York, to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) are necessarily absent.

I further announce that, if present and voting, the Senator from Virginia (Mr. KAINE) would vote ''yea.''

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 56, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 184 Ex.]

YEAS—56

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

NAYS—38

Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Grassley	Portman
Blunt	Hatch	Risch
Boozman	Heller	Roberts
Burr	Hoeven	Rubio
Chambliss	Inhofe	Sanders
Coats	Isakson	Sessions
Coburn	Johanns	Shelby
Cornyn	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Crapo	Kirk	Toomey
Cruz	Lee	Vitter
Enzi	McCain	Wicker
Fischer	McConnell	

NOT VOTING—6

Cochran	Kaine	Moran
Graham	McCaskill	Scott

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 56, the nays are 38. The motion is agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now resume legislative session and proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Washington.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that following my remarks the Senator from Texas, Mr. CORNYN, be recognized.

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

The Senator from Alaska.

(The remarks of Mr. BEGICH and Mrs. MURRAY pertaining to the introduction of S. 2455 are printed in today's RECORD under ''Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.'')

Mrs. MURRAY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

IMMIGRATION POLICIES

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in recent weeks it has become impossible to deny the fact that we have a full-blown humanitarian crisis along the U.S.-Mexican border. Sadly, this crisis is directly the result of President Obama's own policies, and it involves tens of thousands of young children, some reportedly as young as 3 years old, risking their lives.

Indeed, young children are traveling through extremely dangerous territory run by brutal drug cartels that prey on the weak in the form of human trafficking, rape, and even murder. This year alone tens of thousands of unaccompanied minor children have been detained while crossing illegally into the United States. A large percentage has been found in the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas.

To give the Senate an idea of what has happened and the timeline here, as recently as 2011 there were 6,560 unaccompanied minors detained at the border between the United States and Mexico. Then in 2012 the President announced he was taking administrative action to defer deportation of a certain class of minors, most of whom had come here as young children but had since grown up, sometimes called the Dreamers. But this action in 2012 sent a message, apparently, to other people who were anxious to come to the United States. So you see in 2013, there were 24,000 unaccompanied minors. It is projected, although the number is not known, that it will rise to 60,000, or the Senator from Arizona has said he has heard as high as 90,000 potentially of these unaccompanied minors.

Mr. MCCAIN. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. CORNYN. I will.

Mr. MCCAIN. I apologize if I am being redundant here, but how does the Senator from Texas explain to the American people how we have gone from, in 2011, when we start this chart, from 6,000, to now the projection, 3 years later, of over 60,000 and some say as many as 90,000? But let's say it is 60,000. Does this not have to be some kind of orchestrated, organized effort

to account for this dramatic increase? If it is, who is doing it?

Mr. CORNYN. I would say to the Senator from Arizona, he knows a lot about this topic, living in Arizona. But I think it is a combination of factors. It is, 1, the message that was sent by the unilateral deferred action the President ordered in 2012 saying that even children who come here meeting certain criteria would be low priorities for deportation. So the message was: If you can come to America, and you get here, then you are basically not going to be sent back home.

I think it is also a combination, as the Senator knows, of the violence in the failed state status, nearly, of some of the Central American countries where most of these kids come from. But it is creating, as the Senator knows, a humanitarian crisis because we do not have the facilities to take care of this many minor children.

Here again, these are just the ones who made it. The Senator knows how dangerous the trek is from Central America up through Mexico through areas controlled by the drug cartels. Many of these children, some reportedly as young as 5 or 3 years old, are obviously very vulnerable to being preyed upon by unscrupulous characters.

Mr. McCAIN. Additionally, though, these children—when you are saying especially the very young ones, there has to be some kind of organized effort that is bringing them. The average 5-year-old or 6-year-old does not decide to leave home one day and come across the U.S.-Mexican border.

Mr. CORNYN. The Senator is exactly right. I did not answer his question. Let me try to do a better job. As the Senator knows, in years past, the migrants who came across the border typically were people looking for work. But now with the dominance of large swaths of Mexico and Central America by drug cartels, they basically are trafficking in people, in drugs, in guns, and anything that will make them a buck. Unfortunately, they have no scruples whatsoever and no concern for these young, vulnerable children. They recognize their parents are willing to pay money to them to transport them from Central America to the United States. But the problem is they have no control over what happens to those children when they are in the hands of the drug cartels and these transnational gangs as they bring them all the way from Guatemala, for example, which is 1,200 miles away from McAllen, TX. Many of these children suffer from exposure, in addition to being preyed upon by a variety of unscrupulous characters.

Mr. McCAIN. Could I ask again? So these children now, ones because of the numbers in overwhelming our facilities, are in terrible conditions for someone, a human being in the United States of America: no facilities, no bathing, diet, overcrowding, being put on transportation and taken to Arizona and dropped off at bus stops, and yet not only is that a terrific problem, at least once they are there, they are not prey to some of the things they are prey to on the 1,200-mile trip which are horrible in many circumstances given the nature of these people who are the drug smugglers and human smugglers at the same time. So is it true that the dimensions of this humanitarian tragedy/crisis are something that deserve the attention of all of us? I am surprised it has not gotten a lot more attention than it has up to now.

Mr. CORNYN. I would say to the Senator from Arizona that I am a little surprised it has not gotten more attention either. That is one reason that motivated me to come to the floor today to highlight this. Tomorrow, before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Secretary Jeh Johnson of the Department of Homeland Security will be testifying. I hope he can provide us some answers, because what we need is a comprehensive look at what are the incentives that would convince parents to send their unaccompanied children up through this horrific trip through Mexico, some 1,200 miles from Central America, to such an uncertain fate here in the United States, much less along the way. We need to know what the President's plan is to deal with this.

I know the Senator has spent a lot of time in places such as Jordan and Turkey that I have had the occasion to visit. One of our colleagues pointed out, this is like having refugee camps here in the United States, something nobody ever thought we would have.

Mr. McCAIN. I would ask one more question. Does the Senator know of any plan or any idea of what our Department of Homeland Security and our Border Patrol and people have to deal with this? Do you have any idea what they have to address this issue besides transporting children from Texas to Tucson, AZ, and dropping them off at a bus stop?

Mr. CORNYN. I would say to the Senator, I know some of it entails warehousing children at places such as Lackland Air Force Base, and the last report I saw, about 1,000 of them are located there. I am not sure what the plan is going forward. I assume some of it will be to try to reunite them with family members here in the United States. But if they do not have family members, then they are going to basically become wards of the State. I am not aware of any plan.

The reason why I came to the floor today is to express the very concerns the Senator from Arizona has expressed about the causes and the effects of such a poorly thought out policy, which basically sends the message that anybody who can make it here, particularly minors, can come into the United States and we are totally unprepared, in my view, to deal with this humanitarian crisis. We need to be prepared.

Mr. McCAIN. In other words, by making the decision the President of the United States made on deferred action, if you believe those numbers and they are accurate, that triggered a mass movement into the United States of America. So it is not an accident that these numbers have gone from 13,000 up to 60,000 or 90,000, depending on who you talk to. It is not an accident. So if it is a matter of policy, then that policy needs to be reviewed. Rather than cure the symptom, which we have to do because it is a humanitarian crisis, the humanitarian crisis is not going to be over until we address the root of the problem. Is that correct?

Mr. CORNYN. I agree with the Senator from Arizona. I think this is not a coincidence. There is, in my view, very much of a cause-and-effect relationship between this poorly thought out unilateral action by the President, without much knowledge of or thought given to the consequences.

As the Senator from Arizona knows, because he has certainly fought the fight to fix our broken immigration laws, and I have been involved in many of those myself, this is a direct result of the President basically trying to go it alone and basically trying to send a message, a political message, but one that gives very little thought to the very real-world human consequences of his political actions.

The Senator from Arizona was talking a little bit about this trip from Central America. I would show my colleagues, as we know, Mexico has had a lot of security issues that have been dealt with by the last administration, President Calderon's administration, and now are continuing to be dealt with by the current administration in Mexico. But the Zetas, some of the hardest core of the drug cartels, essentially control large portions of this region of eastern Mexico. If you look from Guatemala, from Central America right at the bottom of Mexico here, the pathway these children would have to make all of the way up through Mexico into South Texas, into the Rio Grande Valley, essentially is through territory controlled by the Zetas, the drug cartel.

One question that is horrible to contemplate is how many of the children who started this long 1,200 mile or so trek actually made it to the end of their journey, and how many fell out along the way as a result of illness, as a result of criminal activity, such as kidnapping, how many were assaulted along the way. This is a crisis that needs to be addressed.

I would point out to my colleagues, I have in my hand—and I ask unanimous consent that this document be printed in the RECORD following my remarks. I would read from it. This is a release from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection dated May 12, 2014. As of May 12, 2014, nearly 180 sex offenders were arrested in the Rio Grande Valley sector alone. That is so far in 2014. Can you imagine that amidst the 47,000 children who have been detained since October of last year coming across the

border, that mixed into this pot of people were we know at least 180 convicted sex offenders.

This article continues to point out that:

Additionally, agents have arrested more than 50 members of the Mara Salvatrucha gang, or MS–13, a notorious transnational criminal gang that started in Los Angeles, and about 14 members of the 18th Street gang.

For my colleagues' information, many of them have heard about a train that goes up through Mexico that many of the migrants from Central America take in order to help them make their journey. This train is called the Beast, sometimes called the Beast of Death.

The stories, and indeed the books, that have been written about this chronicle how horrendous this trip is. We can see in this picture there are young people and older people sitting on top of this train, riding it as far as they can, helping them make their journey up that eastern coast of Mexico from Central America, the 1,200 miles they would take to get from Guatemala City to South Texas. Many of them travel on this train known as the Beast.

The stories of what has happened here, of people who have lost their lives, people who have been decapitated when the train has gone through tunnels, people who tried to jump on a moving train only to lose limbs after a fall under the train, will chill your blood.

But the fact is the administration, and indeed the entire Federal Government, needs to deal with this crisis and needs to deal not only with the causes of it but what the effects are and particularly the humanitarian crisis involving this growing number of unaccompanied children.

Federal, State, and local authorities along the border have completely been overwhelmed by the influx. You can imagine that the Border Patrol, which is in the business of processing these children as they are detained and handing them off to Health and Human Services and other agencies, their attention has been diverted from their primary mission of border security because they have had to lend a hand to deal with the humanitarian crisis.

With so many children arriving day after day and with so many of them lacking any identification documents, it has been tremendously difficult to figure out exactly who they are, why they left home, where they have family, and where they should be sent while their case is being processed.

We don't know how many of them have been victims of human trafficking, for example, how many of them might qualify as refugees under U.S. law, how many of them are actually over the age of 18, and how many of them might have a criminal record.

Can anyone at the White House or in the administration say with certainty the children being released from U.S. custody are leaving with an actual family member?

The Senator from Arizona alluded to children being shipped from Texas to Arizona where they were left at bus stops and elsewhere, basically with a request that they reappear at a given time. But, of course, 90 percent, I am told, never show up back at their court appointment.

For that matter, can the administration say with certainty that none of these children have been handed over to an adult with a criminal record? The answer to both of these questions is no.

In short, this is a complete mess, and the use of resources available to Texas and U.S. officials are under enormous strain. The administration estimates that roughly 60,000 of these unaccompanied children will be apprehended this fiscal year. Perhaps twice that many may be apprehended next year.

We can see the trend here and, of course, all we know from this chart is what it was before the President's deferred action announcement, and we know what it is now. But the trendline is undeniable and appears to be growing at an exponential rate. The crisis we are facing now represents a tragic and painful example of the law of unintended consequences.

Two years ago when the President stood in the Rose Garden and announced a unilateral administrative change in U.S. immigration policy, he probably thought he was doing a good thing. But between that policy change and his broader failure to uphold our immigration laws—indeed his statement that he essentially will not enforce broad swaths of those laws—the President has created an extremely dangerous incentive for children and their parents to cross into the United States under these sorts of treacherous and horrific circumstances.

In other words, the policies that were supposed to be adopted for humanitarian purposes to help these children have created a genuine humanitarian disaster for these same supposed beneficiaries of this unilateral policy. While there is widespread violence and poverty in Central America, sadly, that is not something entirely new, and it is not the cause of our current crisis.

President Obama's immigration policies, primarily his policy of nonenforcement, have encouraged untold numbers of parents and children to make a shockingly dangerous journey through the interior of Mexico riding the Beast, some of whom have been subjected to unknown horrors and treatment at the hands of the very same people who were paid to transport them.

The stories I have read indicate that at stops along the way people are held up at gunpoint. If they don't turn over money to their would-be assailant, then they are threatened with being shot and even killed.

While we may have a rough idea of how many children are actually crossing into America, we will never know with certainty how many actually start that journey and never make it, how many die along the way, are kidnapped or perhaps sexually abused or otherwise mistreated because of the lawless conditions under which this takes place. But we do know the massive surge in unaccompanied minors is directly attributable to actions taken or not taken by the administration.

Therefore, I would implore President Obama to immediately do five things:

No. 1, he should immediately declare that the so-called deferred action program—which I referred to earlier that he unilaterally ordered in 2012—does not apply to the children currently arriving at the border. One aspect of enforcement is deterrence, and so deterring the children from ever starting that long, dangerous trek has to be part of the solution.

No. 2, the President should immediately discourage people in Central America and elsewhere from sending their children on such a dangerous journey.

No. 3, the President should immediately begin to enforce all U.S. immigration laws and engage with the Congress in any changes he thinks are warranted and not simply ignore the ones he finds convenient or politically expedient.

No. 4, he should immediately take steps to ensure that Texas and other U.S. border States have the resources they need to address this ongoing humanitarian crisis.

No. 5, he should immediately start working with the Mexican Government to improve security at Mexico's southern border. This is a 500-mile border between Mexico and Guatemala that, if it were better secured, would deter many of these children and other migrants from coming through Mexico and subjecting themselves to these dangerous conditions in the first place.

If the President did all five of those, not only would it help us resolve the current crisis, but it would also help us prevent similar crises from erupting in the future.

These children are being preyed on by drug cartels and human traffickers, and they are at high risk of being kidnapped, raped or even killed while traveling this long dangerous journey to the United States. But sadly, when they arrive here, we still have no way of guaranteeing their safety because of the lack of an adequate plan to deal with this humanitarian crisis.

President Obama effectively created this problem and now he has an opportunity to work with us to fix it. I can only hope he does the right thing.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the U.S. Customs and Border Protection document I referred to earlier.

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

[From the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, May 12, 2014]

NEARLY 180 SEX OFFENDERS ARRESTED BY RGV SECTOR AGENTS SO FAR IN FY14

EDINBURG, TX.—U.S. Border Patrol agents from the Rio Grande Valley Sector have arrested nearly 180 illegal immigrants with prior convictions for sex offenses so far for fiscal year 2014, which began Oct. 1, 2013, and goes through Sept. 31, 2014.

The majority of the sex offenders have convictions for sexual assault crimes involving children. Some of the more heinous offenses include: sexual assault of a child; sodomy, lewd or lascivious acts with a child under 14; aggravated sexual assault of a child; and aggravated indecent assault and corruption of a minor. The sex offenders have convictions for crimes that occurred in states from coast to coast as well as in the Rio Grande Valley.

In addition to the arrests of convicted sex offenders, agents apprehended three illegal immigrants over the weekend who have arrest warrants for sex-related crimes. They include a Mexican national wanted in FortWorth on a continuous child sex abuse charge; a Salvadoran wanted by the Loudan County Sheriff's Office in Virginia on a charge of adultery/fornication: incest with a child between 13–17 years of age; and another Mexican national wanted by the Travis County Sheriff's Office on a charge of indecency with a child/sexual contact The three men were turned over to the Hidalgo County Sheriff's Office pending extradition.

Additionally, agents have arrested more than 50 members of the Mara Salvatrucha gang, or MS–13, a notorious transnational criminal gang that started in Los Angeles, and about 14 members of the 18th Street gang.

The Rio Grande Valley Sector is part of the South Texas Campaign, which leverages federal, state and local resources to combat transnational criminal organizations. To report suspicious activity, call the sector's toll-free telephone number at 800–863–9382.

Mr. CORNYN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. As a Senator from a Western State, as is my friend from Texas, I hope the American people understand the only thing the Republicans can do for whatever happens is blame President Obama: Oh, it rained today—it is President Obama.

How about the most obvious point—that the Republican House has failed to take up an immigration bill. The Senate did it in a bipartisan way. I applaud that bipartisanship. We did it a long time ago. The fact that the Republican House refuses to do it never passes the lips of my Republican friends in the Senate.

If we want to correct our immigration system, we have to sit down and do the hard work, as we did in the Senate. There is no question that we are facing a crisis with children from Central America running away from gangs, violence, rape, and deprivation. There is no doubt about it. The fact is we can deal with that, but we have to look at the laws, and that is why we want to set the rules in a bill.

There is lawlessness because we haven't updated our laws. For example, we have to make sure these short-term holding facilities have humane conditions. We can do that by law.

I want to say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, because it is cloudy one day, don't blame the President. Because it rains the next day, don't blame the President. If you wake up with a sore throat, don't blame the President. When you have trouble at the border, look at your own party, which has held up immigration reform. If we can do it over here, they can do it over there. The whole world is watching.

It is the same way with the veterans. I am hoping and praying that this new effort by Senator SANDERS and Senator MCCAIN will bear fruit in the Senate on a VA bill. But remember that the Republicans filibustered the last BERNIE SANDERS bill, which would have added clinics, which would have addressed the problems. They filibustered it.

Keep your ear open here. We have a chance to address so many issues.

STUDENT DEBT

Mrs. BOXER. I talked about immigration. I talked about veterans. We have a chance now to deal with the student loan crisis, and it is a crisis.

The student loan debt is $1.2 trillion. That is more than credit card debt.

In my home State, the average amount owed by a borrower in 2012 was more than $25,000—a 65-percent increase from 2004. In the same time period, the number of Californians with outstanding student loan debt increased by 60 percent.

In addition, in 2012 there were 641,000 Californians over the age of 50 who were still paying down their student loans and more than 6.8 million people over 50 nationwide still paying off their student loans.

This is a crisis that must be addressed. It is important to our Nation's economy. It is important to the future of our families, to our children, and our grandchildren. It is time to act.

I have to say, Senator WARREN has been a tremendous leader. We can take an important step toward addressing this dire situation by passing Senator WARREN's Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act. It would help millions of Americans refinance their loans at lower interest rates, put more money in their pockets. I have to say, it is kind of a no-brainer. When you have more money in your pocket than you had before, you are going to spend it in your communities.

I am so proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.

Sadly, even though the Federal Government is the biggest student loan lender, and it is making billions of dollars in profits each year, it doesn't allow its borrowers to refinance their existing student loans when rates are low. That is wrong. Our middle class is hurting.

The New York Federal Reserve Bank and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau have been warning us that student loans are acting like an anchor on our economy.

When our President took office, there was a crisis. We were losing 700,000 jobs a month. He has turned it around, and now month after month we are creating over 200,000 jobs, and we have restored all those jobs we lost. But why would we keep this anchor of student loan debt on our economy?

For example, students can't buy cars because they have so much in student loan debt. They can't buy houses.

Andrea from San Francisco writes:

My boyfriend and I both have student debt. He started with $90,000 and has finally gotten it down to $50,000 after 10 years of paying. I recently finished my MFA and now have $56,000 in debt. This has kept us from saving for a house, purchasing a car, and doing things day to day that would boost the economy, like shopping and going out to eat.

Patrick from Thousand Oaks wrote to me and said:

I pay half of my monthly wages to cover the interest alone on my loan.

Worse still, many young Americans wrestling with student debt cannot save enough to start a family.

Stefanie from Pacific Grove wrote:

We are finally starting a family in our late 30s. My husband has been paying off his student loans for ten years. This loan will cost him twice as much as he borrowed—doubling the cost of his college education. That is simply not fair. If the Fed sets interest rates low for everyone else, why not for students?

As Stefanie's story illustrates, student debt is not only a drag on the American economy, it is tearing at the fabric of our American dream.

I read last week that for the first time a majority of people don't really believe the dream will be there for them as it was for us. When 40 million people in America are struggling with a combined $1.2 trillion in student debt, it is no wonder the American dream is elusive.

I have 3.7 million Californians dealing with $97 billion in student loans, and many of these loans are stuck at outrageously high interest rates—7, 8, 9 percent. With interest rates this high, it is hard for anyone to pay off their debt, and it is really hard for recent graduates who are just launching their careers.

In order to help the nearly 40 million Americans with student debt, Senate Democrats have introduced this plan, with the leadership of Senator WARREN. It is a simple plan. The idea is to let borrowers refinance their outstanding student loan debt.

We are at a time of record-low interest. I am asking rhetorically whether it is fair to charge 7, 8, 9 percent interest when the Federal Government lends money to banks at less than 1 percent. The people who have borrowed money to pay for college or send their children to college are trapped with these exorbitant interest rates. And the private student loans can be even worse. I have seen 10 percent and 11 percent.

The Senate Democratic proposal would allow borrowers of both Federal and private student loans to refinance from their high rates into much lower rates. The rates would be 3.86 percent for undergraduates, 5.41 percent for graduates, and 6.41 for the parents who

have helped their kids. Those are the rates Democrats and Republicans agreed on last year, and those are the rates new borrowers received this past school year. But the older borrowers are stuck with these exorbitant rates, and they can't refinance. If those lower rates are good for new borrowers, why wouldn't we allow them for those who have been stuck in this vicious cycle of these high rates?

These young people are not saddled with this debt because they went to the mall and bought a lot of clothes. They worked hard to learn new skills that will benefit our Nation and help keep us strong. They deserve a fair shot at saving and building a career and having a family.

Matthew from Antelope, CA, wrote to me and said:

> I have never worked harder on one single goal than to be the first in my family to gain a degree in higher education. I've been on the Dean's List every semester in college. [But] the ever-present fear of paying off the thousands of dollars of interest I have gained is overwhelming and I am struggling to see past it.
>
> If big banks, which collapsed our financial system, are able to borrow at a rate of nearly zero percent, I don't see why students who will ultimately grow our economy and grow our nation cannot borrow at the same rates.

Matt from Newport Beach, CA, said:

> I am grateful for my college education. As a son of middle-class parents, I knew [college] was an investment in my future, despite the need to take out loans. I even graduated in three years and served as a Resident Adviser to keep costs down. However, my student loan debt is now a major expense that hangs over me as a working adult. It affects my ability to achieve certain life milestones—buy a house, finance a wedding, and save for retirement.
>
> I support efforts to refinance loans at low interest rates—rates comparable to those in the real estate market. Please take action! With more affordable student loans, my generation can grow this economy.

Matt, Matthew, and their classmates who worked so hard to achieve their dreams deserve a fair shot. Tomorrow morning we will have a chance to make achieving the American dream a little easier for Matt, Matthew, and all our struggling college students. So I stand with Matt, Matthew, Patrick, Stefanie, Andrea, and the 40 other million Americans with student loans.

What we are saying is very simple: We want to give students who are trapped in those high interest rates a chance to refinance. We pay for it by saying that those billionaires who aren't paying at least as much as their secretaries pay at least as much as that. It is called the Buffett rule. I can't imagine a better way to pay for this than that.

I urge my colleagues—Democrats and Republicans—to stand with my constituents and their own constituents by voting to let us move forward to consider the bank on students act.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

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

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

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise to speak today on behalf of our veterans. I am here to speak about both challenge and opportunity. The challenge is the problems we face with our Veterans' Administration, which is that we are not getting the care for our veterans that they need and that we all want them to have and that they so very much deserve.

We also have a real opportunity because we have been working on legislation. We have legislation on the Republican side in the Senate and on the Democratic side, and now we are working to bring those two pieces of legislation together. So I think this creates a real opportunity, and it is a vitally important opportunity—one that we grab and that we address on behalf of our veterans. We need to make sure we come together on bipartisan legislation that fixes the Veterans' Administration health care system, and it takes care of our veterans.

I believe the solution, the real key to solving the problem, is choice—or another way to put it might be access to health care. I think that not only solves the problems we have seen with the wait lists but also the problem of distance, which is also an issue, and it is a challenge we see in States such as my own. For example, in our State the issue truly is distance. In other places it is access to health care. We know, for example, in places such as Phoenix, veterans were put on wait lists and in that way denied access to care. That is absolutely unacceptable—absolutely unacceptable.

I think the Veterans Choice Act, which I am pleased to cosponsor with a number of my fellow colleagues, solves that problem, and it solves not only the access and the wait list problem but also, as I have said, the distance problem essentially by providing choice, meaning that if a vet can't get access to a veterans health care facility, then the veteran can go to another health care provider. I believe that works for the vet and it works for the health care provider. The veteran can go to a hospital or a clinic that has the service he or she needs if he can't get into the VA facility in a timely way, and then that hospital or clinic is reimbursed just as if it were for a Medicare patient. Clearly, our health care system has the facilities in place, the resources to handle that type of reimbursement just as they do for Medicare patients.

Now I wish to speak about the distance issue for just a minute because in North Dakota the distance issue is the one we face. For example, in North Dakota it is about 800 miles round trip from Williston to the VA health care system in Fargo. Some services, as we all know, are provided by CBOCs—community-based operating clinics—and we have those around the State. But where we don't have CBOCs or where they are not able to get the service they need from that CBOC or walk-in clinic, then it can be an 800-mile trip to get services.

Not too long ago I held an open forum in Williston, ND, which, as many people know, is the site of an incredible energy boon, the Williston Basin. Now in North Dakota we produce about 1 million barrels of oil a day—second only to the State of Texas. So we have a tremendous number of people moving into this region. We are the fastest growing State in the Nation. We have veterans there who are driving long distances to get medical services. So this is a different challenge than we faced in some of the centers such as Phoenix where they were waiting to get patient care. In our case they are having to drive long distances—as I said, 800 miles round trip to Williston; 400 miles to Fargo and then 400 miles back.

I recently held a forum up in Williston to discuss this issue and look for solutions on behalf of our veterans. I met with our veterans, I met with veterans service officers, as well as health care providers from the region. I talked to two vets who told me their story about trying to get health care. We have a walk-in clinic, a CBOC—community-based operating clinic—in Williston. There were two cases where veterans needed some health care services. In one case, because they couldn't—the first veteran couldn't get it at the local CBOC, that individual took a day to drive to Fargo, which is 400 miles, stayed in a hotel, the next day went in and got those services, stayed in a hotel that night, and then drove back the third day. So he had to take 3 days off of work to get services. He had to drive 800 miles round trip. He had to be put up in a hotel for 2 nights. Now, all of that is reimbursed, as far as the travel in the State, by the VA. So for a relatively straightforward procedure, the VA paid a lot more and inconvenienced that veteran terribly and cost him money because that individual had to take 3 days off from work. That doesn't make any sense.

In the second case, a veteran in a similar situation wanted to get the service at the local CBOC, wasn't able to do that, but instead of driving all the way to Fargo and doing what the first veteran did, the second individual just went into the local clinic or hospital in Williston and got the service that afternoon. Unfortunately, the second veteran is still trying to get reimbursement out of the VA for that procedure.

The individual in the second case did not have to take 3 days off from work, which is smart and, frankly, saved the VA a lot of money because it was not a case where you had to drive down, get reimbursed for that stay with over two

nights in a hotel, and then drive back. So it actually saved the VA money. But still they have not gotten a reimbursement for the cost of that medical treatment because the VA does provide that service in Fargo. But again, in that situation, unless that veteran is reimbursed, you are not truly serving the veteran and, frankly, not doing the sensible thing to save the taxpayer money.

That is why the Veterans Choice Act that I am cosponsoring with others, again, is the solution because we provide choice, we provide access. If the veteran cannot get that service in a timely way in the local community, then the veteran can access another health care facility. That is why the legislation works.

So what I have offered—and, of course, now we are working on bringing two bills together: the Veterans Choice Act, but then also legislation offered by Senator BERNIE SANDERS; and that legislation is the Ensuring Veterans Access to Care Act.

I think we can bring them together, and I think we can get a good solution that serves everybody, most importantly that serves our veterans. But we need to serve all of our veterans—all of our veterans—regardless of where they live. That is why I have offered simple, clarifying language—this is a technical fix—that would clarify and ensure that if a veteran cannot get service in a CBOC, then that veteran can go to a local health care provider on the same basis as an individual who lives more than 40 miles away from the walk-in clinic.

This legislation, this clarification is important to ensure that a veteran is not in any way actually disadvantaged by having a walk-in clinic in the local community, and that all vets can access services on the same basis. Again, it is because of the way this legislation is coming together that requires that if you are within 40 miles of a walk-in clinic or you have to wait more than 14 days, then you can go to another health care provider. But if either one of those criteria apply—you are within the 40-mile radius and you can get an appointment within 14 days to see a doctor—then you have to go to the VA. That works, and that is consistent only if you applied both criteria to the same clinic, to the same health care center.

What I mean is this. Remember the example I gave just a minute ago: Williston, ND, and Fargo, ND. In Williston you have a walk-in clinic. In Fargo you have a full hospital—a full VA medical center. Take the test we are applying in this legislation: If you are within 40 miles, you have to go to the VA facility, as long as you can get in within 14 days. But that 14 days has to also apply to the facility that is within that 40-mile radius; otherwise, you get an inconsistent, unfair result and actually disadvantage somebody who is within 40 miles of a walk-in clinic versus somebody who is outside that radius.

Let me give two examples to illuminate what I am saying.

You have a vet. He lives in Williston, ND. He is within 40 miles of that facility. He goes in, and he gets his shots or whatever it is in that facility—no problem. But what happens if he cannot, if that walk-in clinic does not supply the service? What does he do? Well, if the 14-day rule applies to the Fargo VA hospital, even though he is within 40 miles of the CBOC, if the CBOC—the walk-in clinic—does not provide that service, he still has to drive 800 miles roundtrip for that shot I just talked about a minute ago or that service—the two veterans I described a minute ago. So he still has to travel 800 miles to get service.

Take another individual. He lives 41 miles from that walk-in clinic. Even if the Fargo VA can take him within 14 days, he can still go get local service in Williston, can't he? Why? Because he is 41 miles away. So ask yourself, the veteran who lives within 39 miles of that walk-in clinic, he might have to drive 800 miles roundtrip to get a service that the individual who is 41 miles from that facility can go get in the local community.

Does that make sense? That is the kind of thing we have to make sure we get right so that all veterans, regardless of where they live, get the same fair and consistent treatment. That is why I am saying, as we put this legislation together, we have to be careful to make sure we get that kind of fair and consistent result so this legislation serves all of our veterans and takes care of all of our veterans, and they truly all have that access. Whether the problem is a wait list or long distances, let's make sure this works for all of them.

Believe me, they are out there. Every one of them has put their life on the line and stepped up. All of them have done that for us. Let's make sure, as we work through and file this legislation—something I know we can do; on a bipartisan basis we can get this done—let's make sure it works for all of our veterans and it works well and it works consistently and it truly solves the problem; that is, we make sure they get the health care they deserve.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). The Senator from Georgia.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for up to 3 minutes and that immediately following my remarks the Senator from Iowa, Mr. HARKIN, be recognized for as much time as he might consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ISAKSON. I thank the distinguished Senator from Iowa for relinquishing a little time to let me step in. I am very grateful.

REMEMBERING CAPTAIN WILLIAM HALL DAVISON

Mr. ISAKSON. Madam President, on the evening of June 8, this past Sunday, in Gainesville, GA, CAPT William Hall Davison, U.S. Navy retired, passed away.

It was a significant day in our family for many reasons. He is my wife's father. He is my children's grandfather. He is my grandchildren's great-grandfather. His wife Gay, 97 years old, survives him.

Bill Davison was 99 years old. He was a pilot in World War II in the South Pacific, tracking submarines of the Japanese Navy and cargo ships of the Japanese Navy to make sure our intelligence was the best it could be.

Like so many of America's greatest generation, he sacrificed 4½ years of his life in defense of our country. He made a career of the U.S. Navy. He never talked about it, and only rarely did he say anything about it. But when he did, he talked about how proud he was to be able to wear the uniform of the United States of America.

So while it was a tragic night for my wife, a tragic loss for our family, it is a reminder to all of us as Americans that our greatest generation is passing at a very rapid rate. Soon none will be here with us who stormed the beaches at Normandy, flew the skies of the Pacific or fought on the ground at the Battle of the Bulge.

But we are all here today—you and I, Madam President—because of the sacrifice of those people—the greatest sacrifice in the history of mankind. In fact, the most unselfish act of humanity I have ever read about or heard about or was ever taught about was by that generation that landed on Normandy Beach on June 6, 1944, and freed America and freed the rest of the world from the totalitarian government of Adolph Hitler.

So as my family pauses to mourn the loss of a father-in-law for me, a grandfather for my children, a great-grandfather for my grandchildren, and a father for my wife, we take joy in knowing that one member of our family was a part of a generation that saved all of humanity for democracy and for freedom and for liberty.

To his wife Gay, who is in morning today, at age 97, we wish her a continued, prosperous life, and we thank her for her sacrifice, because like so many women—the wives of the soldiers during World War II—she kept the home fires burning. They worked in the factories. They made sure that America worked while their husbands were off to defend us.

So while we had a tragic loss of life in our family on Sunday night, June 8, we had a positive remembrance of all that has been done for our family by the brave men and women who fought for the United States of America.

May God bless William Hall Davison for his life and may God bless the United States of America.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

BANK ON STUDENTS EMERGENCY LOAN REFINANCING ACT

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I want to speak for just a few minutes in favor of the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act, which is the measure before the Senate now, also referred to as the Fair Shot for College Affordability.

We have been calling this agenda a fair shot, but let's be honest about it. It is just plain common sense. I do not want to go any further without thanking the present occupant of the chair, the distinguished Senator from Massachusetts, for her dynamic and great leadership on this issue and on these kinds of issues that affect college affordability, and especially this overburdensome student debt that is hanging not only over students but over our entire country.

There are some things, as I said, that are just plain common sense. Raising the minimum wage is good for American workers. It increases aggregate demand, and it will increase GDP. It is common sense. Equal pay for equal work is the right thing to do for women. It is common sense. And this bill that lets struggling student loan borrowers refinance their loans is not only good for them but also good for our country and good for our economy.

Families across the country are struggling with student loan debt. It is not only holding them back personally, it is holding us back as a nation. It is holding them back from buying homes and starting families. It is holding back doctors from practicing primary care. It is hurting people trying to save for retirement. It is hurting rural communities that are working to attract doctors or lawyers or veterinarians or whatever.

But you need not take my word for it. Some of the Nation's most prominent economic officials have raised concerns over this student debt issue. Members of the Federal Reserve Board's Federal Open Market Committee, in March 2013—over a year ago—expressed concern that ''the high level of student debt'' is a risk to aggregate household spending over the next 3 years. The Treasury Department's Office of Financial Research has stated that student debt ''could significantly depress demand for mortgage credit and dampen consumption''—again, a drag on our economy. New York Fed president William Dudley told reporters in November of last year: ''People can have trouble with the student loan debt burden—unable to buy cars, unable to buy homes. . . .''

So I am pleased to see that President Obama has taken action to ease the burden of Federal student loan debt for some struggling borrowers. I am also pleased to see the administration is taking critical steps to ensure that servicemembers are getting the benefits they have earned through their service to our country. But it is very clear that much more needs to be done. That is why this bill before us is so important. It will provide relief to student borrowers who took out loans several years ago only to see the rates for student loans have since gone down.

Some Senators may remember this issue presented itself last year. So as the chair of the authorizing committee, I worked with Members on both sides of the aisle and with the administration—we had meetings in the White House—to pass the Bipartisan Student Loan Certainty Act, which lowered interest rates and also authorized the interest rates at 3.86 percent last year for undergraduates, 5.41 percent for Stafford loans for graduate students, and 6.41 percent for parent and graduate PLUS loan borrowers. We want borrowers who may have taken out loans in the past with higher rates to take advantage of these lower rates.

The Department of Education estimates that 25 million borrowers would likely refinance their existing student loans under this legislation. It will save them money. It will give them money in their pockets where they can now go out and start buying things and increase what we need to have done in our country, which is aggregate demand.

The legislation also allows student loan borrowers to refinance their private loans into the Federal program—very important.

The bill provides those who meet certain eligibility requirements and who are in good standing have the option of refinancing their high-interest private loans down to rates offered to new Federal student loan borrowers this year. Those who refinance will also have access to the benefits and protections of the Federal student loan program.

As I said, this bill is just common sense. American consumers have been able to take advantage of historically low interest rates on their homes, their cars. I have heard a number of speakers who have come out here and said: If you had a high-interest loan on your 25-year or 30-year house mortgage, and you could come in and refinance down to 5 percent, sometimes even less than that, you would be foolish not to do it. You can do it. We should not let students do the same thing? It is good for them and good for the economy.

Again, I want to say that while this issue of student debt is critically important, by no means is it the only issue that deserves our attention in higher education policy. Right now I think maybe the most critical, simply because of the huge debt burden overhanging our students—I should say our former students and their families, but there are some other things we have to pay attention to.

In the coming days I plan to release from our committee, release from the chairman's mark, the issue we should be attacking in a comprehensive reauthorization of the Higher Education Act. Our committee over the last several months has held more than 10 hearings on issues ranging from teacher preparation to accreditation. These hearings have been bipartisan. I want to thank Senator ALEXANDER for his partnership in making sure we had good hearings.

As we move forward, our committee is committed to remaining on a bipartisan path for us taking up a Higher Education Act reauthorization. What I plan to put forward is consistent with that bipartisan approach. It simply provides clear guidelines based on the work we have done already. The Higher Education Act we will be coming forward with in the next few weeks will cover basically four topics: 1, affordability; 2, student debt; 3, accountability; and, 4, transparency. As it relates to affordability, we hope to increase affordability and reduce college costs on the front end by entering into a partnership with States, incentivizing States that make strong investments in their systems of higher education.

The one thing that came through in our hearings on why tuition has gone up so much and college costs have gone up so much for students and their families over the last 20 to 30 years—well, there are a lot of indices of why that has happened, but the single largest factor has been over the last 20 to 30 years the decrease in States investing in higher education.

What has happened is State legislatures figured it out. They quit putting more money into higher education. The schools raised their tuition, and the students come to the Federal Government or the private sector and borrow the money to go to school. States have abdicated their responsibility in higher education. We plan to offer incentives for States that step up to the bar and then provide more vigorous funding for higher education, that they will get better support from the Federal Government.

With student debt, we plan to help student borrowers better manage their loan debt through measures such as better upfront and exit counseling on their loans. Again, I hope that tomorrow we would pass our bill, the bill Senator WARREN has worked so hard on and championed. I hope we would pass it and get it behind us. But I fully intend to take the measures in that bill and incorporate them into our broader bill on student debt.

On accountability, we plan to hold schools more accountable to both students and taxpayers by ensuring that no Federal money that goes to students who then go to the schools is used for things such as marketing, advertising. They use it to drive up enrollments. No. If schools want to do that, under our proposal they would not do that with taxpayers' money.

On transparency, we hope to empower students and families by giving them better information from the beginning of the college process in how

they select the school all the way through making sure they know all of their repayment options when they graduate and can make the right choice for their particular circumstances.

What we need is a good comparison. If a student wants to go to college A, they can go online, they can find out what the costs are for a credit hour, what the tuition is, other forms of information on what they can expect from that school—graduation rates, time to graduate, all kinds of things such as that.

They can hit the compare button, then go to college B. They can ask the same questions of college B, hit the compare button, go to college C. Then you can bring up and compare all of these schools. I think students and their families would make wiser decisions if they could compare one school to another. That is hard to do today, almost impossible to do today. But that is the kind of transparency parents and children and families need to have.

I look forward to sharing that proposal, as I said, in the next few weeks. I state publicly: Anyone who has ideas on this and would like to have them incorporated in our bill, please come to our staff or see me. We will try to work it through. As I said, I do want to approach this on a bipartisan basis and work this out. Higher education is too important to our society, to our future as a country, to be a partisan type of approach. It has to be bipartisan.

College affordability, skyrocketing student debt, accountability, transparency, all are very high-stakes issues for our students and their families and for our future as a country. Certainly in today's difficult economy, with young Americans in particular struggling to find good employment and a foothold in life, it is unacceptable to ask students, graduates, and their families to shoulder unnecessarily high student loan interest payments.

That is why this bill is so important for us to pass tomorrow, I guess, when it comes up for a vote. I hope we can pass this, and then I hope we can move on with the rest of what we need to do in higher education, as I said, on accountability, on transparency, and affordability. If we can get a good vote and pass this student debt bill so we can start lowering interest rates, that would be the first step toward addressing the issues confronting us in higher education. I hope we can get bipartisan support for this measure tomorrow and then move on to the other issues we have to address in higher education.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, before I address the issue of college affordability, I want to send my condolences to the families in Oregon, another community ravaged by a school shooting, the 37th of 2014, the 74th school shooting since Sandy Hook. Those are pretty stunning numbers: 37 school shootings this year alone, more than 1 a week; 74 school shootings since Sandy Hook.

I will make the comment one more time, that we are becoming accomplices in these mass murders. We are becoming complicit in this murder of children all across our country. When we do nothing, when we sit on our hands idly as children are gunned down all across our country, we send a message of acceptance that we can do practical things that will lessen the chance that people will be killed in our schools and in our homes and in our neighborhoods.

I will not go through the list right now, but we also can send a message that enough is enough. That message, frankly at this point, is probably just as important as the practical effects of the laws we would change.

I thank the Presiding Officer for her great work on bringing the issue of college affordability to the point where we have reached a national debate around what we can do to try to relieve families of the crippling debt sitting on top of them today. As the youngest Member of this body, I perhaps know in as personal terms as anyone else about what this burden means for my wife and myself who continue to owe money on our student loans, and for our neighbors and friends who are in similar positions.

I want to tell you a story today of one such family, a namesake of mine, the Murphys from Killingworth—no relation. Dennis Murphy recently wrote me about his family's story. Dennis is 52 years old and has five kids. His parents emigrated here from County Kerry, Ireland, and he was born in New York. His family lived in a small apartment in the Bronx. While Dennis was still a boy, his family moved to a house in East Haven, CT, which his father called the promised land.

His father died at the age of 50, when Dennis was 14 years old. Since the family was poor and the father did not have life insurance, Dennis could not afford to go to college himself, so he went straight to work. He was lucky enough to find a job working for the railroad, working as a locomotive engineer for Metro North. He still works at that job, Dennis does, making a good living and earning a solid upper middle-class salary.

Dennis wanted to provide a better life for his own family. So he worked as much as he could, took as many hours as he could, he took as many extra shifts as possible, he worked on holidays, and he was eventually able to make his life better, make his family's life a little bit better. They bought a house in Killingworth. He hoped his kids would get to go to college. One of his daughters has a learning disability and needs extra support, so that took up a decent amount of the family's income, but his oldest son Dennis Murphy, Jr., was a good student in high school, made the honor roll.

When Dennis junior was accepted to the University of Albany, Dennis was so proud that his son would receive the college degree that he never did. Dennis junior worked since the age of 16 to do his part to be able to afford college. He continued working all throughout college. Dennis junior seldom asked his dad for any money. Unlike many of his friends, Dennis junior actually graduated within 4 years.

But the family still had to contribute to Dennis junior's education. So without any money saved away, with money going to pay for the house and for raising five kids and for their daughter's learning disabilities, Dennis had to take out PLUS loans that ultimately totaled over $100,000. Because the interest rate on the loans is fixed at 8.5 percent, the minimum monthly payments were around $700 to $800 a month. With their mortgage payments and the rest of their living expenses, Dennis cannot afford to pay this amount, even with his good salary. Frankly, like a lot of Americans, he did not realize when he first took the loans how the interest would add up over 4 years, nor did he understand how much the monthly payments would be.

The stress of wondering how they are ever going to pay back this huge debt has caused a lot of tension in the family, a lot of arguments within his formerly close family. Sometimes Dennis says he wonders whether he should have let his son go to college at all. Even though Dennis junior has a new good job earning $20 an hour because of his degree, it is not enough for him to be able to contribute significantly to paying off these loans either.

Dennis's family came to America, got that little apartment in the Bronx for reasons that are familiar to nearly every one of us in this Chamber, this idea that if you came to the United States, you had a shot to move and move quickly, a fair shot at economic mobility. My family came from Ireland about two generations before Dennis's, but it was the same reason that brought them here to the United States. It was education that was the vehicle for advancement.

You know, it was not a myth. It was not a story that they told in places such as Ireland and Italy and Poland. It was true that if you came here and did your work and played by the rules and saved a little bit of money you could go to college and you could do significantly better than your parents did. But the reality is that idea, that truism of America being the home of the greatest level of economic mobility in the world is becoming a myth. The odds today that a young person will go to college if their parents did not is 29 percent.

That is one of the lowest rates in the industrialized world. Think of it the other way. Seventy percent of kids whose parents didn't go to college will never go to college. Seventy percent of kids who didn't go to college will essentially be destined to live the same

life and take in the same income level their parents did. That is a stunning lack of economic mobility.

The truth is that it is getting worse specifically for a particular group of Americans. For African Americans, the gap between those with a college degree in the African-American community and in the White community has gone from 13 points 20 years ago to 20 points today. The gap for Latinos was 18 points 20 years ago, and it is 25 points today. So for African Americans and Latinos, that dream of economic mobility is getting even further away than for other folks.

America used to be No. 1 in the world with respect to the amount of young adults with college degrees. We are 12th in the world today. In a very short period of time we have gone from leading the world in college graduates to becoming rather middling.

You don't, frankly, need a college degree for one thing: You don't need a college degree to figure out why fewer people have college degrees. Here it is: Since 1989 the cost of college has gone up by 307 percent and income for the average family has gone up by 72 percent. You don't need a degree in mathematics or a graduate degree in rocket science to understand that when you have this disparity between the growth in income and the growth in the cost of college, you are going to leave millions of families on the outside when it comes to accessing the apparatus of opportunity that has historically made this country the place where economic mobility was more real than anywhere else.

That is why this piece of legislation this week matters so much—because to Dennis the numbers are not going to lie. Dennis is going to go from paying 8.5 percent to about 6.4 percent. You think that is only about 2 percentage points. That is thousands of dollars in savings for the Murphys—thousands of dollars that today they don't have. That story can be multiplied hundreds of thousands of times. We think there are about 300,000 families just in the State of Connecticut who are going to be able to access a lower rate of interest based on the legislation we are going to pass this week. These numbers are pretty stunning, but the fact is that there are stories like Dennis's all across my State and all across this country, and we can do something about it this week.

As Senator HARKIN said—and let me finish with the thought that this is the beginning of the work we have to do—the reality is that it is very important to give students access to lower cost loans, as we will hopefully do this week. It is very important to lower the borrowing burden for families who have already taken out loans, but we actually have to get serious about this number. We actually have to get serious about bending this curve so that college isn't 307 percent more expensive another 20 years from today.

So I hope that in the reauthorization bill our committee, the HELP Committee, is going to undertake, an idea that has been put forward by myself, Senator SCHATZ, Senator SANDERS, and Senator MURRAY will get a fair airing; that is, the idea that we should start expecting some accountability when it comes to these schools that are getting billions of dollars in Federal aid. We send out $140 billion in Federal aid every year, and we really have very loose standards when it comes to affordability and outcome.

A group of schools is under the for-profit umbrella of a company called Corinthian in California. It has 50 percent of its students dropping out after 1 year and 36 percent of its students defaulting on their student loans. They charge $41,000 for a paralegal degree, and the local community college charges $2,500. That is a miserable set of outcomes. That is a total lack of affordability. Yet they collect $1.6 billion every year in Federal aid—$1.6 billion in Federal aid every year. Federal aid means you and me. Our taxpayer dollars are going to a school that is doing nothing about affordability and is delivering very bad outcomes.

So this bill is very important for the Murphys and hundreds of thousands of families like them. But our work is not done. It is time for us to agree that in addition to making it easier for students and families to afford college, it is finally time for Congress to put some real pressure on these schools to do something about the cost of tuition and the quality of degrees they provide. I am going to be very excited to cast my vote for this week's legislation, for the Murphys—no relation—and thousands of families like them in Connecticut.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. I rise today because we need a fair shot for the middle class. To join and stay in the middle class today, a college degree is more important than ever. In Hawaii, by 2018 about two of every three jobs will need some training or a degree past high school. But students are struggling to get ahead. We all know college costs have gone up way beyond inflation and students are borrowing more and more to pay for college.

Last week I joined several of the women in the Senate. We pointed out that student loan debt affects women more. Why? Because it takes longer to repay a student loan if, as a woman, you are making only 77 cents for every $1 a man makes.

I have heard from both men and women in Hawaii who are struggling under the burden of student loan debt, people such as Dawn from Honolulu, who told me, ''I've been teaching for over 3 years and can barely survive on my paycheck after paying student loans and rent,'' and Karen from Hilo, who said, ''Two of my three kids have loans that are almost non-repayable, given their size. They have a master's and almost-completed a PhD and one is home already using her expertise on our community. The other is coming this fall. Our prices are prohibitive enough without excessively high loans hanging over their heads.''

Their stories are not unique. Last year over 20,000 Hawaii undergraduates used Federal loans to pay for school. In Hawaii the average graduate with a bachelor's degree has over $23,000 in student loan debt.

Nationwide, overall student loan debt has skyrocketed to over $1.2 trillion. I know previous speakers have talked about that, but it bears repeating—$1.2 trillion nationwide in student loan debt. That is more than credit card debt or auto debt. The burden of student loan debt makes it very difficult to buy a home or start a family. Older Federal student loans are stuck at high rates of interest, and there is no option to refinance. Private loans often have even fewer consumer protections and higher rates.

In 2007 I was on the House-Senate conference committee for the bill that created the income-based loan repayment program signed into law by President Bush.

This week President Obama took Executive action to help more borrowers cap their student loan payments at 10 percent of their income. The administration will also extend partnerships with private companies, departments, and nonprofits to increase consumer protections and get the word out on existing programs. These are positive steps and ones that I have urged the President to take. But the President can only do so much on his own to help with student loan debt. Congress needs to do its part.

The bill we are discussing on the floor today would allow student loans to be refinanced down to today's low rate for new borrowers. Think about it. Just as homeowners can refinance a mortgage, we should allow student loans to be refinanced. Last year there was overwhelming bipartisan support for a bill keeping the student loan rates low for new loans.

I ask my Republican colleagues to join Democrats once again in voting for today's refinancing bill.

In addition to today's bill, I wish to point out another way we can combat student loan debt. A big reason students are taking on so much debt to go to college is the decline in State and Federal grants. Fewer college grants means more reliance on loans, resulting in more student debt.

In recent years State support for higher education has dropped. From 2008 to 2012 State higher education spending per student plummeted by 28 percent. That is a cut of over $2,000 per student on average.

At the Federal level, the Pell grant was once our main commitment to our students. Pell grants were the primary form of student aid to help low- and moderate-income students join and stay in the middle class.

Like the GI bill after World War II, which invested in our veterans, investing in low-income and moderate-income students pays off. From a strictly economic standpoint, we know these students get degrees, get better jobs, and pay taxes.

In the 1970s the Federal Pell grant covered nearly 80 percent of the cost of attendance at a 4-year instate public university. Today the Pell grant covers less than one-third.

To make matters worse, Congress chipped away at Pell grant eligibility and completely cut off the year-round Pell grant. In 2011, before this year-round program was eliminated, over 1,600 highly motivated Hawaii college students used year-round Pell grants to get a degree sooner. They are among 1.2 million students nationwide who used year-round Pell grants in that year alone.

One of those Hawaii students works in my office now—my University of Hawaii law school fellow, Janna Wehilani Ahu, who is on the floor with me. Her family is from a small fishing village in rural Hawaii Island. She graduated from Kamehameha Schools, the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and now attends the university's William S. Richardson School of Law. She used a summer Pell grant in 2010, and without it she says she wouldn't have been able to attend summer school and move more quickly toward a degree.

Wehi is one of many Hawaii students who have told me how Pell grants helped them. Another student, Lehua from Waianae, wrote:

> I would like to thank you for supporting the Pell Grant program. Pell Grants have allowed me to increase my education and [have] provided me with a higher paying job. Who would ever think that a country girl from Wai'anae—who grew up with society telling me that we had the lowest reading and math scores in the state of Hawaii, the highest of everything such as welfare, crime, teen pregnancy and substance abuse in the state—can get a college degree.
>
> Today, I . . . want to help people from Wai'anae to achieve their dreams.

Pell grants have made it possible for this Native Hawaiian, single mother, and country girl—as she calls herself—to be graduating with an associate's degree in early childhood education and transferring to the University of Hawaii West Oahu.

With ever-increasing college costs, we should be strengthening Pell grants, not cutting back on them. That is why I introduced the Pell Grant Protection Act with several my colleagues. Recognizing the importance of Pell grants, Congress has been providing discretionary funds for this program for over 40 years. It is time to put this program on the strong footing our students deserve by making this a mandatory funded program with a cost-of-living adjustment. The bill would also include an updated, clearer version of the year-round Pell grant.

The bill has the support of 25 national organizations representing students, professors, financial aid administrators, college presidents, and advocates for the middle class. The Associated Students of the University of Hawaii passed a resolution of support, and several University of Hawaii campus chancellors have also come out in support.

I also worked with my colleague, Senator MARY LANDRIEU of Louisiana, on a related Pell grant bill—her Middle Class CHANCE Act. Senator LANDRIEU's bill would restore year-round Pell grants, increase the Pell award to keep up with college costs, and let students use Pell grants for more semesters.

I look forward to working with Chairman HARKIN on these and other bills to make college more affordable. These efforts are investments in our young people and in our collective future. Today is a start, and I urge my colleagues to vote for Senator WARREN's refinancing bill.

Mahalo.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD Hawaii stories of student loan debt.

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

HAWAII STORIES OF STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Dawn from Honolulu wrote me to say:

''I've been teaching for over 3 years and can barely survive on my paycheck, after paying student loans and rent.''

Karen from Hilo wrote me to say:

''Two of my three kids have loans that are almost non-repayable, given their size. They have a masters and almost-completed PhD and one is home already using her expertise on our community. The other is coming this fall. Our prices are prohibitive enough without excessively high loans hanging over their heads.''

Jennifer from Kailua wrote:

''My mortgage is 3.25% but my $133,000 federal student loan . . . is stuck at 7.25%. Please . . . allow me to consolidate [or] refinance my loan.

''It is totally unfair that the federal government made more profit in 2013 off student loans than Apple made off its 2013 sales.''

Janna Wehilani Ahu's family is from a small fishing village in rural Hawaii Island, and she made it to Kamehameha Schools, UH Manoa, and UN Richardson School of Law. She used a summer Pell Grant in 2010, and without it, she says she wouldn't have been able to take summer school and move quicker toward a degree. This outstanding student works in my office right now—she's our UN Law School Patsy Mink fellow.

Ariana Ursua, who just finished her sophomore year at UH Manoa wrote me to say:

''As a 19-year-old paying for her own education, it's been stressful having to take out loans to receive a higher education. Thankfully, the Pell Grant decreases the amount of money I have to borrow. I am so grateful every time I complete my FAFSA and see that my Estimated Family Contribution is zero because I know that I'm granted the full Pell Grant amount. I have received about $10,000 from the Pell Grant for the past two years, which means less money I have to worry about paying back. If I didn't receive financial aid, such as the Pell Grant, I would be a lot more discouraged to further my education due to finances. Fortunately, the Pell Grant helps me sleep a little easier and study a little harder, and I am forever thankful.''

Lehua from Waianae wrote me to say:

''I would like to thank you for supporting the Pell Grant program. Pell Grants have allowed me to increase my education and [have] provided me with a higher paying job. Who would ever think that a country girl from Wai'anae—who grew up with society telling me that we had the lowest reading and math scores in the state of Hawaii, the highest of everything such as welfare, crime, teen pregnancy and substance abuse in the state—can get a college degree. Today, I . . . want to help people from Wai'anae to achieve their dreams. Pell Grants have made it possible for this Native Hawaiian, single mother and country girl to be graduating with my AS in Early Childhood Education and transferring to UH West Oahu.''

Tom Robinson is the former president of the Graduate Student Organization at the University of Hawaii in the meteorology department. He wrote me:

''If it wasn't for the Pell Grant, I wouldn't have gone to college. In fact, when I graduated from high school, I went to a bartending school because I didn't think my family could afford to send me to college. Now I am going for my PhD, so the Pell Grant was pretty important for my path in life.

''Between the federal Pell Grant and the state grant, my tuition, books, and transportation costs were covered so I didn't have to take out any loans at that time. It was pretty amazing and really helped my focus. I was able to graduate Cum Laude. When I transferred to The College of New Jersey, I ended up getting a job and I had to take out [over $20,000 in] loans for the rest of my undergraduate experience. My grades were not as good when I was at TCNJ.

Cristina from Kaimuki wrote:

''I am writing because I know you are committed to education and I have a concern to bring to your attention.

I . . . have accrued over $30,000 of student loan debt after 1998 receiving my undergraduate and graduate degrees. I teach in a critical shortage area, science. . . . Student loan debt is a major issue and taking action on my concern is a small step in the right direction.''

Edwyna from Honolulu wrote:

''Even President Obama and Michele JUST finished paying off their student loans 9 years ago. I struggled with high interest rates on student loans and it was crippling.''

David from Pahoa wrote:

''I'm hoping you already support Elizabeth Warren's Student Loan Plan. I made it through on the VA and a bunch of student loans that I wouldn't have taken otherwise, but I know these kids nowadays can't afford this indentured servitude, which is exactly what student loans have become.''

Ms. HIRONO. I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

ARMY-McCARTHY HEARINGS ANNIVERSARY

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I had the pleasure of speaking yesterday while the Presiding Officer was in the chair on the 242nd anniversary of the burning and sinking of the Gaspee by Rhode Island patriots. I am here today to mark the 60th anniversary of a different event which also occurred on the same day—June 9—60 years ago. It was a pivotal moment in the history of the Senate and, indeed, of the country. It was the 1954 Army-McCarthy hearings and the exchange

between Joseph Welch and Joseph McCarthy that changed this city and the world.

Six decades ago, America's national mood was marked by anxiety over the looming threat of communism. The victory of World War II had given way to the gripping tension of the Cold War. Communist power was on the rise in Eastern Europe and in China. American forces were at war in Korea.

Here in Congress the House Committee on Un-American Activities worked to sniff out Communist subversion within our borders, including the infamous Hollywood black list. One man in the Senate set out to exploit the fears of that time, and he came to symbolize the fearmongering of that fretful era.

Joseph McCarthy was a relatively unknown junior Senator from Wisconsin when, in February of 1950, he delivered a speech accusing Secretary of State Dean Acheson of harboring 205 known members of the American Communist Party within the State Department.

The charge was questionable and ill-supported. But the brazen accusation struck a nerve with an anxious American public, and Senator McCarthy rocketed to fame. Thus began a chilling crusade to flush out Communist subversion—real or contrived—from every corner of American society.

McCarthy's anticommunist witch hunt seemingly knew no bounds, as he launched investigations or often just allegations of disloyalty on the part of private citizens, public employees, entire government agencies, as well as the broadcasting and defense industries, universities—even the United Nations.

In 1953, the Republican Party gained a majority in the Senate, and McCarthy ascended to the chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Government Operations and its Subcommittee on Investigations. From those chairmanships, he dragged hundreds of witnesses before scores of hearings, publicly shaming and berating his targets. His fiery rhetoric and his remorseless mendacity intimidated critics and challengers. His accusations carried the power to destroy reputations, careers, and lives.

The effect of McCarthyism on 20th century American society was toxic. Prudent citizens shied from civic engagement. Meaningful political dissent withered. Criticism of American foreign policy evaporated. Even college campuses, our cradles of intellectual curiosity, were cowed by McCarthyism.

Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas called it ''the black silence of fear.'' Intimidated colleagues in this Chamber gave Joe McCarthy broad leeway to abuse Congress's constitutional powers of investigation and oversight. Harvard Law Dean Erwin Griswold described Chairman McCarthy's role as ''judge, jury, prosecutor, castigator, and press agent, all in one.''

This was the regime 60 years ago, in 1954, when U.S. Army officials accused McCarthy of exerting improper pressure to win preferential treatment for a subcommittee aide serving as an Army private. McCarthy countered that the Army accusation was retaliation for his investigations of them. The stage was set. The countercharges would be adjudicated, of course, in McCarthy's Subcommittee on Investigations.

The so-called Army-McCarthy hearings, held in a packed, smoke-filled Russell caucus room, would last 36 days and be aired on live broadcast television. Twenty million Americans tuned in during gavel-to-gavel coverage of our Nation's first great TV political spectacle—the precursor to the Watergate hearings, the Iran-Contra hearings, and the Thomas-Hill hearings.

Special counsel to the Army in those hearings was an avuncular Boston lawyer named Joseph Welch of the law firm then called Hale & Dorr. Here, in Washington, Joseph Welch was a nobody. He had no office, he had no position, he had no clout. But he was a good lawyer with a dry wit and unflappable demeanor. He also had a sense of fairness—a sense of fairness that was soon to become famously provoked by McCarthy's bullying. And he had that greatest virtue—courage—the virtue that makes all other virtues possible.

On June 9, 1954, Joseph Welch challenged Senator McCarthy's aide, Roy Cohn, to actually produce McCarthy's supposed secret list of subversives working at defense facilities. Since there likely was no such list, McCarthy needed a distraction. So he lit into an accusatory attack in a traditional McCarthyite way on a lawyer in Welch's firm, a young lawyer—indeed, an associate within the firm, Fred Fisher, a young man who was not even in the hearing room to defend himself—accusing him of various Communist associations and inclinations.

Welch responded:

> Until this moment, Senator, I think I never really gauged your cruelty or your recklessness.

Had Senator McCarthy been a smarter man, he would have sensed the warning in those words. But he didn't. He pressed his attack and refused to let up on young Fred Fisher. Welch angrily cut Senator McCarthy short.

> Let us not assassinate the lad any further, Senator. You have done enough. Have you no sense of decency, sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?

Thirty words. If you count them, it is just 30 words. But with those 30 words, suddenly something happened, something changed. The emperor suddenly had no clothes.

There had been such an avalanche of words from McCarthy over the years—of lies, of accusations, of hyperbole. And these 30 words—these few short sentences—stopped all of that roughshod hypocrisy in its tracks.

Welch declared an end to McCarthy's questioning, and the gallery of onlookers, on behalf of a nation, burst into applause. The black-and-white footage shows McCarthy asking Roy Cohn, ''What happened?'' What happened was that a spell was broken. The web of fear woven by McCarthy over Washington, DC, began unraveling.

Near the end of the hearing, Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri faced McCarthy down. After an angry exchange, he rose and walked out to come here to vote. As Chairman Karl Mundt of South Dakota gaveled the hearing into recess, Joe McCarthy kept on railing about Communist conspiracies. As he railed on, Senators, reporters, and members of the gathered audience steadily filed out of the room, leaving him shouting. The spell was broken.

Six months later the Senate voted 67 to 22 to censure Senator Joseph McCarthy. Four years later, he was dead at the age of 48. Historians agree he drank himself to death. His fall from grace and demise were nearly as rapid as his rise was meteoric, consistent with the ancient principle: Climb ugly; fall hard.

Very often—indeed, too often—political outcomes in Washington are determined by the political weight and the wealth of contesting forces vying for power. It is brute force against brute force. It makes us wonder, is that all there is to this? Is this just an arena of combat, where huge special interests lean against each other trying to shove each other around, each for their own greed and benefit?

This incident 60 years ago is an eternal lesson of what a difference one person can make. A regular American, a nobody in Washington, good at his craft, good in his character, and in the right place at the right time, a man who knew what was right, broke the fever of virulent political frenzy that had captured Washington; one private lawyer's sincere, direct outrage at a cruel attack on his young associate, a few words from a Boston lawyer who had just had enough turned the tide of history. May we never forget in this world of vast and often corrupt political forces the power of one person to make a difference.

I yield the floor.

Madam President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mr. MARKEY. Madam President, I was the first in my family to go to college. I drove an ice cream truck to work my way through Boston College as a commuter. I did the same thing to go to law school. I lived at home all the

way through college and law school in order to be able to afford to go to college. As a result, I had to take out Federal loans like so many millions of American students have to do today. But here is the thing. If the owner of the ice cream truck company I worked for wanted to refinance the loan he had for the trucking fleet, he could do that. If my parents wanted to refinance the mortgage on their house, they could do that. But if I wanted to refinance my student loans as would every single student today, I was out of luck, and that is not right, that is not fair, and that needs to change.

In Massachusetts, as the Presiding Officer knows better than anyone, we recognize that education is a ladder of opportunity that allows every child to maximize their God-given abilities. It is the best path to middle class success and economic opportunity. The big dreams of college should never be thwarted by the small print of student loan agreements. The economic opportunities that students have because they graduate should not be accompanied by the hopelessness from overwhelming debt—almost like the mythical Sisyphus with a boulder on his shoulders, trying to go up the side of a mountain. That is how students feel with their student debt as they graduate from colleges and universities across this country. So in the same way that mortgage refinancing helps mortgage holders who are underwater, students drowning in debt should benefit from refinancing their student loans at a lower rate.

Today more than 70 percent of America's students borrow money to attend college. The average student graduates from college owing nearly $30,000. Americans today owe almost $1.2 trillion in student loans, more than is owed on credit cards. Almost 1 million people in Massachusetts currently owe more than $24 billion in student debt. Thirty percent of young borrowers nationwide are unable to keep up with their payments and are in default, forbearance or deferment. That kind of debt makes it difficult to start a family, buy a home or save for retirement. Reports show that high student loan debt deters our promising minds from enrolling in graduate programs. That means fewer highly skilled workers, which harms our economy now and makes us less competitive in the world economy in the future.

There is a way to make it easier for those of us who have student loan debts and to put more money in their pockets every single month. That is to listen to the wisdom of our Presiding Officer, to make sure that people here in this Chamber and across our country listen to this guiding light that you are creating for our country to be able to move from this present world where debt so saddles young people that they really cannot ever plan to realize all of their dreams, to a new vision of what might be possible in lowering this burden on young people across our country.

Last year the Congress passed legislation that lowered Federal student loan interest rates for new borrowers but did nothing for existing borrowers. So today interest rates for new borrowers are just under 4 percent while rates for older borrowers are around 7 percent for recent undergraduates and even higher for some older borrowers. The bill which you have introduced as the senior Senator from Massachusetts simply allows 25 million eligible student loan borrowers the option of refinancing down to the rates offered to new Federal student loan borrowers this year.

The bill allows eligible student loan borrowers to refinance their private loans into the Federal program. Many parents cosigned the private loans for their children and are on the hook if their children default on these loans. Your legislation will save existing student loan borrowers thousands of dollars to help them get ahead, not fall behind. This money can be used to help pay for the downpayment on a new home, to start a new business or to start a family. This is one more way to give Americans a fair shot at the American dream. So we thank you for your leadership on this issue. We thank you for laying out a pathway to make it a slightly easier place for young people to be as they leave college, as they have this debt on their shoulders.

When I was in school the interest rate was 3 percent. Those loans were called national defense student loans. Emblazoned over the Boston Public Library it reads: ''The education of its people is the best defense of a nation.'' That is what it says across the Boston Public Library. That is what we have to once again understand, that the first generation that was the beneficiary had 3 percent loans. This generation—in a much more wealthy country—has loans at 6, 7, 8, 9 percent and more, and that just makes it very difficult for them to maximize their God-given abilities in the same way that the Members of the Senate were able to maximize theirs.

We have a responsibility to this generation to go back to that original message, to go back to that incredible plan that was put together after World War II to finally democratize access to education for every family, for every child who wanted to work towards improving themselves. Those national defense student loans understood that the best defense of a Nation is the education of its people. That is how we preserve order and liberty within our society, and that is what your proposal does.

By using the Buffett rule, by using the offset which says to billionaires and millionaires in our country that you are just going to pay the same taxes as the middle class, well, then we finance something that is really critical. We finance the dreams and the hopes of young people in our country, so that the debt they have to shoulder after they leave college is not so burdensome that they never really can fully realize their dreams.

So I ask all my colleagues to support Senator WARREN's legislation. I think it is going to be without question at the top of the list of the most important work we do in this Chamber this year, and I call upon my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to respond in the kind of bipartisan way that the American people want, those 40 million families that need relief from this oppressive burden of student loan debt.

With that, I thank the Presiding Officer for her leadership.

I yield back the remainder of my time, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. 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. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, tomorrow the Senate has a historic and magnificent opportunity to increase everybody's fair shot at the American dream—everyone's fair shot at a college education that enables and opens the American dream to people who come from families where college was an unachievable aspiration. I know about those families because I come from one of them. I am the first man in my family to have a college education, not to mention the opportunity to go to law school.

There are a couple of hard, practical facts, apart from all the rhetoric about the American dream. The fact is today college education is a major—maybe the most important determinant—of income. It is one of the major determinants of employment. The employment rate for college graduates is much higher than for those who lack it. In fact, the unemployment rates for college graduates are half or less than what they are for those who lack that education.

College education—in fact, education in general—is the single most important instrument of social mobility in this country. It is a way for people to reach the middle class or for families to stay in the middle class. Right now, the middle class is squeezed in every direction by so many different economic factors and pressures, and the cost of a college education is one of the most pressing of them.

So we have the opportunity tomorrow to enable countless people to take advantage of the American dream in a very hardheaded, practical way by enabling all college graduates or others who have student loans to reduce the charges—the interest rates—on those loans to a lower rate that is the lowest rate acceptable.

I thank the Presiding Officer for her leadership in championing this cause before it reached the Senate floor—way before it became the fashionable and

popular issue it has become. I thank also the President of the United States who, by Executive action, has helped to ease the burden of those college loans to thousands of current student debtholders. He has recognized the importance of reducing that burden by expanding a program that was passed by Congress in 2010, tying monthly student debt payments to a portion of the debtholder's discretionary income. He has expanded that program to include many of those debtholders before the date that it is currently operative, and I thank him for that step, but it is a minor step compared to what we have the opportunity to do tomorrow in realizing an opening to the American dream for many students who have already been through education and now carry interest rates on their debt of 8, 10, 11 percent. It is an opportunity not only for them to reduce that interest rate but also for the economy to take advantage of their purchasing power that will be unleashed—consumer demands that will be enlarged—because people are more likely to buy homes, start families, begin businesses, become entrepreneurs, be innovators and inventors, who right now are making career choices because they are saddled with debt that forces them to pay interest rates much higher than current students do.

It is not a forgiveness program. They will continue to pay the principal on that debt. It is not a free ride or a handout. They simply get the benefit of the interest rates that our friends across the aisle thought was absolutely right, just months ago, when applied to the existing program.

So this opportunity is a commonsense, simple measure to provide some relief to people struggling under a debt load that is suffocating to them, their futures, their families, and our economy's future.

I believe sincerely there are equally important measures that eventually we need to take in this body, in this Congress, in this Nation, to make college more affordable. The costs of tuition and college expenses need to be brought down. The grants we provide—so-called Pell grants—and scholarships that come from other sources need to be expanded and increased. The opportunities for people who incur debt to work down or work off that debt through public service can be dramatically and drastically enhanced for their benefit and for the benefit of our communities and country that will stand to be forthcoming by their policing, their teaching, their firefighting, their public service that can be, in effect, rewarded and incentivized by enabling them to work down or work off those debts.

These programs are a moral imperative, as is affording the opportunity of students to discharge in bankruptcy those debts when they simply cannot fulfill them, but this idea of giving everybody the benefit of the lowest possible interest rates that will be part of the bill we vote on tomorrow is a solid and sound and vitally important beginning.

We enable homeowners to refinance and car buyers to refinance and many other kinds of debtholders to refinance but not student loans. That is a discrimination, maybe not unlawful but still a distinction that makes no sense either from the standpoint of our economy or the interests of the debtors. So I hope we will give them a fair shot but also impose a basic and fundamental tenet, an ethos of fairness: If it is good enough for home loans and car loans, why not for student loans?

We should not be adopting policies that encourage people to give up on their dreams. In fact, we ought to be doing just the opposite, making young people feel their dreams are within reach.

I will close by saying to my colleagues that in the last months I have been listening around the State of Connecticut—at roundtables and meetings—to both high school students and college students about this issue of college affordability. What is so inspiring to me, in the meetings I have had—in places such as Ansonia, Windham, and Bridgeport—is the drive and determination of our students to embark on a college education. They know its value, its realistic value, its cost, and they want to do it because they know it is a way up. They are gaining and they are giving back.

But many of them have to make compromises. They have been admitted to schools. Their first choice is a first-rate school, but they cannot put together the package financially that will enable them to go. It is beyond reach financially, even as it is within their grasp intellectually. So they may compromise—maybe the first of other compromises that they will make throughout their lives, as they pursue careers, as they have to make hard choices. But at that age, those compromises should not be driven simply by financial imperatives. They should have the best education that is possible for them, and this country should make it available, not just for their sake but for all of ours.

I have been listening to college students who are leaving—at the commencement addresses I have given at law schools, as well as colleges—listening to students talk about their futures as well, futures that will be compromised because of the debt they have, an average of $27,000 to $30,000 in the State of Connecticut alone, and it is similar in many States around the country and the reason we have $1.2 trillion in debt overall today.

They will compromise in doing a job that may be more lucrative but less rewarding, less so to them and less so to our economy, less so to our society—a lesser way of earning a living in terms of its impact in contributing to our social fabric, qualify of life. They may not be teaching, they may not be policing, they may not be doing things that give back to our society because they need the income, the higher income to pay back that debt.

So those compromises affect all of us as well. They are done because they simply cannot afford either to go to the school of their first choice or the career of their first choice, but the government can afford to give them a lower interest rate. We know the government can do so because right now it is profiting off the backs of students in billions and billions of dollars. The estimates range, over a 5-year period, from $66 billion to other amounts. We know the government will continue to profit even at lower interest rates from the Student Loan Program.

So let's have less profit to the government, better well-being in our communities, and fairer treatment for our students—a fair shot for them and their families and for all who have as their objective simply to better their lives and gain a fair shot at the American dream.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

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

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

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise to speak about a challenge that is confronting our middle-class families all across my home State of Pennsylvania and across the country. The Presiding Officer knows this issue well and has worked tirelessly to enact measures of public policy to confront this problem. We have an opportunity now with her leadership, as well as other leaders in the Senate, to work together on what I think is the kind of legislation that will help those middle-income families.

The Bank on Students Emergency Refinancing Act, of which I am a proud cosponsor, is an opportunity for the Senate, folks in both parties who hear from middle-class families all the time about a range of issues. I doubt there is any issue we hear about more often than the cost of higher education. So I wish—as I am sure many other Members of this body do—to ensure that every student in our States, and for me every student in Pennsylvania, gets something very fundamental, a fair shot to attend college and reach their full potential.

The bill we are considering would help students who have private and public loans in good standing from before July 1 of 2013. It allows them the chance to refinance those loans at a 3.6 percent interest level, the level that was agreed to in last summer's bipartisan student loan compromise. This compromise, as we might remember, passed the Senate overwhelmingly, 81 to 18.

With interest rates near record lows, homeowners, businesses, and even local

governments with good credit regularly can refinance their debts, but few if any students have that same option. Why should more Americans not be helped by the opportunity to pay a lower interest rate?

That is a question I think we all ask tonight and in the days we are debating this issue. More than 40 million Americans owe almost $1.2 trillion in student loan debt, much more than is owed, for example, on credit cards. According to the Institute for College Access & Success, as of the year 2012 Pennsylvania ranked third in the Nation in the highest average student debt indicated—nearly $32,000 per student is the number in Pennsylvania—and 70 percent of graduates in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania leave college with debt, the fourth highest of any State in the Union. Too many young Americans cannot get ahead because they cannot get out from under the burden of student debt.

Because of their debt, many Americans are unable to buy a home, save for retirement, start a business or even start a family. This hurts the economy terribly and it makes the American dream so much harder for young Americans to reach. At an 18-year low, the rate of home ownership among young people has been cut in half since 2001. A recordbreaking number of young adults are still living in their parents' homes.

This high level of student debt makes it harder for entrepreneurs to start new businesses and create jobs. Entrepreneurial activity among 20- to 34-year-olds is at the lowest level in 20 years. We know this bill can help at least 1.2 million Pennsylvanians and more than 25 million across the Nation, according to the Department of Education.

Based on calculations from the Congressional Research Service, a typical Pennsylvanian who owed the State average, nearly $32,000 in student debt, would be able to save more than $4,000 over the life of their loan. This bill would not only save millions for Americans, but the bill itself would save the Federal Government more than $14 billion over 10 years, based on figures from the Congressional Budget Office.

A college education, we all know, is the surest path to middle-class success and is still the best investment a student can make. Getting a college degree opens the door to job opportunities for the average worker. That means $1 million more in earnings over a lifetime compared to those who only go as high as a high school diploma.

So college education is indeed tied directly to the economic success of young people across the country. This bill is a step in the right direction and would do much to tackle the problem of student loan debt. However, Congress and the Nation still have a lot of work to do to make college affordable for all of our children. What we are talking about is something very fundamental. All we are asking is that the House and the Senate, both parties, come together to give students and their families just a fair shot.

That is all they are asking for. They are basically saying to us, especially middle-class families are saying to us: You folks in Washington talk all the time about the middle class, but you need to act on our behalf. Unfortunately, they do not see enough action coming out of Washington that directly impacts their lives, that directly has an impact on their economic fortune, their economic future.

This is one of those rare opportunities with one vote, with one bill we can have a substantial positive impact on the lives of literally millions of Americans as soon as the bill is enacted into law.

I would venture to say that when you talk to any middle-class family, if student loans and the cost of college is not the No. 1 issue they mention, it is certainly in the top two or three. For most middle-class families it is No. 1. Yet they have not seen much in the way of direct action that we can take in Washington to provide a measure of relief—not a magic wand, not eliminating all the pressure and all the worries that people have when it comes to affording college.

This is one bill that can provide some relief, some needed relief, especially when young people are trying to buy a home, invest in their families, start a business, and begin their life after higher education. I ask that we all come together on this legislation and provide a measure of relief to middle-class families and, by virtue of doing that, a badly needed injection into our economy.

I yield the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, tomorrow, the Senate will vote to proceed to a bill that I am proud to cosponsor, to allow students to refinance their student loans at lower interest rates. We must take this commonsense approach to allow those with student loans to take advantage of historically low interest rates.

It should go without saying that student loan costs should not rise so high that students cannot repay. Yet in recent years, average college tuition rates have climbed faster than inflation, far outpacing student financial aid. Since 1985, the cost of attending college has risen by 559 percent, and last school year alone, instate tuition and fees at public 4-year institutions were on average 8.3 percent higher than in the previous year.

Debt caused by student loans has surpassed the level of credit card debt in the United States. In Vermont, there are 99,000 people with Federal student loans representing more than $2 billion in debt. This not only affects those borrowers and their families, but it has a devastating effect on the economy as a whole—particularly in the housing market. Student loan debt is preventing many would-be first-time home buyers from saving enough to afford a down payment. High student loan debt, combined with the housing lending climate, has left many unable to secure a mortgage. Experts are worried that the high level of student loan debt is one of the reasons the housing market has been slow to recover.

This bill would help those suffering with the burden of student loan debt by offering them the opportunity to refinance at lower interest rates. We offer refinancing options to businesses, homeowners, and even local governments. These options should be available to students, too. The legislation would help roughly 25 million borrowers keep up with their student loan payments by allowing them to refinance at the same rates that new borrowers receive. Combined with the Executive action announced this week by President Obama to give more students the ability to cap monthly payments, this bill is an important step toward relieving the student debt burden so many Americans face.

I regularly hear from Vermonters about their struggles to afford a college education, and their concerns about student loan debt after they graduate. Many students are forced to take on significant debt, and too often are not able to complete college because of soaring costs. For those students who do go on to graduate, record student loan debt has made getting ahead in today's job market an insurmountable challenge for some students. Students who might otherwise choose to work in the public sector or other historically lower paying jobs like primary health care or teaching professions must make professional choices based solely on their level of debt. Unfortunately, along with the pressure from student loan debt has come an increase in default rates among borrowers, which will affect a student's financial stability for decades.

I have always firmly believed in the importance of a college education. I was the first Leahy in my family to graduate from college. Every young person should have the chance to pursue higher education. Education is a path out of poverty, a road to personal growth, and an access ramp to professional accomplishment and economic security. Everyone wins when access to education expands.

Each opportunity for a young American to earn a college education is also an opportunity for the Nation's future. Our country's ability to compete in the global marketplace in the future depends on our children's ability to finance their education. This does not need to be a partisan issue and should be one where we can find widespread agreement.

I urge every Senator to help us move ahead to support our students, their futures, and our country's future. This issue deserves to be debated in the Senate.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, 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.

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

TRIBUTE TO GREGORY SANFORD

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, when Vermonters contemplate the history of our great State, many think fondly of our former State archivist, Gregory Sanford. With his flowing gray beard and quick wit, Gregory is a noted scholar on all things relating to Vermont's history and culture. Gregory retired from his post as the Vermont State archivist in 2012. The appreciation of the extent of Gregory's intellect and influence is not limited to Vermonters. His impressive career was recently chronicled in Archival Outlook, a publication of the Society of American Archivists.

Throughout his career, Gregory Sanford served as a critical resource for journalists, legislators, town moderators, and anyone else searching to put today's events into historical context. He brought excitement to the daunting but essential task of preserving State records. It was his vision, passion, and ability to anticipate the myriad of ways that technology would alter the job of State archivist that set Gregory Sanford apart. As the Archival Outlook piece notes, Gregory spent his career imagining innovative solutions to difficult problems with limited resources.

During his years as State archivist, Gregory was also an ambitious author who worked to explain how our laws affect the lives of everyday Vermonters, often invoking colorful analogies to do so. His regular column, ''Voices from the Vault,'' never lacked for detail or readership. In short, Gregory brought history to life, and worked tirelessly to preserve it, which is precisely why this profile of Gregory Sanford is entitled, ''The Sense of Wonder.'' My State of Vermont is so fortunate for his many contributions, and I ask unanimous consent that the Archival Outlook article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From Archival Outlook]

THE SENSE OF WONDER

VERMONT STATE ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION BUILDING NAMED FOR GREGORY SANFORD

(By Terry Cook and Helen Samuels)

Most archivists work in buildings devoted, in whole or part, to preserving historical archives or managing dormant institutional records. Over the course of their careers, some get the opportunity to participate in the design of new buildings for these purposes. A mere handful are privileged to lead teams to conceptualize, design, build, and occupy a combined historical archives and records center. But only rare—and very special—archivists do all that and then have such multipurpose buildings named in their honor—in fact, only one to our knowledge in the United States. Our colleague and friend, Gregory Sanford, is that rarest of archivists. This is his story, or at least the story of why he achieved this signal and singular honor.[1]

Professional innovator and leader on many fronts, our Gregory is modest to a fault. Part of this is his genuine belief that he is just working away, trying the best he could to make a difference, in a small state in a far corner of the country, neither looking for nor expecting recognition from practicing a profession that he loves so well. Many people in life who are modest have much to be modest about, but not Gregory, for he has envisioned, thought, and accomplished much, and in so doing set some valuable models for our profession.

One marvels over the scope of his publications, both formal and scholarly, and much more pervasively and influential, his hundreds of newspaper columns and lively speeches given all across his state, in schools, before local societies, in the broader New England region, and beyond, as well as before hundreds of meetings of legislative committees, all extolling the merits of archives and good records management, demonstrating through story and character, wild analogies and moving metaphors (more on that later!) The power of archives to inform, educate, transform, and amuse—and (as the official building plaque notes) create a ''sense of wonder'' about the past and its impact on all Vermont citizens.

He transformed a state papers office of one person located in a tiny office, with shared records storage in the basement of the executive office building, into a dynamic institution, the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA), currently with fourteen staff members, an updated archives and records law (that he authored), and a newly renovated and expanded archival and records center building. In accomplishing this, Gregory has worked tirelessly with legislators, bureaucrats, educators, media, and anyone who would listen, to give records management, and especially for digital records, both visibility and strategic direction for his state in the information world. The result is a resuscitated records management service now exists under the control of the state archivist, rather than languishing in the state's general services department.

His highly innovative use of the archives and its collections to frame and give context to current issues of debate in the state, so citizens and legislators do not ignore the wisdom of past, is especially admirable. This ''continuing issues'' approach to archival public programming makes the relevance of archives very apparent to citizens and sponsors, legislators and media personnel, beyond the well-known uses of archives for history, genealogy, and general support to government. In effect, and not without some political risk to himself, Gregory has championed the fundamental principle of archives being arsenals for democracy through an informed citizenry. For controversial issues facing the state and its legislators, he repeatedly uncovered past precedents where denials flourished that such existed; outlined forgotten past examples of workable government processes where chaos now reigned until his intervention; showed that sacred cows of state policy assumed to be sacrosanct since time immemorial had in fact changed many times, and could thus be readily changed again. In his column, Voices from the Vault, appearing in the Secretary of State's monthly publication, as well as on the VSARA web site, Gregory applied his vast knowledge of state records and Vermont history, its constitution and laws, and his own wide reading and sense of wonder. Gregory thus for many years kept ''continuing issues'' burning, showing the relevance of archives and records to living life now. So much so that legislators and media turned to him for ''backgrounders'' on many public issues, and those he gave them in his interviews and in his Voices from the Vault columns—always with flare, good humor, and self-deprecation, but also with dedication, passion, and keen intelligence.

Despite his tiny resource base in the state archives and many pressing home and family responsibilities, Gregory has, as a committed professional, applied for and received several NHPRC grants. He wanted to push the frontiers of archival and records management research, strategy, and best practice, to try to understand, codify, and share more widely the lessons he was learning in Vermont with his wider profession. The most noted of these, in our opinion, was the Vermont State Information Strategy Plan (VISP), in which we both had marginal roles as consultants, but enough to observe the project first hand.

VISP was a gubernatorial initiative embracing executive agencies. Though the archives was not originally envisioned as a VISP participant, Gregory succeeded in getting it a place at the table. He had been impressed by some of the appraisal thinking occurring in the archival profession in the late 1980s centered around functional analysis and macroappraisal. Instead of appraising records by their subject and informational-value content, which is impossible for modern records given their huge extent in paper, their interconnectedness across many creating institutions in our complex world, and their transient digital formats, archival theorists like Hans Booms in Germany, Helen Samuels in the United States, and Terry Cook in Canada shifted the focus for appraisal to the functional context of creation: which functions, programs, and activities within which structural entities would be most likely to produce the best records, including evidence of citizen's interaction with the state, rather than which of the billions of modern records themselves might have potential research value.

Gregory was impressed by these ideas, but he took functional analysis a step further, and built it back into the information system planning of the state. Based on research into the mandates, structures, and especially functions, programs, and activities of every state agency, he automated the results to produce a grid that matched functional activity with the several (sometimes many) offices performing aspects of that activity. He demonstrated that promotion and control of tourism, for example, was spread around nine separate agencies that did not talk to each other, or that a single mother with dependent children at school, when seeking benefits, would have to contact and then fill in similar information on application forms for each of the twelve agencies. By revealing this overlap and duplication, VISP permitted consolidation, in a virtual sense, of these programs through information systems that talked to each other for greater effectiveness, reduced duplication and inefficiency, made things easier for clients of the government to get service (applying once, not twelve times), helped the state promote itself (tourists now got one effective consolidated message when they wrote, rather than

perhaps a few of nine partial ones). And of course archival appraisal could now be focussed functionally on the location of the best records in the VISP matrix to document the state's activities with its citizens, because the state's functions had finally been mapped and understood.

Though support for VISP waned with changing gubernatorial administrations, the Vermont State Archives and Records Administration, through the collaborative work of Gregory and his deputy (and now successor) Tanya Marshall, used VISP insights to model and then encourage state agencies to move to a functions-based, multiple-access-point, facet-designed file-classification system for its records management programs.

Our Gregory achieved innovative results with minimal resources and much imagination. He is one of those effective facilitators working with ''power'' behind the scenes, as well as frequently and openly in the public and media, to make things happen. He is not just a dreamer and thinker, orator and writer, thorough researcher and master storyteller, though he does all that with considerable aplomb. He is also a roll-up-the-sleeves practical archival administrator who builds buildings, writes laws, plans and carries out ambitious programs, and lobbies effectively for his profession with panache and passion.

But what of ''the sense of wonder''? While the dedication plaque on Gregory's building recognizes his ''devoted service'' to archives and public records, which we trust the foregoing account justifies, what state formally memorializes ''the sense of wonder'' of any of its public servants? Indeed, what government anywhere celebrates ''the sense of wonder'' through a building dedication? To understand that, we need to turn from what he did for historical archives and managing public records to how he did it, to that sense of panache and passion just mentioned, to ''the sense of wonder'' he so often felt himself and shared so effectively with others.

While the sense of wonder most especially describes Gregory's endless curiosity and voracious reading, to say nothing of his being a mountain of a man with a huge improbable beard, what made that sense of wonder as state archivist so special was his endless commitment to inform Vermont citizens about the value and relevance of public records, but always in the most engaging fashion. In this way he passed on to those readers his own sense of wonder.

During Vermont's bicentennial celebration in 1991, for example, Gregory organized a series of debates to engage Vermont citizens around issues of current importance, such as the death penalty and term limits. These debates were held in each of the several cities that served over time as the state's capital. While Gregory explored current issues, he was always able to provide historical context, through stories and examples drawn from his deep historical understanding of the records. Citizens were empowered to feel at the center of their government, working through contemporary issues themselves with rich historical context to temper and inform debate.

Gregory used his many speaking engagements to offer wry perspectives on record and information management. Regularly invited to address freshmen legislators as part of their orientation, Gregory once introduced the importance of the ''big picture'' of records management through an analysis of the impact of dog urine on trees in New York City! Two dogs at one fire hydrant that you see at brief glance, is one thing; almost seven million gallons of urine squirted annually on expensive (and now dying) city trees is quite another picture. Similarly, one shelving bay of records in the corner office is one thing; millions of documents across scores of agencies, if not well managed in a statewide integrated recordskeeping system, is quite another. We suspect those legislators went home and never quite forgot that image, records management, or Gregory. Nor would they have forgotten the man who appeared before them, based on a daughter's dare, with his huge beard newly dyed a bright fuchsia color!

But Voices from the Vault was his regular forum to demonstrate the relevance of records to current debates, but always incorporating that special touch of Gregory's humor and his own sense of wonder. Here is a fine example from his January 2011 Voices from the Vault column that, additionally, provides insight into his goal for his columns:

''Most people, alas, don't find records/archival management a particularly titillating topic. Therefore I usually start my column with some misdirection, attempting to ensnare readers before they realize they are reading about records. This month I appeal to the reader's prurient interests and offer a sex column. Female dragonflies, according to those who study such things, possess 'sperm storage organs.' These are special sites which incubate sperm, keeping it alive for months until the female is ready for fertilization. Male dragonflies, however, are only concerned with passing along their own genes. To them, the thought of the females cheerfully flying about, slowly incubating the genes of rivals is not a happy one. So, over time, the sexual organ of the male dragonfly evolved to include a little scoop. This allows the male to empty out the female's storage organ before filling it with his own seed.

''Government is like that. New administrations, secretaries, and commissioners arrive in Montpelier and immediately clear out the records of the previous occupants. They then refill the various storage organs of government with records of their own programs and initiatives. I confess that the analogy is not exact since in many cases those leaving government clean out their own record storage units before departing.

''The news media comment on these transitions often speculating on the legacy of the departing administration. This impulse to quickly define a particular administration's legacy raises numerous interesting issues, notably the tension between continuity and change inherent to our democratic system of government. In other words, to what degree are we documenting the continuities of government and to what degree are we documenting the initiatives and actions of specific administrations or state officers? Obviously these are not mutually exclusive efforts, but they require decisions over what files should be left in situ for continuity of operations; what records should be sent to the state archives to ensure long term access; and what records can be disposed of without violence to statute or administrative need?''

In 2009 Gregory introduced a column dealing with the history of Vermont Special Session in the following way: ''Traditional marriage is at risk in Vermont. No, no not that one; it appears to be doing fine. I am talking about the long standing union between car fenders and duct tape. Duct tape is no longer good enough to get your car inspected. I am currently organizing a Tape Back Vermont campaign. I thought of imploring the governor to convene a special session of the general assembly to address this unprecedented attack upon the customs and usage of home auto body repair. This required some preliminary investigation on the history of special sessions,'' which Gregory then traces from 1777 forward.

One of Gregory's 2012 columns was entitled ''Sexing Chicks and the Appraisal of Public Records.'' The column begins with a brief introduction about how in the 1920s the Japanese discovered ''that by squeezing a day-old chick's intestines it was possible to see slight anatomical differences . . . and thus males could quickly be culled and feed expenses reduced.'' After this anatomical lesson, Gregory admits that though the analogy is not precise, ''Sexing chicks is not unlike appraising public records. [Archivists] don't want to pay upkeep for records that don't have value. We need ways to recognize the variations in public records so we can correctly determine their ''gender'' with high accuracy. Good records analysts, like good chick sexers, handle large volumes, quickly, and have sufficient training and experience to develop contexts for accurately interpreting what they see.''

His gift to inform, amuse, and educate while promoting the archives was truly amazing. To further appreciate his delightful skill in writing about archives and documents, readers are encouraged to discover more of these wonderful columns at http://vermont-archives.org/publications/voice/.[2]

That we all who feel the wonder of archives could so imaginatively translate that into workplace reality as did Gregory, and could have such enlightened employers as the State of Vermont to recognize the merit of ''wonder'' so publicly!

NOTES

[1] One of the buildings of the Illinois State Archives, but not its records center, is named for long-time State Archivist and pioneering records theorist, Margaret Cross Norton. And a new wing of the Alabama Department of History and Archives (the state archives) has recently been named for that institution's long-time director, Edwin C. Bridges. A few archives may have reading rooms or public areas named after famous archivists, but these are hard to verify. Examples (with stories) would, we are sure, be welcome for mention in future issues of Archival Outlook. We thank Teresa Brinati and Richard J. Cox for their helpful advice. In Canada, one Dominion Archivist (Sir Arthur Doughty) has an official historic plaque, and even a statue, raised in his honor, and all the Dominion and National Archivists are recognized by a sculpture inside LAC's Gatineau Preservation Centre, but none have their ''own'' buildings!

[2] Sanford's final article for this publication was printed in the July/August 2012 issue. Since then, Sanford's successor, Tanya Marshall, has continued contributing to the publication.

TRIBUTE TO THE BORINQUENEERS

Mr. DURBIN. I would like to recognize the remarkable service of the 65th Infantry Regiment, also known as the Borinqueneers, a unit composed primarily of soldiers from the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico and recruits from other Latino backgrounds.

Today, President Obama has signed into law a bill honoring the Borinqueneers with a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor our Nation can bestow. The Gold Medal is awarded as a national expression of gratitude to men and women who perform outstanding acts of service that advance the security, prosperity, and national interest of the United States of America.

American minorities have a proud history of serving their country with honor and distinction even in the face

of racism and exclusion. As the largest and longest standing segregated unit in our military's history, the 65th Infantry Regiment is no different. In the face of segregation and discrimination, the Borinqueneers demonstrated valiant service to our Nation. From World War I to Korea, the Borinqueneers represented the United States and Puerto Rico proudly. They were often among the first into battle and have been the recipients of numerous awards and commendations.

The 65th Infantry Regiment was originally formed as a battalion of volunteer infantry in Puerto Rico in 1899 and first saw combat in World War I. The unit fired the first shot of the war by U.S. regular Armed Forces while defending the harbor of San Juan against a ship flying the colors of the Central Powers. Members of the Regiment also served in World War II and, with particular distinction, in the Korean war, where they earned 10 Distinguished Service Crosses, 256 Silver Stars, 606 Bronze Stars, and 2,771 Purple Hearts by war's end.

The Borinqueneers now join the ranks of the Tuskegee Airmen, the Navajo Code Talkers and other distinguished minority units who have received the prestigious Gold Medal. This day is long overdue but well deserved.

I congratulate the Borinqueneers on their honor. These brave men deserve recognition befitting their contributions to our Armed Forces. The unit's story is one of service and honor beyond even the usual highest standards to which we hold our men and women in uniform.

Of the surviving Borinqueneers I would like to recognize and give special thanks to those who have made their home in Illinois: Diego A. Figueroa Reyes, Santiago Perez, David Ramirez-Granado, Ramon Rodriguez, Juan Vasquez, and Onil G. Velez. I commend you and all of the Borinqueneers for your steadfast service to our country and wish you and your families all the best.

SENIOR SAFETY INITIATIVE

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the need to protect the safety and health of older Americans from hazards posed by consumer products. Since its inception in 1972, the Consumer Product Safety Commission CPSC has been tasked with protecting the public from unreasonable hazards posed by consumer products. Historically, the CPSC has not focused explicitly on seniors despite the aging population's vulnerability to these hazards. For example, a 2012 CPSC report found that Americans age 65 and older are nearly three times more likely to suffer a product-related injury that results in a visit to the emergency room than Americans between the ages of 25 and 64.

On May 19, 2014, the CPSC introduced the Senior Safety Initiative. I commend the CPSC for taking on this important and timely project. The Senior Safety Initiative aims to reduce both the incidences of product-related deaths, nearly 65 percent of which are suffered by seniors and the estimated 5 million injuries suffered by older adults. This initiative includes the creation of a mechanical and senior hazards team to monitor hazards associated with products intended for seniors, publication of a hazard screening report focused exclusively on seniors, and continues the CPSC's partnership with other agencies to reduce the death and injury associated with consumer products. In addition, the CPSC will join the Federal Interagency Forum on Aging-Related Statistics to work with other Federal agencies to improve the availability of aging-related data.

In particular, the initiative aims to reduce hazards associated with adult portable bed rails. Between 2003 and 2012, the CPSC received reports of 174 deaths, 80 percent of which involved seniors over age 60, and nearly 110,000 medically attended injuries involving adult portable bed rails. The collective costs associated with these injuries totaled around $250 million annually. The CPSC recently partnered with manufacturers, the Food and Drug Administration, and the voluntary standards community to develop the first-ever standard for adult portable bed rails. As the senior Senator of the State with the largest proportion of people above the age of 65, I welcome the CPSC's efforts to reduce injuries and deaths involving consumer products, particularly adult portable bed rails.

Last month, in conjunction with the publication of the Senior Safety Initiative, the CPSC participated in Older Americans Month by partnering with the Administration for Community Living and other participating organizations to promote educational resources for seniors and their families about preventing hazards associated with household products often used by seniors and their caregivers.

As chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, I know how important it is to protect the well-being of older Americans from unreasonable risks in their retirement years. As our aging population grows exponentially over the coming decades, it is imperative that we support initiatives like the CPSC's to enhance the safety, independence, and well-being of our older Americans.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. KAINE. Mr President, during today's session of the Senate, six rollcall votes were taken. I was necessarily absent and missed five of these votes, due to attending funeral services in Richmond for Ray Boone.

While I missed votes on the confirmation of Leo T. Sorokin, of Massachusetts, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts and Richard Franklin Boulware II, of Nevada, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nevada, I did vote to invoke cloture on these two nominees on Monday, June 9, 2014.

I also missed three cloture votes on nominations for the Federal Reserve: 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. However, I do intend to vote to confirm these three Fed nominees on Thursday, June 12, 2014.

WORLD WAR II VETERANS VISIT

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Mr. President, today I wish to pay tribute to the outstanding military service of a group of incredible Coloradans. At a critical time in our Nation's history, these veterans each played a role in defending the world from tyranny, truly earning their reputation as guardians of peace and democracy through their service and sacrifice. Now, thanks to Honor Flight, these combat veterans came to Washington, DC, to visit the national memorials built to honor those who served and those who fell. They have also come to share their experiences with later generations and to pay tribute to those who gave their lives. I am proud to welcome them here, and I join with all Coloradans in thanking them for all they have done for us.

I also want to thank the volunteers from Honor Flight of Southern Colorado who made this trip possible. These volunteers are great Coloradans in their own right, and their mission to bring our veterans to Washington, DC, is truly commendable.

I wish to publicly recognize the veterans who visited our Nation's capital, many seeing for the first time the memorials built as a tribute to their selfless service. Today, I honor these Colorado veterans on their visit to Washington, DC, and I join them in paying tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of liberty.

These veterans from World War II include Charles Barnett, James Hubbard, John Lee, Donald Joiner, John Cotton, Anthon Aragon, Sedley Hall, Fred Radestock, Carl Davidson, Clarence Norris, Gordon Ashwood, Gerald McCann, Charles Tomsick, Timothy Churchill, John Ross, Richard Gottlieb, Gene Noel, Clifford Hibpshman, Eldon Price, Lester McLaughlin, Samuel Stephens, Albert Cordova, and Barlow Westcott.

Our Nation asked a great deal of these individuals—to leave their families to fight in unknown lands and put their lives on the line. Each one of these brave Coloradans bravely answered the call. They served our country with courage, and in return, let us ensure they are shown the honor and appreciation they deserve. Please join me in thanking these Colorado veterans and the volunteers of Honor

Flight of Southern Colorado for their tremendous service.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING THE ARKANSAS TORNADO VICTIMS

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I wish to offer my thoughts and prayers to the victims of the April 27, 2014, tornadoes that devastated a number of communities in central Arkansas.

The tornadoes that spawned from the storm system that left a trail of destruction across the south took the lives of 16 Arkansans in Pulaski, White and Faulkner Counties.

The Arkansas victims include an Iraq veteran who died while protecting his 5-year-old daughter, two children who had just started school in Vilonia, and an unborn child who died as a result of the injuries to the baby's mother.

While others escaped the tornadoes with their lives, many lost everything else they had. From homes to businesses, entire communities were wiped out leaving many residents homeless and without livelihood.

However, our actions in a time of crisis are a reflection of us as a society and despite the tragic stories we saw many uplifting acts before, during, and after the tornadoes hit. As the storm approached, Christian Gunther acted to save ten disabled veterans from a long-term care facility by making sure they reached safety before the tornado hit. During the storm, MSG Daniel Wassom, gave his life using his body to shield his daughter from a falling beam. And, in the immediate aftermath of the storm, Arkansas's first responders rushed to the hardest hit communities, saving lives in the aftermath of the tornadoes.

During this time where many have to sift through the rubble and rebuild their lives, we are grateful for those who have reached out to their neighbors and provided assistance. Volunteers from all across the State have come to ravaged areas to help. This disaster serves as a testament to the compassionate character of the people of Arkansas. Rebuilding is never easy, but I know that Arkansans do not give up.

I am pleased the President quickly responded to the situation by designating four Arkansas counties as major disaster areas, making Federal funding available to people in these counties impacted by the storm. However, more work remains to be done. I am committed to ensuring that relief comes to the families and communities affected by this disaster.

Again, our thoughts and prayers go out to those who endured the storms, who need to rebuild, and especially to those who have lost relatives and loved ones. I ask that my colleagues continue to keep them in their thoughts and prayers.•

RECOGNIZING THOMAS HOLLAND

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the life and career of Dr. Thomas Holland who has spent the past 22 years finding and identifying the remains of American servicemen. His efforts have helped bring peace and closure to the families of our fallen soldiers.

With over 83,000 American servicemen who have been listed as missing in action, Dr. Holland's vision and insights have helped find and identify the remains of soldiers who would otherwise be unaccounted for and unknown. He has led recovery missions to numerous countries such as North and South Korea, China, Iraq, and Cambodia. Most notably in 1995, Dr. Holland led the classified mission in Iraq to recover the only serviceman missing from the First Gulf War.

Originally from Fort Smith, AR, Dr. Holland received his bachelor's degree in fine art from the University of Missouri-Columbia where he continued his post graduate studies and earned his master's degree and his doctorate degree in anthropology. Currently, Dr. Holland serves on the graduate faculty at the University of Hawaii. As a world renowned expert, he has been published in many journals and has presented papers at numerous national and international meetings. During his tenure at the Central Identification Laboratory and Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, he held positions as an anthropologist, senior anthropologist, and scientific director.

While his academic and professional achievements are outstanding, his most admirable accomplishment has been his great service that honors American prisoners of war and those missing in action. Since 1992, Dr. Holland has diligently performed the solemn task of finding and identifying lost soldiers, sailors, and airmen using the science of human identification.

Dr. Holland has displayed dedication, perseverance, and commitment to excellence. I am grateful for his years of service and efforts devoted to those who fought and died for our freedom.

RECOGNIZING FRANK BROYLES

• Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, today I wish to honor a friend to all Arkansans, Frank Broyles, an icon in Arkansas athletics, the former head coach of the Arkansas Razorbacks football team and former Athletic Director who is retiring from the University of Arkansas at the end of June.

This legendary football coach spent his life serving Arkansas and laying the foundation and building the dynamic athletic department at the University of Arkansas. His hard work, dedication and commitment to Arkansas and its athletes is clear. As an offensive tackle for the Razorbacks in the late 1960s, I played under Coach Broyles. He had a great influence on my life and I know that to be true for many other Arkansas athletes.

Coach Broyles' influence extends well beyond Arkansas into college athletics. The Broyles Award was established in 1996 to honor the work of assistant football coaches. Honoring Coach Broyles, the award recognizes his history of producing some of the most successful assistant coaches in college football.

He has been successful on and off the field. After his wife Barbara lost her battle with Alzheimer's, Coach Broyles made it his life's mission to advocate for a cure and educate Americans on caring for loved ones suffering with Alzheimer's. He wrote the Alzheimer's Playbook based on his family's experience caring for Barbara which is a great resource for all caregivers.

Despite retiring as the Arkansas Athletic Director in 2007 he continued his service to Arkansas on the Razorback Foundation. This will truly be the end of an era when he leaves at the end of the month.

The Arkansas Razorbacks are blessed to have the leadership of Coach Broyles in the many roles he assumed for the university. His vision for the Razorbacks is what we recognize today and support today. I am honored to have had the opportunity to play for Coach Broyles and call him a friend and wish him the best of luck in retirement.•

TRIBUTE TO JIM ANDERSON

• Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I wish to honor Jim Anderson, who has been the president of the Springfield, Missouri, Area Chamber of Commerce since 1988. Later this month, Jim will leave that position to pursue other opportunities. Jim has played a role in nearly every major development that has shaped Springfield over the last 25-plus years. Over that time he has been a great friend and an important advisor on all things Springfield—my hometown and Missouri's third largest city.

Jim Anderson was lured back to Springfield from Jefferson City, MO, to run Springfield's Chamber of Commerce, a role he had already played in Jefferson City for nearly a decade. With his background as teacher and administrator, his quick smile and sharp mind for details, and a wealth of contacts and government know-how, Anderson has been a spirited leader at the Springfield Chamber. His knowledge and experience have helped as he has devoted his efforts to economic development, job creation, civic involvement, and advocacy efforts at both the local and state levels.

Jim Anderson is a leader who knows what it takes to make his community an attractive place for businesses and consumers. From 2001 until 2009 Anderson served on the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission and rose to the chairmanship in 2007 and was vice chairman the following year. During that period Jim became a supporter of infrastructure programs to fix bridges, expand capacities, and grow a safer transportation network to promote economic development. Jim's

keen intellect on economic development issues earned him an appointment in 1993 by Gov. Mel Carnahan to the Missouri Business Council and to the Total Transportation Commission in 1996.

In 2005 Jim's peers honored him with the Springfieldian Award, a recognition given to the person whose contributions leave a lasting mark on Springfield. Jim has certainly left his mark. That same year Anderson was a recipient of the Missourian Award. In 2007 he was the recipient of the Lifetime Achievement in Business Award from the Springfield Business Journal. And last year Anderson received the Career Service in Economic Development Award at the Governor's Conference on Economic Development. These awards only scratch the surface of Jim's impact on the region.

Jim has amassed many awards and accolades from the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. But Jim is also grounded in his local community—Springfield. He served as chairman of United Way of the Ozarks and president of Urban Districts Alliance. He is a member of the Springfield Rotary Club and has been recognized for his work with the Boy Scouts. Jim is a past chairman of the board of directors of Springfield Innovation, Inc., at the Roy Blunt Jordan Valley Innovation Center. Anderson is an active member of First & Calvary Presbyterian Church.

Jim's contributions to the Springfield area have strengthened the fabric of the community. I know he will be glad to have more time with his wife Janet and their daughters Rachel and Rebecca. I wish him well in his next opportunity and thank him for his years of service in Springfield.●

BENTON 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 Benton 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 successfully acquire financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $56 million to the local economy.

Of course, one of my favorite memories of working together has been working to designate Vinton as the site for the Americorps National Civilian Community Corps, NCCC, facility, and securing $2.5 million to create the residential campus. I have also appreciated working with Iowa Educational Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired on one of my biggest priorities—eliminating barriers in our society for people with disabilities. 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 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 one-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 Benton 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.

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, Benton County has received $600,000 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Benton County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling $142,900.

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. Benton County has received over $14.2 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, Benton County has received more than $25 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, Benton County's fire departments have received over $1.9 million for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

This is at least a partial accounting of my work on behalf of Iowa, and specifically Benton 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 Benton 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.●

LEE 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 Lee 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 Lee County worth over $28.8 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $35.3 million to the local economy.

Of course, one of my favorite memories of working together include the terrific work that Keokuk and Fort Madison have done to improve their downtowns through Main Street Iowa, my long standing support work to make sure the Avenue of the Saints construction benefits the area and is funded, and working to improve river navigation on the Mississippi River, in part through funding reconstruction of Lock and Dam 19 at Keokuk.

Among the highlights:

Investing in Iowa's economic development through targeted community projects: In Southeast 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 Lee 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 Lee County, I have fought for more than $23 million for the restoration of Lock and Dam 19 as well as overall navigation and environmental improvements on the Mississippi River, as well as more than $118 million for work on the Avenue of the Saints, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities in the region.

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 Fort Madison and Keokuk to use that money to leverage other investments to jump-start change and renewal. I am so pleased that Lee County has earned $78,500 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, Lee County has received more than $4.1 million in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Lee County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling $288,457.

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. Lee County has received over $5.1 million to remediate and prevent widespread destruction from natural disasters.

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, Lee County's fire departments have received over $1.4 million for firefighter safety and operations equipment, and more than $564,187 in Byrne justice assistance grants.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Lee County has recognized this important issue by securing $389,563 for community wellness activities.

Disability Rights: Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf but I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act 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 one 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 Lee 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 Lee 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 Lee County, to fulfill their own dreams and initiative 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.●

REMEMBERING ROBERT MILLER III

● Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I speak in memory of the life of Robert Jackson Miller III, an accomplished architect and a man who, above all else, was a devoted husband and a loving, generous father. Bob passed away on March 10, 2014, at the age of 48, leaving behind a wife and four daughters who loved him dearly.

Bob held within him a brilliant capacity to design buildings that drew out the full potential and imagination of those who entered their doors. Throughout his career—from his early years at Robert A.M. Stern Architects and his role as partner-in-charge at Michael Graves and Associates in New York, to his co-founding of Miller & Wright Architects in New York City—he was a diligent designer who cherished the ability he had to provide unique shared space for individuals across the United States. He often spoke of his proudest work, the St. Coletta School in Washington, DC, a place where children and adults with intellectual disabilities were afforded the opportunity to learn and grow as a community.

Yet all of Bob's architectural accomplishments pale in comparison to the passion that defined his life: the love he felt for his wife Grace and his daughters Eve, Margot, Lily B. and Poppy. To say that Bob was an utterly devoted family man would merely scratch the surface of his complete dedication to the lives of his wife and daughters. If you were to ask Bob, he would prefer nothing in the world more than simply sharing a Friday night at home with his family, watching movies or relaxing on the beach in their company. He was content to spend as much time as he possibly could with them; nothing brought him more joy. If you were ever to go to the Miller household, you would invariably find Bob hard at work teaching the girls new lacrosse techniques, helping them practice for their plays, or helping construct an elaborate Halloween costume. His faithfulness as a father and a husband were characteristic of the kind soul Bob possessed. When he was diagnosed with melanoma, Bob placed even more emphasis on profoundly treasuring each moment he was allowed with Grace, Eve, Margot, Lily B. and Poppy. He never lost sight of the gift he had been given to spend his life with them.

This will be the first Father's Day the girls spend without their father. To lose a valuable, vibrant, compassionate spirit like their father's at such a tender age is an incomprehensible tragedy. There are moments of pain in this life when we can see the sadness of others and desire only to lessen their hurt, knowing full well that our words and our sympathies are insufficient. This is such a moment.

I hope that Grace and the girls understand the bright loveliness their father brought into the world, and will continue to carry that light forward in his absence. The world is a better place for Bob having traveled through it. He is continuing his journey now, but we will remember him here, and his family will remember him for the rest of their lives. His memory will serve as an example of how to love completely, how to dedicate yourself to your family entirely, and how to treasure the moments you are given in the brief time we have.●

SIDNEY, MONTANA

● Mr. WALSH. Mr. President, I wish to recognize a town in eastern Montana with a story that reflects the American dream. In the 19th century, pioneers settled in Sidney, MT, chasing prosperity along the banks of the Yellowstone River.

Throughout the years Sidney has seen booms in agriculture and energy development, but through it all one thing has remained constant; the people who call Sidney home share the core values of service, honesty, and the willingness to help a neighbor in need.

Today, Sidney, Montana celebrates its 100th anniversary—100 years of ingenuity, 100 years of prosperity, and 100 years of history.

When pioneers first settled in eastern Montana they were not guaranteed prosperity, but they brought with them a strong work ethic. Before Sidney was even incorporated, the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project canal was dug and with their new access to water, the dry land farmers were given a lifeline to irrigate crops and develop the plains. The pioneer farmers were taming an area of the country many thought couldn't be tamed.

Today, agriculture producers from Richland County continue to grow the crops and raise the cattle that feed the world—working the land the same way those before them did.

In the 1970s Sidney went through period of change. The world was now hungry for oil and Sidney, MT, was there to answer that call. Through the decade to follow Sidney boomed with energy through a period of prosperity.

With the recent increase in hydraulic fracturing, Sidney once again is at the center of an unmatched energy boom. With the development of the Bakken Formation, Sidney enters the newest chapter of its story.

Agriculture and energy has affected many families in Sidney, but one thing has remained the same. The people of Sidney remain good neighbors and they continue to stabilize a region that has grown accustomed to change.

I congratulate Sidney for its contributions to our State, our Nation, and the world. We look forward to the next century being as exciting as the last.●

MANAGEMENT EDUCATION ANNIVERSARY

● Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I want to recognize the 100th anniversary of management education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Management education began at MIT in 1914 with the introduction of Course XV, then known as ''Engineering Administration.'' Over the past century, MIT's business program has grown from a single course to a world-class school that provides our Nation's leaders and entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge they need for success, while also producing cutting-edge research.

Today, the MIT Sloan School of Management stands as one of the world leaders in management education. MIT Sloan has jump started the careers of some of our foremost innovators, thinkers and business leaders. From launching successful Massachusetts-based companies like Zipcar and HubSpot to making revolutionary intellectual contributions to the fields of organizational behavior and system dynamics, Sloan alumni have made a huge positive difference in the world. According to a Sloan study, in 2006, there were 25,800 active companies founded by MIT alumni, which combined to employ 3.3 million workers.

MIT's motto is ''mens et manus,'' which translates to ''mind and hand,'' and its school seal displays two men—one with a book, and another with an anvil. This connection between thought and action, between intellectual pursuits and practical applications, has helped define MIT's mission and has made the school the unique institution that it is today. For 100 years, MIT's management education programs have perfectly embodied this spirit.

I am proud to join with the MIT community in recognizing the enduring contributions that a century of management education programs at MIT have given us, and we all look forward to MIT Sloan's leadership in the next century of its work.●

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message from the President of the United States was communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE REFERRED

In executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate a message from the President of the United States submitting a nomination which was referred to the Committee on Armed Services.

(The message received today is printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCY THAT WAS ORIGINALLY DECLARED IN EXECUTIVE ORDER 13405 OF JUNE 16, 2006, WITH RESPECT TO BELARUS—PM 43

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency with respect to the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons to undermine Belarus's democratic processes or institutions that was declared in Executive Order 13405 of June 16, 2006, is to continue in effect beyond June 16, 2014.

The actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Belarus and other persons to undermine Belarus's democratic processes or institutions, to commit human rights abuses related to political repression, and to engage in public corruption continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States. For this reason, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13405 with respect to Belarus.

BARACK OBAMA.

THE WHITE HOUSE, *June 10, 2014*.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:45 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, with an amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

S. 1254. An act to amend the Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998, and for other purposes.

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

H.R. 1679. An act to amend the Expedited Funds Availability Act to clarify the application of that Act to American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands.

H.R. 2072. An act to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the accountability of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to the Inspector General of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R. 3211. An act to amend the Truth in Lending Act to improve upon the definitions provided for points and fees in connection with a mortgage transaction.

H.R. 4228. An act to require the Department of Homeland Security to improve discipline, accountability, and transparency in acquisition program management.

H.R. 4412. An act to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes.

The message further announced that the House has agreed to the following concurrent resolution, without amendment:

S. Con. Res. 36. Concurrent resolution permitting the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the next of kin or personal representative of Raoul Wallenberg.

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

H. Con. Res. 100. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The message further announced that pursuant to 22 U.S.C. 276d, and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Speaker appoints the following Members of the House of Representatives to the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group: Mr. HIGGINS of New York, Ms. SLAUGHTER of New York, Mr. MEEKS of New York, Mr. LARSEN of Washington, and Mr. DEFAZIO of Oregon.

The message also announced that pursuant to section 4(b) of the World War I Centennial Commission Act (Public Law 112–272), and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Speaker appoints the following individual on the part of the House of Representatives to the World War I Centennial Commission to fill the existing vacancy thereon: Ms. Monique Seefried of Atlanta, Georgia.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bills were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 1679. An act to amend the Expedited Funds Availability Act to clarify the application of that Act to American Samoa and the Northern Mariana Islands; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R. 4228. An act to require the Department of Homeland Security to improve discipline, accountability, and transparency in acquisition program management; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 4412. An act to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 2450. A bill to improve the access of veterans to medical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 4660. An act making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–6039. A communication from the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Farm Credit Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Regulatory Capital Rules: Regulatory Capital, Implementation of Tier 1/Tier 2 Framework'' (RIN3052–AC81) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6040. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''National Cemeteries, Demonstration, Special Event'' (RIN1024–AE01) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–6041. A communication from the Chairman and President of the Export-Import Bank, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to transactions involving U.S. exports to Azerbaijan; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–6042. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department of Defense assigning women to previously closed positions in the Marine Corps; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–6043. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Defense Environmental Programs Annual Report for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–6044. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; SOCATA Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0031)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6045. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0864)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6046. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of

a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2008–0616)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6047. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2010–1160)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6048. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Eagle Grove, IA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0589)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6049. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Amery, WI'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0591)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6050. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Kuparuk, AK'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0996)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6051. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Dalhart, TX'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0918)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6052. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Albion, NE'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0595)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6053. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (296); Amdt. No. 3590'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6054. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Standard Instrument Approach Procedures, and Takeoff Minimums and Obstacle Departure Procedures; Miscellaneous Amendments (80); Amdt. No. 3589'' (RIN2120–AA65) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6055. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Agusta Westland S.p.A Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0943)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6056. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D Airspace; St. Paul, MN'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0954)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6057. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Grand Forks, ND'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–201–0135)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6058. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Bois Blanc Island, MI'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0986)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6059. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishment of Class E Airspace; Blairsville, GA'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0731)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6060. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class E Airspace; Akutan, AK'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0032)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6061. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Class D and Class E Airspace; Grand Forks, ND'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0806)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6062. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Restricted Areas R–5001A and R–5001B, Fort Dix, NJ'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0260)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6063. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Restricted Areas R–5304C; Camp Lejeune, NC'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0272)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6064. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification and Establishment of Restricted Areas; Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0729)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6065. A communication from the Chief of Staff, Media Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Implementation of the Commercial Advertisement Loudness Mitigation (CALM) Act'' ((MB Docket No. 11–93) (FCC 14–71)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6066. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of Air Traffic Service (ATS) Routes; North Central United States'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–1062)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6067. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Modification of the Philadelphia, PA, Class B Airspace Area'' ((RIN2120–AA66) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0922)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6068. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2008–0618)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6069. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2012–1103)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6070. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Airbus Helicopters (Type Certificate previously held by Eurocopter France) Helicopters'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0306)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6071. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Vulcanair S.p.A. Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0602)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6072. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0869)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6073. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; The Boeing Company Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0686)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6074. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; PIAGGIO AERO INDUSTRIES S.p.A Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2013–0967)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6075. A communication from the Paralegal Specialist, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; GROB–WERKE Airplanes'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2014–0092)) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–6076. A communication from the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act Regulations, Definition of Indian Tribe'' (RIN1024–AD98) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 6, 2014; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–6077. A communication from the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits'' (29 CFR Part 4022) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 9, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6078. A communication from the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Limitations on Guaranteed Benefits; Shutdown and Similar Benefits'' ((RIN1212–AB18) (29 CFR Part 4022)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 9, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6079. A communication from the Director of Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Maximum Civil Money Penalty Amounts; Civil Money Penalty Complaints; Confirmation of Effective Date'' (Docket No. FDA–2014–N–0113) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 9, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6080. A communication from the Director of Regulations Policy and Management Staff, Food and Drug Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Establishing a List of Qualifying Pathogens Under the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act'' (Docket No. FDA–2012–N–1037) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 9, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6081. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Federal Agency Drug-Free Workplace Programs''; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6082. A joint communication from the Chairman and the General Counsel, National Labor Relations Board, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office of Inspector General Semiannual Report for the period of October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6083. A communication from the Inspector General, U.S. Election Assistance Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6084. A communication from the Director, Congressional Affairs, Federal Election Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Commission's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6085. A communication from the Secretary of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Transportation's Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. HARKIN, from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, without amendment:

S. 2452. An original bill to support early learning.

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. INHOFE:

S. 2451. A bill to support the local decision-making 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; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HARKIN:

S. 2452. An original bill to support early learning; from the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; placed on the calendar.

By Mrs. BOXER:

S. 2453. A bill to reinstate the 10-year statute of limitations period applicable to collection of amounts paid to Social Security beneficiaries by administrative offset, and prevent recovery of overpayments from individuals under 18 years of age; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 2454. A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to extend expiring provisions of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act of 2010; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BEGICH (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2455. A bill to enhance Social Security benefits for children, divorced spouses, and widows and widowers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2456. A bill to amend the Fair Credit Reporting Act to provide protections for active duty military consumers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 2457. A bill to require States to establish highway stormwater management programs; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. WALSH:

S. 2458. A bill to provide student loan forgiveness for American Indian educators teaching in local educational agencies with a high percentage of American Indian students; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Mr. GRASSLEY:

S. 2459. A bill to revise counseling requirements for certain borrowers of student loans and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MENENDEZ:

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; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 822

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 822, a bill to protect crime victims' rights, to eliminate the substantial backlog of DNA samples collected from crime scenes and convicted offenders, to improve and expand the

DNA testing capacity of Federal, State, and local crime laboratories, to increase research and development of new DNA testing technologies, to develop new training programs regarding the collection and use of DNA evidence, to provide post conviction testing of DNA evidence to exonerate the innocent, to improve the performance of counsel in State capital cases, and for other purposes.

S. 2037

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2037, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to remove the 96-hour physician certification requirement for inpatient critical access hospital services.

S. 2076

At the request of Mr. BOOZMAN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2076, a bill to amend the provisions of title 46, United States Code, related to the Board of Visitors to the United States Merchant Marine Academy, and for other purposes.

S. 2182

At the request of Mr. WALSH, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2182, a bill to expand and improve care provided to veterans and members of the Armed Forces with mental health disorders or at risk of suicide, to review the terms or characterization of the discharge or separation of certain individuals from the Armed Forces, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2192

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2192, a bill to amend the National Alzheimer's Project Act to require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to prepare and submit, directly to the President for review and transmittal to Congress, an annual budget estimate (including an estimate of the number and type of personnel needs for the Institutes) for the initiatives of the National Institutes of Health pursuant to such an Act.

S. 2307

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2307, a bill to prevent international violence against women, and for other purposes.

S. 2324

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2324, a bill to amend the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to prohibit certain waivers and exemptions from emergency preparedness and response and security regulations.

S. 2328

At the request of Mr. VITTER, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2328, a bill to amend the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to preclude law firms and licensed attorneys from the definition of a debt collector when taking certain actions, and for other purposes.

S. 2340

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) 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. 2359

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2359, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to protect and preserve access of Medicare beneficiaries in rural areas to health care providers under the Medicare program, and for other purposes.

S. 2363

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2363, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

S. 2395

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2395, a bill to repeal the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution of 2002.

S. 2430

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2430, a bill to establish the Office of the Special Inspector General for Monitoring the Affordable Care Act, and for other purposes.

S. 2432

At the request of Ms. WARREN, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of 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.

S. 2435

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2435, a bill to amend section 5542 of title 5, United States Code, to provide that any hours worked by Federal firefighters under a qualified trade-of-time arrangement shall be excluded for purposes of determinations relating to overtime pay.

S. 2440

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2440, a bill to expand and extend the program to improve permit coordination by the Bureau of Land Management, and for other purposes.

S. 2441

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2441, a bill to extend the same Federal benefits to law enforcement officers serving private institutions of higher education and rail carriers that apply to law enforcement officers serving units of State and local government.

S. 2450

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the names of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN), the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ), the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) 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. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 2450, supra.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. INHOFE:

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; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, with 20 kids and grandkids, I understand the importance and value of quality education. For many years my wife dedicated her life to teaching and mentoring young students, never knowing that in the years to come, two of our children would follow in their mother's footsteps, building classrooms of their own and impacting the lives of so many young people.

Through my family's unique educational experiences, and my time in State and local government, I have learned that with teaching comes the great responsibility of not only working with students, but also parents, employers and many in the local community to ensure our children are well equipped for the road ahead.

Nationwide, 96 percent of local school board members are elected, making those members accountable to the many students, parents and taxpayers they represent. But in recent years, the voice of this local authority is being eroded through inhibitive policies and requirements established by Federal agencies, like the Department of Education.

Education has historically been a State and local issue. By strengthening the process for meaningful input by impacted stakeholders, our local communities can remain active in the education policy decision-making process.

This is why I have introduced the Local School Board Governance and Flexibility Act. With this legislation, the goal is to bring control of our education policy back to where it belongs—with our local communities—giving State and local school boards the necessary flexibility to achieve their educational goals. S. 2451 would wrestle away control from the Department of Education by prohibiting the agency from issuing any regulations, rules, guidance materials, or grant conditions that would result in a conflict of authority with any State or local educational agencies.

This bill would also streamline reporting requirements and would require the Department to provide Congress with an annual report on how the agency's policies impact local school districts. As we have seen, many of the overreaching education policy changes declared by Washington bureaucrats have resulted in negative effects on local schools, not only in terms of policy, but also financially. This bill requires the Department of Education to seek input on costs and assistance needs from State and local school agencies before issuing or implementing regulations, rules, guidance materials, or grant conditions.

The Local School Board Governance and Flexibility Act will give State and local school boards a voice in how the Federal Government issues regulations and guidelines for education. It is time for the Department of Education to be accountable to the parents, teachers, and local elected officials who work first-hand with our Nation's children. Education needs are unique to each community, and in order to give the next generation of Americans a better future and wealth of opportunities, my legislation will give State and local school boards the authority they need to carry out the education goals that are best suited for their children.

By Mr. LEAHY (for himself and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 2454. A bill to amend title 17, United States Code, to extend expiring provisions of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act of 2010; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I join today with Senator GRASSLEY to introduce legislation to reauthorize for another 5 years expiring provisions of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act, STELA. This law provides satellite television carriers with the necessary rights to retransmit distant broadcast television programming to households that are otherwise unable to receive local signal over-the-air. If Congress does not act by the end of the year to reauthorize the distant signal license, approximately 1.5 million consumers will lose access to the broadcast television programming that they are currently receiving.

The compulsory copyright license system for satellite television has been successful in promoting competition in the video marketplace. Consumers across the country benefit from having nationwide competitors to cable. Rural consumers, including many in Vermont, rely on a healthy satellite industry that is able to provide service to customers where cable is unable to reach. Congress has helped to facilitate the growth of the satellite industry by providing it with a mechanism to clear the rights to broadcast television content, which remains among the most popular.

Senator GRASSLEY and I are continuing what has always been a bipartisan partnership on satellite television legislation. I worked with Senator HATCH in 1999 to establish a permanent license allowing satellite carriers to retransmit local television content to consumers. That license has had an important impact on competition in the video market. In 2010, I worked with Senator SESSIONS on STELA. Satellite television legislation should never be partisan—it should be an opportunity for Democrats and Republicans to come together and demonstrate to the American people that we can act responsibly and prevent serious disruption to consumers.

The bill we are introducing today is a narrow approach. We are extending the current system for another 5 years, while also making some minor technical corrections to the existing statutes. This bill may not please all stakeholders. Some would like Congress to use this legislation as a vehicle to enact significant changes to the current system that governs the relationship between broadcast television stations and distributors. Others would prefer that Congress not act at all and simply allow this license to expire. My focus is on the consumers who stand to lose access to broadcast television content in the event that Congress is unable to pass a bill by the end of the year. This bill will ensure that they are not left in the dark come December 31.

Our legislation is one half of what the Senate will have to do in order to ensure that 1.5 million consumers are able to maintain the broadcast television signals that they are currently receiving. I look forward to working with Chairman ROCKEFELLER as we work to fit the necessary Copyright and Communications Act provisions of this bill together. I also look forward to working with our counterparts in the House in order to protect the consumers relying on this license.

I urge the Senate to support extending STELA for another 5 years.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2454

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Satellite Television Access Reauthorization Act of 2014''.

SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION.

Chapter 1 of title 17, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in section 111(d)(3)—

(A) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''clause'' and inserting ''paragraph''; and

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''clause'' and inserting ''paragraph''; and

(2) in section 119—

(A) in subsection (a)(6)(E), in the undesignated matter following clause (iii), by striking ''clause (i)'' and inserting ''subparagraph (B)(i)'';

(B) in subsection (c)(1)(E), by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2019'';

(C) in subsection (e), by striking ''2014'' and inserting ''2019''; and

(D) in subsection (g)(7)(C), by inserting ''the'' before ''Communications''.

SEC. 3. TERMINATION OF LICENSE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 119 of title 17, United States Code, as amended in section 2, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(h) TERMINATION OF LICENSE.—This section shall cease to be effective on December 31, 2019.''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 107(a) of the Satellite Television Extension and Localism Act of 2010 (17 U.S.C. 119 note) is repealed.

By Mr. BEGICH (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY):

S. 2455. A bill to enhance Social Security benefits for children, divorced spouses, and widows and widowers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I am pleased to be here today with my friend and colleague, Senator MURRAY, to talk about Social Security. I am going to spend a few moments discussing a bill we are introducing today and then turn it over to Senator MURRAY.

As you know, Social Security is one of the most important programs ever established in this country. After 75 years, Social Security continues to deliver as intended. It is a promise to Americans. The promise is simple. If you work hard all your life and contribute to the system, then Social Security will be there to help make ends meet when you retire or help out the family if a worker dies or is disabled.

Let me be clear. Despite the naysayers, Social Security is not a handout. Social Security benefits are linked directly to the amount that retirees pay into the system through a lifetime of hard work. But times have

changed and we need to make sure the promise of Social Security continues in a meaningful way. That is why Senator MURRAY and I introduced the Retirement and Income Security Act yesterday, which we like to call the RAISE Act. It is a commonsense bill to update, enhance, and protect Social Security in a fiscally responsible way.

When it comes to fairness, this bill is a small but important step for seniors, for older women, and for the families of deceased or disabled workers. It makes sure that the modest benefits of Social Security will go to everyone who deserves them.

The RAISE Act has three major components.

It will, first, improve Social Security benefits for divorced spouses. Under current law, the divorced spouse only gets benefits from a former spouse's earnings if they were married for at least 10 years. Under our bill, eligibility rules would be phased in beginning at 5 years of marriage. The spouse would be entitled to 60 percent of the benefits after 6 years of marriage, 70 percent after 7 years, and so on.

Second, our bill will enhance benefits for widows and widowers. It establishes a new enhanced benefit for widows and widowers where both spouses have retired. An alternative calculation in the bill will use both spouses' benefits—deceased and surviving—rather than just the survivor's benefit. The surviving spouse will receive either their current benefit or the new alternative, whichever is greater.

The third component of the RAISE Act extends eligibility for children of retired, disabled or deceased workers. This provision would apply if the child is still in high school, college or vocational or career school. Under current law, minors and high school students under the age of 19 can get Social Security benefits if their parent is a retired, disabled or deceased worker. Beginning in 2016, this provision extends benefits for full-time students up to the age of 23.

Even though Social Security continues to fully pay for itself and has never added a dime to the deficit, I know some of our colleagues will complain that we cannot afford these small enhancements. That is why our bill asks those Americans who can most afford it to pay their fair share towards the strengthening of the Social Security trust fund.

Beginning in 2015, the RAISE Act would apply a 2-percent payroll tax on annual earnings over $400,000. This means that, for future generations, Social Security will continue to be fully funded. In future years, that threshold will increase under an indexing formula built into the bill.

I am a proud sponsor of this bill with Senator MURRAY. It was an easy decision for me, since my commitment to bolstering Social Security started from day one in the Senate. I have already introduced two other bills on Social Security, and I want to just mention them briefly before I turn it over to Senator MURRAY.

The first bill is my Protecting and Preserving Social Security Act. It would extend the solvency of Social Security by lifting the cap on high-income contributions, which this year is $117,000. Not everyone knows this, but once your annual income hits that threshold, you no longer have to contribute to Social Security for the rest of the calendar year. This seems unfair to me. My bill would lift the cap and phase out what effectively has become a tax loophole. Higher income Americans would pay into Social Security all year long—just like everyone else. This provision would add generations of financial certainty to Social Security.

The bill would also improve benefits for seniors and others by establishing new cost-of-living adjustments based on reality. The formula would better reflect seniors' financial needs by basing the adjustments on items such as prescription drugs and housing, which seniors pay for, instead of electronics and new cars.

My second bill is the Social Security Fairness Act. It would repeal unfair reductions to Social Security benefits for people who have worked part of their career in noncovered jobs—often State or local government or other civil service jobs.

Congress passed the Windfall Elimination Provision and Government Pension Offset in the 1980s because of fears workers who retire under other pensions would be double covered and Social Security could not afford it. But in effect those old laws are punishing people by reducing benefits they rightfully have earned.

Today, these provisions affect more than 2 million people nationwide, and the number is growing. It is not just about getting back what you paid into the system. Removing these penalties would also encourage people willing to work in public service as a second career—such as police officers or teachers. If you are considering such a move today but know your Social Security benefit would be reduced or penalized because you had stepped forward and worked in public service, why would you do it?

Let's remember one thing about all of these bills—the two I introduced earlier and the RAISE Act we are discussing today. Social Security benefits are vitally important but also are very modest. Nationally, they average $13,500 a year for recipients. It is very important to my State. More than 71,000 people in my State of Alaska rely on Social Security. That is roughly 1 out of 10 Alaskans. Social Security lifts tens of thousands of Alaskans out of poverty—the elderly and especially elderly women—and it pumps more than $1 billion into our economy every single year.

No one is getting rich off of Social Security, but it does provide an important foundation, and it does so in a truly American way: You work, you contribute, and you get something back. As long as I am in Congress, I will fight to make sure Social Security is solvent and there for not only this generation but for generations to come.

Senator MURRAY has been a longtime champion for Social Security, and I am proud to stand with her on the floor today. Our RAISE Act is another modest improvement. I hope our colleagues will join us in standing up for this critically important program.

Our Social Security system reflects the best of America: hard work, personal responsibility, human dignity, and caring for our parents, our children, our spouses, and our neighbors and ourselves.

Let's come together in this Chamber and do all we can to make sure Social Security is working for all Americans.

With that, I yield the floor for my colleague, Senator MURRAY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Alaska, Mr. BEGICH, for coming and joining me today because I know he is deeply committed to strengthening and protecting Social Security for current and future seniors. So I was very pleased to join him today in introducing the RAISE Act, which will be a very critical step forward in this effort.

Over the last several decades, middle class families have been increasingly squeezed by rising prices for everything from college tuition to health care. Wages have stayed flat—or even declined for some people—and fewer companies today are offering the kinds of generous pension plans that used to help so many workers stay financially secure.

With all that in mind, it is not surprising that, as families have struggled to stretch their dollars further and further in order to get the bills paid and raise their children, it has become harder and harder to save for retirement.

In fact, a recent study showed that more than a third of today's workers have been unable to save even a dollar for retirement, and even those who do have savings do not have very much. The same study found that 60 percent of respondents had less than $25,000 in total assets and investments, excluding their home.

The numbers are even more pronounced when you look at women in the workforce. Because women, on average, earn less than men, they accumulate less in savings, they receive smaller pensions, and nearly 3 in 10 women over 65 depend only on Social Security for income in their later years.

It is clear that now more than ever Social Security is a lifeline for millions of seniors. So it is especially important for us to make sure this critical system is meeting the needs of today's beneficiaries.

For 75 years our Social Security system has offered millions of seniors and

their families a foundation of financial security. But a lot has changed in those 75 years. Today, most families have two earners. Because Social Security was actually designed for single-earner families, surviving spouses in families where both adults worked may receive less in benefits than they deserve.

Social Security also supports children whose parents retired, became disabled or passed away—but those benefits end at the age 18 or 19. That is right. When young adults should be thinking about continuing their education—a necessity in today's economy—they are worried about having nowhere to go.

At a time when Social Security is an increasingly critical source of support for so many, the RAISE Act would make some commonsense updates to ensure our Social Security system is doing everything possible to help today's seniors and their families.

As the Senator from Alaska described, the RAISE Act would establish a new alternative benefit to make sure widows and widowers from two-earner families do not receive less in survivor benefits than those from single-earner families.

The RAISE Act would enable spouses who were married for less than 10 years to receive spousal and survivor benefits. It would extend benefits for young adults under 23 who are enrolled in school full time.

Crucially, to help ensure Social Security is there for future generations, the RAISE Act would shore up the Social Security trust fund in a fiscally responsible way that protects middle-class families. I believe strengthening and protecting Social Security benefits through the RAISE Act would do an enormous amount of help to our workers and families and their ability to stay financially secure.

But I also want to note there is a much broader challenge. There is not just one solution. We should absolutely make these critical changes to help make sure our Social Security system is meeting the needs of today's workers and families, but we also have to look at ways for workers to save for retirement and encourage companies to offer higher retirement plans.

That is not all. We need to make sure women get equal pay for equal work so they will have the same shot at a secure retirement as their male coworkers.

We do need to invest in education and training and get college costs down so our workers are prepared to compete for high-wage, high-skilled jobs.

We need to continue to fight to strengthen and protect programs such as Medicare which senior women and men rely on.

Democrats care deeply about taking these steps and many others to make sure our workers have the secure, dignified retirement they deserve. There is absolutely no reason why, after working hard all of her life, a retiree should have to worry about how she and her family will make ends meet.

I believe we can do better. I know Senator BEGICH does as well. I urge our colleagues on both sides of the aisle to take a close look at our RAISE Act. I hope we can pass it to offer seniors and their families some additional relief. Then I hope we can build on this with other policies to create more opportunity and more financial security for our workers.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 2457. A bill to require States to establish highway stormwater management programs; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, today I come to the floor to discuss the introduction of my latest legislative proposal to better control the harmful and volumes of polluted stormwater that is generated from our Nation's Federal aid highways. Highway stormwater is a growing threat to water quality, aquatic ecosystems and the fish and wildlife that depend on the health of these ecosystems. Moreover, the high volumes and rapid flow of stormwater runoff from highways and roads poses a very serious threat to the condition of our Nation's water and transportation infrastructure as well as personal property particularly in urban and suburban communities.

The Environmental Protection Agency has recognized that pollution from point-sources have been steadily declining since the enactment of the Clean Water Act. Likewise, we have seen reductions in pollution from certain non-point sources like agriculture which are attributable in part to the success of a wide variety of USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service Programs and farming innovations in soil conservation and nutrient pollution management.

One non-point source sector where we are unfortunately seeing an increasing impact on water quality is from impervious surface that create rapidly moving high volumes of untreated polluted stormwater that rush off of road surfaces, erode unnatural channels next to and ultimately underneath roadways comprising the integrity of roadway infrastructure, and increases the stress on storm sewer systems shortening the useful life of this infrastructure and ultimately lead to the discharge of untreated pollution that is carried off roadways and into our lakes, rivers, streams, and coastal waters.

Impervious surfaces include most buildings and structures, parking lots and of course the nearly 9 million lane miles of roads across our country. The total coverage of impervious surfaces in an area is usually expressed as a percentage of the total land area.

The coverage increases with rising urbanization. In rural areas, impervious cover may only be 1 percent or 2 percent, however road surfaces comprise 80 percent to 90 percent of a rural area's total impervious surfaces. In residential areas, impervious surface coverage ranges between 10 percent in low-density subdivisions to over 50 percent in more densely developed communities, where the composition of the impervious surface area coverage works out to be 50 percent roads. In dense urban areas, the impervious surface area is often over 90 percent of the total land area, with roads comprising 60 percent to 70 percent of that coverage.

According to EPA, urban impervious cover, not just roads, in the lower 48 adds up to 43,000 square miles—an area roughly the size of Ohio. Continuing development adds another quarter of a million acres each year. Typically two-thirds of the cover is pavement, roads and parking lots, and 1/3 is buildings.

According to the Chesapeake Bay Program, impervious surfaces compose roughly 17 percent of all urban and suburban lands in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The greatest concentration of impervious surfaces in the Bay watershed is in the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Areas of DC, Maryland and Virginia. The Virginia Tidewater area, Philadelphia's western suburbs, and Lancaster, PA, are also regions in the watershed where impervious surfaces are greater than 10 percent of the total land area.

Rainfall on hard surfaces like roads and highways has a very destructive and turbulent affect on nearby waterways and infrastructure. For example, the rain events that occur over a week long period at the end of April brought nearly 8 eight inches of rain to the Baltimore-Washington region. The urban runoff from roads in Baltimore caused an embankment above the CSX railroad track along East 26th Street, between St. Paul and Charles Street, to collapse. Fortunately no one was injured though homes had to be evacuated for more than a month, nearly a dozen parked cars were destroyed and moreover movement of freight along CSX railroad was disrupted for more than a week. This event shows just how destructive and disruptive poorly managed stormwater from transportation infrastructure can be.

Some may chalk this up to a freak storm of unusually large proportion. It's true this storm was unusual, but so were the polar vortexes and all of the snow we had in the mid-Atlantic and Southeast, and last year's 3-mile wide tornado in Alabama, and the California drought and wildfires, and baseball sized hail in Nebraska just last week. ''Unusual'' weather seems to becoming a lot more usual. As extreme weather events triggered by our changing climate become more frequent it is imperative that we incorporate better designs into our infrastructure to be better handle these types of events.

Under the Clean Water Act, stormwater is considered a non-point source and there are no requirements that stormwater be collected or treated. The exception being for localities where in order to meet the standards

set in an MS4, Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System, permit a region may include its transportation infrastructure in its MS4 permit.

However, in most cases stormwater that falls on roadways washes oil, grease, asbestos brake-dust, nitrogen deposits from tailpipe emissions, trash, road salt and de-icing agents, and sediment into nearby waterways. Highway stormwater runoff is most often not treated or adequately managed.

While these organic and inorganic contaminants are legitimate threats to water quality, the greater concern with roadway runoff is the sheer volume and rapid flow rate in which stormwater leaves these hard surfaces and enters our waterways. Flows and volumes that cause roads to collapse in Baltimore.

Roads are designed for stormwater to flow off of the driving surface quickly, for safety reasons. When stormwater rushes off of road surfaces into storm drains it is usually piped straight into the nearest river or stream without removing contaminants, detaining any of the volume, or slowing down the flow. This creates an enormously destructive set of circumstances for our waterways.

Another example of the destructive force that persistent unmitigated and poorly managed highway runoff can have on the condition and safety of highway infrastructure is in Mobile Alabama along Highway 131 in the Joe's Branch Watershed. The Mobile Bay Estuary Program, part of the National Estuaries Program, in coordination with Alabama Department of Transportation is having to spent millions of dollars to reinforce a highway embankment to keep the highway from slipping down a hill and into the Joe's Branch Creek, restore the hydrology of the river, and help protect private property from the dangerous erosion that's been caused by poorly managed stormwater from Highway 131.

The Mobile Bay Estuary Program described the problem this way: ''In the Joe's Branch watershed, on the property of Westminster Village adjacent and parallel to Highway 131, a head cut stream is eroding at an accelerating rate, an ominous condition as ALDOT prepares to undertake improvements to the highway. Identified as a high priority stabilization area in the D'Olive Creek, Tiawasee Creek and Joe's Branch Watershed Management Plan, MBNEP has submitted a funding request to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management on behalf of its partners in Spanish Fort, Daphne, ALDOT and Westminster Village to undertake restoration of the stream using a cutting-edge technology called Regenerative Step Pool Storm Conveyance.''

The four entities involved are spending large amount money to repair a problem caused by stormwater damage that could have been prevented at a lower cost by incorporating better stormwater mitigation facilities into the design of the highway.

These high-volume/high-speed flows also hasten the deterioration of water infrastructure. A 2001 study on the erosive power of urban stormwater flows examined how excessive stormwater volumes and flow rates off of urban surface infrastructure caused more than $1 million in roadway and water infrastructure damage in the Cincinnati metropolitan areas in Ohio and Kentucky in a single year.

While there are serious water quality concerns with not adequately controlling roadway infrastructure runoff, there are serious infrastructure costs, that are ultimately passed on to taxpayers and ratepayers, that can be avoided if transportation authorities do more to control and manage stormwater runoff with the infrastructure assets they manage and build.

The increased incidence of flash flooding events that occur even during seemingly mild and routine storm events is a direct result of the growing percentage of impervious land cover in urban and suburban communities. Replacement of the ''greenscapes'' that are lost to pavement is essential to restoring hydrological balance to our urban and suburban communities and impaired watersheds.

According to USGS: an inch of rain on one square foot of pavement produces 1.87 gallons of stormwater, Scaled up, 1 inch of rain on one acre would produce 27,150 gallons of stormwater. Using FHWA design standards for interstate highway lane and shoulder widths, 12 feet per lane, 10 foot right shoulder, 4 foot left shoulder, 10 miles of a four lane interstate highway generates nearly 2.5 million gallons of polluted stormwater for every inch of rain. To put that into perspective for the Potomac and Anacostia River Watersheds: The Capital Beltway, not including its 48 interchanges, generates nearly 30 million gallons of polluted stormwater for every inch of rain that falls on the 64 mile 8 to 12 lane interstate highway loop. It is volumes of stormwater like that which cause dangerous streambank erosion.

Gillies Creek is an urban waterway located East of Downtown Richmond. It is a tributary of the James River which flows into the Chesapeake Bay. Gillies Creek is surrounded by industrial and residential development and also receives stormwater from State highway 33, Interstate 64, US 60, and hundreds of city streets including Stony Run Parkway which directly adjacent to the creek for several miles. The banks and bed of this creek have eroded so badly as urban development around the creek has added more impervious surfaces to the watershed that streambed sheering has created cliffs more than ten feet tall at spots along the creek. Trees supporting the bank continually fall into the creek and nearby roadways and other infrastructure as well as homes and business are at risk. Reducing the impacts of the storms by mitigating the flow and volume of stormwater in this watershed will protect against further erosion and save the cost of repair and eventual replacement of the assets located along this endangered creek.

The aim of this legislation is to improve highway designs to better manage stormwater to avoid the costly damage that poorly managed stormwater causes to infrastructure and nearby streams, rivers and coastal waters.

I held a hearing on this issue in the Water and Wildlife Subcommittee on May 13. I heard many ideas from both the minority and majority witnesses that were invited to present testimony at this hearing. I listened to the concerns of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle and I have incorporated provisions into this bill that should alleviate concerns they may have had with previous attempts to better control highway stormwater.

My bill's approach to highway runoff management is one that I hope my colleagues of both parties can support. First of all it puts states in the driver's seat for developing hydrological analysis and implementation of best management practices to control highway runoff. The objective of the legislation is to control and manage flow and volume of stormwater from highways not to treat runoff in order to meet water quality standards. By taking this sort of approach we avoid EPA's involvement in the process. Lastly, States would only need to apply these procedures to new construction on major reconfiguration projects that significantly increases the amount of impervious surface in the project area.

Title 23 of the U.S. Code states: ''transportation should play a significant role in promoting economic growth, improving the environment, and sustaining the quality of life'' through the use of ''context sensitive solutions.'' In 2008, the Government Accountability Office issued a report examining key issues and challenges that needed to be addressed in the next reauthorization of the transportation bill. That report highlighted the clear link between transportation policy and the environment. With 985,139 miles of Federal aid highways stretching from every corner of the US, polluted highway runoff is no small problem facing our Nation's waters. I would urge my colleagues to join me trying to address this problem facing America's waterways and infrastructure.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 2457

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Highway Runoff Management Act''.

SEC. 2. FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY RUNOFF MANAGEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 3 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 330. Federal-aid highway runoff management program

''(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following definitions apply:

''(1) COVERED PROJECT.—The term 'covered project' means a reconstruction, rehabilitation, reconfiguration, renovation, major resurfacing, or new construction project on a Federal-aid highway carried out under this title that results in—

''(A) a 10-percent or greater increase in impervious surface of the aerial extent within the right-of-way of the project limit on a Federal-aid highway or associated facility; or

''(B) an increase of 1 acre or more in impervious surface coverage.

''(2) EROSIVE FORCE.—The term 'erosive force' means the flowrate within a stream or channel in which channel bed or bank material becomes detached, which in most cases is less than or equal to the flowrate produced by the 2-year storm event.

''(3) HIGHWAY RUNOFF.—The term 'highway runoff ', with respect to a Federal-aid highway, associated facility, or management measure retrofit project, means a discharge of peak flow rate or volume of runoff that exceeds flows generated under preproject conditions.

''(4) IMPACTED HYDROLOGY.—The term 'impacted hydrology' means stormwater runoff generated from all areas within the site limits of a covered project.

''(5) MANAGEMENT MEASURE.—The term 'management measure' means a program, structural or nonstructural management practice, operational procedure, or policy on or off the project site that is intended to prevent, reduce, or control highway runoff.

''(b) STATE HIGHWAY STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, each State shall—

''(A) develop a process for analyzing the erosive force of highway runoff generated from covered projects; and

''(B) apply management measures to maintain or restore impacted hydrology associated with highway runoff from covered projects.

''(2) INCLUSIONS.—The management measures established under paragraph (1) may include, as the State determines to be appropriate, management measures that—

''(A) minimize the erosive force of highway runoff from a covered project on a channel bed or bank of receiving water by managing highway runoff within the area of the covered project;

''(B) manage impacted hydrology in such a manner that the highway runoff generated by a covered project is below the erosive force flow and volume;

''(C) to the maximum extent practicable, seek to address the impact of the erosive force of hydrologic events that have the potential to create or exacerbate downstream channel erosion, including excess pier and abutment scour at bridges and channel downcutting and bank failure of streams adjacent to highway embankments;

''(D) ensure that the highway runoff from the post-construction condition does not increase the risk of channel erosion relative to the preproject condition; and

''(E) employ simplified approaches to determining the erosive force of highway runoff generated from covered projects, such as a regionalized analysis of streams within a State.

''(c) GUIDANCE.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall publish guidance to assist States in carrying out this section.

''(2) CONTENTS OF GUIDANCE.—The guidance shall include guidelines and technical assistance for the establishment of State management measures that will be used to assist in avoiding, minimizing, and managing highway runoff from covered projects, including guidelines to help States integrate the planning, selection, design, and long-term operation and maintenance of management measures consistent with the design standards in the overall project planning process.

''(3) APPROVAL.—The Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall—

''(A) review the management measures program of each State; and

''(B) approve such a program, if the program meets the requirements of subsection (b).

''(4) UPDATES.—Not later than 5 years after the date of publication of the guidance under this subsection, and not less frequently than once every 5 years thereafter—

''(A) the Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other relevant Federal agencies, shall update the guidance, as applicable; and

''(B) each State, as applicable, shall update the management measures program of the State in accordance with the updated guidance.

''(d) REPORTING.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2)(A), each State shall submit to the Secretary an annual report that describes the activities carried out under the highway stormwater management program of the State, including a description of any reductions of stormwater runoff achieved as a result of covered projects carried out by the State after the date of enactment of this section.

''(2) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS UNDER PERMIT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A State shall not be required to submit an annual report described in paragraph (1) if the State—

''(i) is operating Federal-aid highways in the State in a post-construction condition in accordance with a permit issued under the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.);

''(ii) is subject to an annual reporting requirement under such a permit (regardless of whether the permitting authority is a Federal or State agency); and

''(iii) carries out a covered project with respect to a Federal-aid highway in the State described in clause (i).

''(B) TRANSMISSION OF REPORT.—A Federal or State permitting authority that receives an annual report described in subparagraph (A)(ii) shall, on receipt of such a report, transmit a copy of the report to the Secretary.''.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 3 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''330. Federal-aid highway runoff management program.''.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3232. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2432, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans , and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3232. Mrs. SHAHEEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 2432, to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide for the refinancing of certain Federal student loans, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

TITLE IV—NATIONAL STUDENT LOAN DATA SYSTEM

SEC. 401. NATIONAL STUDENT LOAN DATA SYSTEM.

(a) AMENDMENT TO THE TRUTH IN LENDING ACT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 128(e) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(12) NATIONAL STUDENT LOAN DATA SYSTEM.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Each private educational lender shall—

''(i) submit to the Secretary of Education for inclusion in the National Student Loan Data System established under section 485B of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092b) information regarding each private education loan made by such lender that will allow for the electronic exchange of data between borrowers of private education loans and the System; and

''(ii) in carrying out clause (i), ensure the privacy of private education loan borrowers.

''(B) INFORMATION TO BE SUBMITTED.—The information regarding private education loans required under subparagraph (A) to be included in the National Student Loan Data System shall include the following if determined appropriate by the Secretary of Education:

''(i) The total amount and type of each such loan made, including outstanding interest and outstanding principal on such loan.

''(ii) The interest rate of each such loan made.

''(iii) Information regarding the borrower that the Secretary of Education determines is necessary to ensure the electronic exchange of data between borrowers of private education loans and the System.

''(iv) Information, including contact information, regarding the lender that owns the loan.

''(v) Information, including contact information, regarding the servicer that is handling the loan.

''(vi) Information concerning the date of any default on the loan and the collection of the loan, including any information concerning the repayment status of any defaulted loan.

''(vii) Information regarding any deferment or forbearance granted on the loan.

''(viii) The date of the completion of repayment by the borrower of the loan.

''(ix) Any other information determined by the Secretary of Education to be necessary for the operation of the National Student Loan Data System.

''(C) UPDATE.—Each private educational lender shall update the information regarding private education loans required under subparagraph (A) to be included in the National Student Loan Data System on the same schedule as information is updated under the System under section 485B of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092b).''.

(2) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by paragraph (1) shall apply to private education loans that were made for the 2011–2012 academic year or later.

(b) AMENDMENT TO THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965.—Section 485B of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(i) PRIVATE EDUCATION LOANS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The National Student Loan Data System established pursuant to subsection (a) shall contain the information required to be included under section 128(e)(12) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1638(e)(12)).

''(2) COSIGNER.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall ensure that any cosigner of a private education loan for which information is included in the National Student Loan Data System—

''(A) is able to access the information in such System with respect to such private education loan; and

''(B) does not have access to any information in such System with respect to any loan for which the cosigner has not cosigned.

''(3) PRIVACY.—The Secretary shall ensure that a private educational lender—

''(A) has access to the National Student Loan Data System only to submit information for such System regarding the private education loans of such lender; and

''(B) may not see information in the System regarding the loans of any other lender.

''(j) REPAYMENT OPTIONS.—The Secretary shall establish a functionality within the National Student Loan Data System established pursuant to subsection (a) that enables a student borrower of a loan made, insured, or guaranteed under this title to input information necessary for the estimation of repayment amounts under the various repayment plans available to the borrower of such loan to compare such repayment plans.''.

NOTICE OF HEARING

PERMANENT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs has scheduled a hearing entitled, ''Conflicts of Interest, Investor Loss of Confidence, and High Speed Trading in U.S. Stock Markets.'' The Subcommittee hearing will examine conflicts of interest in the U.S. stock markets and the impact of such conflicts on consumer confidence, including in the context of high frequency trading. In particular, the hearing will focus on the conflicts of interest that arise between the obligation of brokers to provide their customers with best execution of their orders to buy or sell securities, and the brokers' receipt of payments from other brokers for order flow and rebates from some trading venues for placing those orders directly. Witnesses will include representatives of stock exchanges, brokerage firms, and institutional investors, as well as a securities market expert. A witness list will be available Friday, June 13, 2014.

The Subcommittee hearing has been scheduled for Tuesday, June 17, 2014, at 9:30 a.m., in Room 216 of the Hart Senate Office Building. For further information, please contact Elise Bean of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations at 224–9505.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 10, 2014, at 9 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 10, 2014, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's Semi-Annual Report to Congress.''

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 10, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND THE FEDERAL WORKFORCE

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Federal Programs and the Federal Workforce of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 10, 2014, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled, ''A More Efficient and Effective Government: Examining Federal IT Initiatives and the IT Workforce.''

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

SUBCOMMITEE ON OVERSIGHT

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Oversight of the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 10, 2014, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Protecting Taxpayers and Ensuring Accountability: Faster Superfund Cleanups for Healthier Communities.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Ray Li, Jacklyn Vasquez, and James Gulbranson, interns with my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of today's session.

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

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that privileges of the floor be granted to the following member of my staff, Janna Wehilani Ahu, during the pendency of the 113th Congress.

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

AUTHORIZING USE OF THE ROTUNDA

Mr. CASEY. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 100, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 100) authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol for a ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. CASEY. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 100) was agreed to.

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 2014

Mr. CASEY. I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:15 a.m. on Wednesday, June 11, 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, we resume consideration of the motion to proceed to S. 2432, the college affordability bill, and the time until 10 a.m. be divided as follows: Senator ALEXANDER controlling up to 15 minutes and the remaining time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees prior to the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the bill.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, there will be a rollcall vote at 10 a.m. tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:15 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. CASEY. 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 7:09 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, June 11, 2014, at 9:15 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be colonel

ROBERT H. MCCARTHY III

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant colonel

BURTON C. GLOVER

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

CLARENCE E. DINGMAN

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be major

PAUL A. THOMAS

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate June 10, 2014:

THE JUDICIARY

M. HANNAH LAUCK, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA.

LEO T. SOROKIN, OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS.

RICHARD FRANKLIN BOULWARE II, OF NEVADA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 113th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 160 WASHINGTON, THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2014 No. 91

Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii.

PRAYER

The Rabbi Daniel Ginsberg, associate dean, Ohr Somayach-Tanenbaum College, Jerusalem, and rabbi of Yeshiva Ateres Shmuel, of Waterbury, CT, offered the following prayer:

Our Father in Heaven, bless the United States of America and the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who have left their loved ones in defense of freedom.

Bless our lawmakers—men and women who love to serve and who will serve with love. Place into their hearts and into the hearts of their counselors a moral compass to guide them to the right decisions. O Lord, protect and inspire these good, gifted, and gracious people. Endow them with courage, fortitude, wisdom, and crown them with humility and compassion. May the eternal teachings always be with them—to act with accountability, to relate with respect, to be diligent and devoted, to be a friend of truth.

May our beloved United States be a place where dreams are worth dreaming, a place where sacrifices are worth enduring and where our tomorrows can be even better than our todays.

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 12, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BRIAN SCHATZ, a Senator from the State of Hawaii, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. SCHATZ thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I now move to proceed to Calendar No. 428.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 428, a bill (H.R. 4660) making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I yield to my friend the distinguished Senator from Connecticut.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut is recognized.

WELCOMING RABBI GINSBERG

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, I thank both Majority Leader REID and Chaplain Black for allowing Rabbi Ginsberg to open our session with what I thought was a very beautiful prayer challenging us to action and to conscience.

Just a word about Rabbi Ginsberg's leadership. For the last decade Rabbi Ginsberg has been helping to organize one of the most robust religious communities in Connecticut.

In 2000 Rabbi Judah Harris conceived a yeshiva in Waterbury. It began with about 38 students and today has grown to service 600 students and 180 families who have settled in a neighborhood just off the center of Waterbury that 10 to 20 years ago had become pretty rundown but today is thriving and has been rebuilt because of the community surrounding the yeshiva.

We have had a wonderful Jewish community since the mid-1800s, but it is stronger today than ever, in large part because of the efforts of Rabbi Ginsberg.

In addition to building this wonderful community and being amongst its leaders, he has been of great counsel to me, Senator BLUMENTHAL, and Governor Mallow as a moral guide but also as someone on whom we can rely when it comes to the tough policy choices we have to make.

I again thank Chaplain Black and Leader REID, and I thank Rabbi Ginsberg for accepting our offer to lead us this morning.

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, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11:30 a.m. During that time the Republicans will control the first 30 minutes and the majority will control the second 30 minutes.

At 11:30 a.m. there will be up to four rollcall votes on the confirmation of several nominations, although we are confident and somewhat hopeful that only one rollcall vote will be necessary.

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

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We will move forward to confirm Crystal Nix-Hines to be U.S. Permanent Representative for UNESCO; Michael J. McCord to be Under Secretary of Defense, Comptroller; R. Jane Chu, Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts for a term of 4 years; and then we will move forward on Todd A. Batta to be Assistant Secretary of Agriculture.

At 1:45 p.m. this afternoon there will be three rollcall votes on the confirmation of three Federal Reserve nominations: Lael Brainard to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; Jerome H. Powell to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; and Stanley Fischer to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

Would the Chair announce the business of the day.

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 11:30 a.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time being equally divided or controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first 30 minutes and the majority controlling the next 30 minutes.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum, and I ask unanimous consent that the time be charged equally.

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

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yesterday the Senate passed bipartisan legislation to address the VA scandal. The Sanders-McCain bill will increase patient choice, it will infuse some much needed accountability into the VA system, and it was important for us to show some urgency in addressing the crisis. That is why I voted for it, and that is why I am glad that the majority leader decided to move forward on this effort, even if it took a vote to set aside a partisan bill in order to take up this important bipartisan legislation.

It will now go to conference so it can be improved further. The sooner the bill managers begin negotiations with their colleagues in the House, the sooner we can get a bill on the President's desk. I am optimistic they will do just that.

As I have said all week, the systemic failures and scandals we have seen within the administration are a national disgrace. When you see 100,000 veterans—100,000 of them—waiting for care, that is a national disgrace. When you see so many veterans waiting 3 months or longer just to get an appointment, that is a national disgrace. And when you see veterans dying before they even receive care they were counting on, it is completely unacceptable.

So this problem needs to be solved, and there is more to be done. A lot of the responsibility here resides with the President himself. He still needs to nominate a capable manager who possesses the necessary skills, leadership, and determination to fix this scandal. He needs to support the thousands of VA workers committed to serving our veterans and to provide all those who serve bravely with the timely care they deserve, and he needs to use all the tools in his toolbox to address the systemic management failures—both the tools he already has and the new ones we can provide him, such as those contained within the legislation we passed yesterday. Our veterans have waited long enough for care, and they shouldn't be made to wait any longer.

90TH BIRTHDAY OF PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH

Mr. MCCONNELL. Obviously much of Washington's focus this week has been on doing right by our veterans. That is exactly what we should be doing. We owe so much to the men and women who protect us. In that spirit I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge an important milestone just reached by one of America's most famous veterans.

Today our Nation's 41st President, George H.W. Bush, turns 90. It is a rare milestone. Only 4 other presidents have ever reached it: Herbert Hoover, John Adams, Gerald Ford, and the man President Bush once served under, Ronald Reagan.

Beyond wishing him a very happy birthday, I want to acknowledge President Bush's extraordinary record of service. On his 18th birthday the future President volunteered as a World War II Navy pilot, going on to receive the Distinguished Flying Cross for bravery. From there he would go on to excel in a dizzying number of fields as a businessman, a Congressman, a diplomat, CIA Director, leader of his party, Vice President and President, and Commander in Chief during Desert Storm and Desert Shield.

Even his post-Presidency has been marked by continuing and gracious willingness to serve. Yet for all of his professional distinction, I know President Bush's favorite job never appeared on his resume. It was his role as proud husband to Barbara, who also turned a year older this week, and as the father of five adoring children and proud grandfather and great-grandfather. Maybe that is why every time you see him these days he always has a big smile on his face and a lively pair of socks on his feet. With a loving family like that, it is not hard to see why.

So I am proud to cosponsor the resolution we agreed to yesterday honoring this good man and former President for such a long lifetime of service. I know my colleagues join me in sending President Bush the warmest of birthday wishes.

TRIBUTE TO MARTHA J. CASSITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, one final note concerning our Nation's veterans. I want to honor an exemplary citizen of my home State, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, who has devoted her life to service of our country. Martha J. Cassity is a veteran of the U.S. Army, a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and this Saturday she will be named the first female veteran State commander of the Kentucky VFW. Her ascension to this post is an accomplishment I believe is deserving of recognition and praise here in the Senate.

Martha was born on September 29, 1957, in my hometown of Louisville. She was raised there by her parents Joan and Charles Blanford. While attending Western High School, Martha joined the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars in 1974, thus beginning her life of devoted service to her country.

The stated mission of the Ladies Auxiliary is to serve ''the veterans of this country and our communities in honor of the sacrifices and commitment of every man and woman who has served in uniform.'' For 9 years Martha worked tirelessly to advance this mission, holding multiple chairmanships in the organization.

Martha joined the U.S. Army in October of 1984 as a track vehicle repairer and gave 10 years of honorable service to the Army, including postings in Germany and South Korea. She became eligible to join the VFW while stationed in South Korea, and she did so in 1991.

Upon returning from South Korea, Martha was stationed at Fort Stewart, GA, where she was injured during the battalion's preparations for Operation Desert Storm. She was honorably discharged in 1994. After leaving the Army, Martha earned her associate's degree in applied science from Alabama Southern Community College. Although her days in the military were behind her, Martha's service to America and her fellow veterans would continue. Since 1999 Martha has been heavily involved in the Veterans of Foreign Wars. She has held numerous chairmanships and chairs on the post and

district levels. She has served as VFW post and district commander. She has held chairmanships on the national level and has been on the National Women Veterans Committee for the past 3 years. She currently serves as senior vice commander of the Kentucky VFW, and this Saturday she will be named the first female veteran State commander of the Kentucky VFW.

We owe our veterans an unimaginable debt for their service to our country. In this new post Martha will continue to serve her Nation by advocating on veterans' behalf. Martha works to make real the VFW's vision: ensuring that veterans are respected for their service and recognized for the sacrifices they and their loved ones have made on behalf of a grateful America.

So today I ask that my Senate colleagues join me in recognizing Martha J. Cassity's lifetime of service to our country and wishing her well in her new post as veteran State commander of the Kentucky VFW. She is a true friend to Kentucky veterans, to the Commonwealth, and to our country.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

HONORING TWO GREAT MEN

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I want to join our Republican leader in recognizing the birthday of the 41st President of the United States, George H.W. Bush. It is possible that nobody ever came to the Presidency with a preparation that exceeded his in both diplomacy—he served as the first U.S. emissary to China in those decades and he served as the head of the CIA. He served as Vice President.

I was just reading a few days ago another and new retelling of what happened as the Soviet bloc fell apart—the importance of both President Reagan and President Bush, who brought his unique background to that time when it was so unpredictable what might happen. Frankly, the results turned out to be carefully managed by this President as the Berlin Wall fell, as these countries came together, and President Bush's skills were in great evidence, as they were when the coalition was put together to push back what the Iraqis had done in Kuwait.

But probably his greatest example to all of us is an example of a man of kindness and generosity—some would say an almost too forgiving nature to have risen in politics as he did. But on his 90th birthday it is a good time for Americans to reflect about his service to the country. His wife's birthday was just a few days ago, and on her birthday we also want to think about their family and what their family has meant to the country.

My understanding is that President Bush has announced that he intends to jump out of an airplane for the third decade in a row as he did on his 70th birthday and 80th birthday, and will do on this 90th birthday. I am not sure the judgment to do that is quite as good as the judgment he showed in managing the future of the country. But if you are 90, you only get to be 90 once, and I am sure he is the only 90-year-old President to have jumped out of an airplane in 3 different decades. We appreciate the service of George H.W. Bush to his country, from signing up to be the youngest pilot in World War II until the service that he continues to provide as a former President of the United States.

I was thinking about him and the other World War II veterans as we see them leave us as heads of families, as examples we could turn to, and of the thought of another veteran whom one of my colleagues was mentioning just a few days ago, Senator MORAN's father Raymond Moran.

Raymond Moran died on D-day at 98 years old. Senator MORAN and I have been good friends for a long time. I know we speak on this floor in the Senate about ''my good friend, our long time relationship.'' This is a case where we really have been close friends. We have been so close that in the couple of decades now that we have known each other, I have heard a lot about JERRY MORAN's father and his mother.

JERRY was lucky enough to have both of his parents until just a couple of years ago, and his mom and dad were together until just a couple of years ago. JERRY's father was a staff sergeant in North Africa and in Italy. He was not part of the D-day invasion, even though his death on June 6, the 70th Anniversary of D-day, is a significant day for all the veterans of that conflict.

The stories I heard about Senator MORAN's father were the stories that you would think a man from Plainville, KS, would be part of—quiet, unassuming, church-going, passing along the values that he stood for to his family, and working hard and believing in some way that somehow his children could do anything they wanted to do. Then he had the opportunity to see his son in the Congress of the United States representing that huge district in western Kansas and then in the Senate of the United States.

These two stories are very different—the stories of George H.W. Bush and Raymond Moran. But the lives that these two men led are very similar in the values that they stood for and the values of their generation—the generation that Tom Brokaw called ''the greatest generation.'' These are fundamental and foundational values to what we are all about as a nation.

HEALTH CARE

This week the Senate stepped up united as we seldom are these days to talk about the veterans of that war and our other wars and the obligation that we have to our veterans. The bill that the Senate passed yesterday, which I cosponsored and I voted for, can be better and, frankly, it will be better after we get a chance to have a conference with our House colleagues—maybe a conference similar to the conferences we used to hold. It is time we get back to the normal way of doing business.

But the underlying approach and key significant change this bill the Senate passed yesterday brings to the veterans is more options and more opportunities. Particularly our younger veterans want to see more choices. They want to have more information.

When Senator STABENOW and I sponsored and initially put the bill forward in early 2013, the Excellence in Mental Health Act, the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans were among our greatest supporters along with law enforcement and the mental health community. This was for an act they thought had the potential to provide more options for treatment, more places to go, more ways to get the mental health treatment and access you would like to have that worked with family, that worked with jobs. These are young veterans who left the military but still have lots of obligations that they want to, need to, and should be trying to fulfill for themselves, their families, and the work they have chosen to do, so the assistance we can give them with more options is important.

This bill will give veterans more options. If the Veterans' Administration fails to meet their needs in an appropriate way or if a veteran is 40 miles or an hour away—or any way you measure traffic and time—from a veterans facility, that veteran will have the ability to permanently get the care they need at any facility that accepts Medicare patients at the Medicare rate, and that would be the reimbursement rate the government and the VA will be obligated to pay.

Even if a veteran lives next door to a VA hospital, if that hospital could not see that veteran within the time the law will ultimately decide is the critical time—by the way, there are occasions when the critical time is right away. For a veteran suffering from a heart attack or contemplating suicide, there is no waiting period for them. If a veteran can't be seen within 14 days for routine medical care, that veteran will get a card that says they can go wherever they want to go.

I hope that is the way this final bill works out so veterans will have lots of options. I think the Veterans' Administration is going to be better if they have to compete. I have thought that for a long time.

I was at the Truman veterans facility—I stand here at one of the desks Harry Truman used when he was in the Senate. His name is carved in the desk drawer. Anyway, I was at the Truman veterans facility in Columbia, MO, with my longtime good friend Dewey Rehms, who advises me on veterans issues with the VFW, and we were meeting with the people who run that hospital. Dewey Rehms said: As Senator BLUNT has been saying for at least

10 years, we need to have more options for veterans, and I am here today to say that I think he has been right. Even though defenders and advocates of veterans hospitals and veterans systems want to make it better, we have been slow to embrace the idea that they want more options, but they, along with Congress, are now willing to accept more options, and this system will be better because veterans will have more choices.

There are some issues that the Veterans' Administration is clearly better at than other facilities, and if they are not better than anybody else in dealing with those issues, we need to ask why. They are better at dealing with injuries that result from IEDs and explosive attacks, and so they should be better at dealing with eye injuries, loss of limb, and rehabilitation than anybody else in America. They should also be better at dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder than anybody else in America. But there is no reason they would be better at dealing with cancer or a heart problem or a lung issue. There is no reason to believe that at all.

This is the time to really rethink not what is best for the Veterans' Administration but what is best for the veterans. Our goal should be doing what is best for veterans, not what is best for the Veterans' Administration.

We have all seen the list, and too many Missouri facilities are high on that list with veterans waiting to get service. We have all heard about the lists and heard the stories about supervisors from one facility after another. And I am sure not every facility is telling the people they supervise: Here is how we are going to manage the people who want to be here so that it appears we are doing a better job than we are doing.

We have had enough of that. We have had enough with appearing to be doing a better job than they are doing. Now is the time to insist that they do a better job. I think we took a big step in that direction yesterday.

I look forward to this bill improving as the House and Senate work together to bring the two bills to a final vote so it can get on the President's desk to be signed into law and ultimately change the way we deal with veterans.

While I am on the floor, I have a few additional items to mention. My office continues to get more letters about the unintended consequences when government thinks it can better manage people's health care than they can themselves. I have three examples with me today that have come into my office over the last few days.

Brandon from St. James, MO, said:

> I purchased a separate health insurance policy for my college-aged son because it was cheaper than continuing to carry a family policy. It was a good policy with a decent deductible through Blue Cross Blue Shield. We received a notice that his insurance was going to be cancelled. This was alarming to us and just plain wrong. The goal of Obamacare was supposed to get more people insured. Instead it was doing the opposite, it was cancelling his insurance.

Brandon goes on to say:

> Then we got another notice later saying that he could keep his current insurance after the President decided to extend the mandate for another year.

Brandon says now he is concerned about what will happen—as many people are—at the end of that year.

The more we postpone and delay and say the law doesn't mean what the law says, the more we are confused. When you have a bad law, postponing and delaying it has some merit.

Jerry from Jefferson City says he has a plan with really good benefits. Under the President's health care plan, his plan will now and in the future be subject to an additional tax because he was fortunate enough to have a really good plan.

If they are really trying to get people the insurance they want—and hopefully as good an insurance plan as they could have—that is not something you would expect them to do.

The third example is from Earl, who resides in Palmyra, MO. He said he is a senior citizen and found that his longtime preferred doctor is no longer in the network, so he has to pay to see the doctor he has always seen. His doctor visits have gone from $20 a visit to $45 a visit. So much for the pledge that if you like your health insurance, you can keep it or if you like your doctor, you can keep him.

I hope we can find a way to rally around the health care challenge for everybody the way we figured out a way to rally around the health care challenge for veterans. We need a system that doesn't create all kinds of unintended consequences but just makes it easier for people to have access to the insurance they want, not the insurance the government says they should have.

I see my colleagues are joining me, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. WALSH). The Senator from Maine.

TRIBUTE TO PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to honor a great American, President George Herbert Walker Bush, on the occasion of his 90th birthday. As I reflect upon his remarkable life, I am amazed that he has managed to pack so many accomplishments into just 90 short years. In fact, today President Bush will mark this milestone by doing what he has done on other birthdays so many times: He will jump out of an airplane—or as Barbara Bush once put it, he will jump out of a perfectly good airplane.

President Bush has spent every summer of his life—except during the war years—at the family home in Kennebunkport, ME. A few years ago his neighbors in Kennebunkport came together to acquire a Navy ship's anchor in his honor. It is a fitting tribute to President Bush, who so often describes Walker's Point in Maine as his anchor to the windward. It is fitting in another way. As a Navy aviator in World War II, as a Member of Congress, as U.N. Ambassador, as an envoy to China, as Director of the CIA, as Vice President, and as President, George Bush embodies the values that are the anchor of American society. Courage, duty, honor, and compassion define our Nation and his life.

I am sure it is a great joy for him to share this special day with his First Lady Barbara Bush, who also recently celebrated a birthday and who has done so much to promote family literacy in this country.

Last night our Senate colleagues unanimously passed a resolution that I submitted with dozens of our colleagues, including Maine Senator ANGUS KING, the two Senators from Texas, and our two leaders, wishing both President and Mrs. Bush the happiest of birthdays and honoring them. The love within this extraordinary family anchors their commitment to one another, to their community, to their two home States, and to their Nation.

Another great President, Abraham Lincoln, spoke a great many eternal truths that still inspire us today. Nothing he said was ever truer than this:

> It's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.

President George H.W. Bush has filled his years with a lifetime of service and contributions marked by integrity and humility. I wish him and his family many more years of celebration, and I thank him for his extraordinary service and dedication to the country he loves so much.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Mr. WYDEN. Last night the Senate passed the Intelligence authorization bill, and it contains some very important provisions relating to whistleblowers. While Senator COLLINS is on the floor, I wish to commend her for her extraordinary work on this issue. She has been at this for years, and it is a pleasure to be able to team up with her in this effort. I think it is fair to say both of us are very appreciative of the work done by our chair, Senator FEINSTEIN, who did so much to make this possible.

I am going to be very brief. Chairman HARKIN has some important remarks to make this morning. He graciously allowed me to go ahead of him.

I wish to reflect a little bit on where we are with respect to whistleblowers and the ability of intelligence agency employees to speak out on matters that do not affect national security but are important to the debate about how to ensure our country resolutely fights terror and protects the public's right to know.

I think it is fair to say—and I make this judgment on the basis of having been on the intelligence committee for 13 years now—that the very important and worthwhile efforts to protect our national security after the terrorists murdered more than 3,000 of our people on 9/11 were also accompanied by a lot of overreaching by the intelligence leadership.

In recent years I think it is fair to say reformers have made some real progress in our efforts to address that overreach, and now with the PATRIOT Act and other measures coming before us—and the country truly understanding what is at stake—I think it is going to be possible to make additional progress.

The reason I have come to the floor to discuss whistleblowers and the ability of intelligence employees to speak out is a lot of the progress we have seen recently would not have happened without whistleblowers and without some of the intelligence agency employees who are willing to risk their very careers to draw attention to real and serious problems. I also make note of the fact that there were journalists, journalists who worked hard to report the facts responsibly to ensure an informed public debate that is so essential to our democracy.

Here is why the whistleblower issue is so important: There are existing laws and regulations that say employees of American intelligence agencies who are concerned about possible misconduct, such as waste and fraud and illegal activity, are allowed to report that, and these laws and regulations lay out channels for doing it.

The reality is these principles—and the idea is that if there is misconduct reported to one of these entities, the oversight entity would have some opportunity to do something about it. Unfortunately, reporting misconduct by your colleagues or by your agency does not always work out so well. That is why rocking the boat and reporting misconduct can sometimes be hazardous for an individual's career.

If a government employee thinks about blowing the whistle on possible misconduct, but can see that their supervisor or someone in their chain of command is condoning or participating in that misconduct, the employee is rightly going to be concerned about possible retaliation and will not get that promotion and might not even be able to retain their security clearance.

So title VI of this year's Intelligence Authorization Act strengthens the ability of those whistleblowers to come forward. It prohibits retaliation against intelligence whistleblowers who report misconduct using approved channels, and it includes disclosures to the Congress or to an inspector general. It requires the executive branch to establish an appeals process for whistleblowers who have their security clearance unjustifiably revoked. Establishing these protections in statute—in statute—in my view is an important advance forward. So we are making some progress there with respect to whistleblowers, but we are not doing so well with respect to making sure we are protecting the ability of our employees in the intelligence field to speak out.

Recently the head of National Intelligence issued a new policy directive regarding agency employees' contact with the media. I will tell you, I am troubled by how sweeping in nature this is. At the outset, this is supposed to prevent disclosures of genuinely sensitive information. That is obviously an important goal, but it is also important to make sure that as we carry out that provision, we do not keep employees, for example, from being able to talk about nonclassified matters.

The new policy makes it clear that intelligence agency employees can be punished for having ''contact with the media about intelligence-related information.'' Make no mistake about it, that is so broad it could cover unclassified information. It does not lay out any limits on this extraordinarily broad term that I have described.

For example, is an employee's opinion about the scope of the NSA's domestic surveillance activities intelligence-related information? Are publicly available assessments about developments in Syria or the Ukraine intelligence related? This new directive does not say that, but it certainly points in that direction.

It becomes even more problematic if we read further down into this new policy and review the definition of the word ''media.'' It includes any person or entity ''engaged in the collection, production or dissemination to the public of information in any form related to topics of national security, which includes print, broadcast, film and Internet.'' This is extraordinarily broad. It goes well beyond professional news gatherers to include anyone who uses the Internet—the Internet—to disseminate any information at all relating to national security topics. So if someone is an employee of an intelligence agency and if they have a family member who likes to post or retweet articles about national security, suddenly having a conversation with that family member about important issues, such as NSA surveillance or the war in Afghanistan, could lead to them getting punished for having unauthorized contact with the media, which this directive says ''will be handled in the same manner as a security violation'' regardless of whether any classified information is disclosed.

So I am willing to give everyone the benefit of the doubt; that some of the authors of this policy did not intend to have this happen. I know that trying to make definitions of who is and is not a member of the media is going to be a challenge with these new media technologies, but that does not remove the fact that this policy is too broad, is too sweeping. It incorporates too much of what we want in Montana, in Oregon, which is to make sure our people can talk about the policy issues that afford them the information so they can cast a ballot.

My hope is we can get this corrected because I think it is going to have a chilling effect on intelligence professionals who simply want to talk about unclassified matters on important national security issues—such as how to reform domestic surveillance or whether our country should go to war.

In closing—and I thank my colleague from Iowa—we have made progress. Back in 2012 there was an overly broad antileaks bill reported by the intelligence committee. It came out of the committee on a 14-to-1 basis. I was the opposing vote. At that time I knew it was a flawed policy, but I did not even know how flawed it was because we were not able at the time to talk to outside parties. When it was ready for the floor, the country and journalists and citizens saw how sweeping it was, saw how flawed it was and the damage it would have done, again, to discussing nonclassified matters, and we got it corrected, but suffice it to say, we are going to have a host of challenges in the years ahead. While we have won victories—such as against that overly broad antileaks policy, when we were able to derail what would have been the biggest invasion of privacy in our country's history, the Total Information Awareness Program, which was derailed because a young person in our office found a memo that demonstrated how sweeping it was—while we have made progress, we have a lot to do.

We are in better shape this morning because of the passage of that intelligence authorization bill and the additional measure of protections for whistleblowers, and Senator COLLINS and the chair of the committee, Senator FEINSTEIN, deserve enormous credit. But make no mistake about it; we have a lot of work to do, and certainly that new media policy that has come from the Director of National Intelligence—that is so broad, so broad it could make it difficult to talk about unclassified matters on the Internet—is just one example of the kind of issue we are going to have to zero in on in the days ahead.

I also note that our next speaker, Chairman HARKIN, has been a great advocate on these kinds of issues as well.

I thank him for his courtesy so I could go ahead.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

WORLD DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, today, June 12, 2014, is the day set aside by the International Labor Organization to bring attention to the tragic predicament of millions of children across the globe who continue to be trapped in forced and abusive labor, often in extremely hazardous conditions.

So today is the World Day Against Child Labor. It is a day set aside every year globally for people to take a look at what is happening to kids around the globe who are forced into very abusive and exploitative labor conditions.

I think we should obviously think about these children more than just 1 day a year. We should think about them every day.

In my travels I have seen the scourge of forced and abusive child labor firsthand. Previously on the floor—going back for almost 20 years—I have spoken about how shocked I was to see the deplorable conditions under which some of these kids are forced to work. I have witnessed this personally in places from South Asia to Latin America, to Africa.

These pictures I have in the Chamber are, as a matter of fact, pictures I took myself. This picture was taken in a rug-making place in Kathmandu, Nepal. We were told there were no children being forced into this kind of labor, but under the cover of darkness, on a Sunday night—it was probably after about 8 o'clock in the evening—we were able to make entry into one of these back-alley places, and this is what we came across: young people, girls and boys, some as young as 8 years of age, working at these looms. I remind you, this is at 8 p.m. on a Sunday night. They lived in barracks. They were housed, kind of stacked in barracks, so they could not leave, they could not go anywhere, they could not see their families.

Here is another picture of some older girls. These are young teenage girls working at the same place. I did not take that picture because this is me in the picture. This picture was taken by Rosemary Gutierrez, my staff person.

So I witnessed this firsthand. Even though we were told no such thing existed, we found it did exist.

This witnessing I have done in all these places has also been a call to action, a call to become a voice for these kids. Since 1992, when I first introduced the first bill to ban all products made by abusive and exploitative child labor, I have been leading this effort in the Senate.

Since the introduction of the bill in 1992, we have made progress in raising awareness about abusive and exploitive child labor, and we have significantly reduced the number of kids working in these hazardous conditions.

This effort received a big boost through the International Labor Organization's Convention 182, a treaty calling for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.

In June 1999, President Clinton traveled to Geneva to support and sign this treaty. I was proud to accompany him on this historic trip when, for the first time in history, the world spoke with one voice in opposition to abusive and exploitative child labor. Countries from across the political, economic, and religious spectrum came together to proclaim unequivocally that abusive and exploitative child labor is a practice that will not be tolerated and must be abolished.

After returning from that trip with President Clinton, I worked with Senator Jesse Helms in the Senate—he was then chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—to bring this treaty before the full Senate. Just 5 months later, the Senate unanimously gave its advice and consent, in a 96-to-0 vote, to ratify this treaty.

I have to digress for a minute. We have another treaty that hopefully we will be bringing up soon; that is, the U.N. treaty on the rights of people with disabilities—the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. There has been a lot of talk about sovereignty, that we can't give up our sovereignty. That is just a red herring. I would say that many Senators who are here today voted on that 96-to-0 vote and nobody ever raised an issue about sovereignty. Have we lost our sovereignty since we joined that treaty? Not one speck. So why is it we are so concerned about some sovereignty issue when it deals with people with disabilities but we weren't in 1999 when we voted unanimously, Republicans and Democrats, when it dealt with exploitative child labor? So I just want to make that point for people to consider when we, hopefully, bring up the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities sometime this summer.

With that historic treaty on exploitative child labor, the global community rejected the argument that abusive and exploitative child labor is a practice that can be excused by a country's poor economic circumstances.

In pushing the United States to lead by example, I worked with the Clinton administration to issue Executive order 13126, the ''Prohibition of Acquisition of Products Produced by Forced and Indentured Child Labor.'' This Executive order, in effect since 1999, prohibits the U.S. Government from procuring items made by forced or indentured child labor.

I have always believed that trade agreements—on the right terms—promise many broadly shared benefits and opportunities for all. That is why I have worked hard to improve the labor provisions in various trade measures, concentrating particularly on combating abusive and exploitative child labor.

Thereafter, in 2000, during consideration of the Trade and Development Act, I again worked with Senator Helms to amend the Generalized System of Preferences—GSP—so that ''efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor'' would be included as a criterion and condition for receiving trade benefits. That is in the law.

Additionally, that amendment also mandated that the Department of Labor's International Labor Affairs Bureau—called ILAB—the U.S. Government's foremost authority on child labor, must produce an annual report in which our government formally monitors and documents the effort or lack of effort of 144 countries and territories receiving U.S. trade benefits to meet their international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. This amendment enshrined into law something I had been working on for years through the previous Department of Labor reports.

I intended for this report to bring countries to account, to shine a spotlight on their need to reform their national laws, and to put in place safety nets for those trapped in the worst forms of child labor. The aim is not punitive but, rather, to jump-start individual and collective action. I wanted this report to be equal in stature—and in impact—to the State Department's human rights report, and we are well on our way to achieving that status.

On the technical assistance side, ILAB has funded 269 technical cooperation projects to combat exploitative child labor in over 90 countries around the world. Think about that. We have funded 269 projects to combat child labor in over 90 countries around the world. As a result of these efforts, about 1.7 million children have been rescued from child labor through the provision of education and training services and livelihood support for their families.

Let's be clear. Whether we are talking about trafficking of children for sexual exploitation or for purposes of forced labor in dangerous, abusive circumstances, the outcome is the same. These children are robbed of their childhood, robbed of their education, robbed of their future. And in the countries where this takes place, the cycle of poverty is perpetuated.

A nation can neither achieve nor sustain prosperity on the backs of its children. In the global economy, the exploitation of children must not be tolerated under any circumstances or for any reason.

When children are exploited for the economic gains of others, everybody loses—the children lose, their families lose, their country loses, the world loses. When even one child is exploited, every one of us is diminished. That is why in 2001, after reading investigative reports by Knight-Ridder exposing the magnitude of forced child labor on cocoa farms in West Africa, I resolved to do what we could to end this tragic exploitation of children.

Together with Congressman ELIOT ENGEL of New York, we engaged the major chocolate companies in lengthy, intense negotiations. The result is what has become known as the Harkin-Engel Protocol—a public-private partnership to tackle the problem of child labor on nearly 1.5 million small cocoa farms in four African countries, beginning with Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

One might ask why we are so interested in that. Think about this: 60 percent of all of the chocolate consumed in America—think about our Hershey bars, the chocolates we eat, the cocoa we make, chocolate that goes into

cakes, whatever it is—60 percent of all of that we consume in America comes from two countries: the Ivory Coast and Ghana. How many people, when they bite into that chocolate or eat that chocolate bar or that piece of chocolate cake or drink some cocoa in the morning, know they got that through abusive child labor—kids 10 years of age with knife cuts, machetes taking off their fingers, not being allowed to go to school, forced to work in terrible conditions in these cocoa fields just so we can have chocolate to eat. Is that something we are proud of?

So we developed this protocol to begin the process of getting them out of this kind of work.

Again, we have made some progress. The joint efforts of the stakeholders failed to rise to a level to match the magnitude of the challenge. This is what an independent study by Tulane University in 2010 concluded:

> Despite the concerted efforts of the various stakeholders—

One of them being us—

> it is evident that much more work is required and the majority of children exposed to the worst forms of child labor remains unreached by the remediation activities currently in place.

That was reported by Tulane University. The study noted that over 1 million children were trapped in exploitative labor in the cocoa sector of just those two countries.

I was determined to take steps to accelerate our progress. To that end, in September of 2010 we worked—again with ILAB—to develop a framework of action that sets the goal of reducing the worst forms of child labor in the cocoa industry in those two countries, Ivory Coast and Ghana, to reduce it by 70 percent by 2020. The framework is a cooperative effort by the governments of the United States, Ivory Coast, Ghana, the international labor organizations, the cocoa industry, and civil society groups, including labor unions. To initially fund this effort, the U.S. Government agreed to provide $10 million in new funding. In turn, the international chocolate and cocoa industry has committed an additional $20 million toward this endeavor.

This is truly a historic step with the key stakeholders—the national governments, the industry, the Department of Labor—working as partners to intensify efforts to combat the scourge of child labor in the cocoa fields. Together, key stakeholders have undertaken a sustainable remediation process that includes better schooling and training opportunities for these young people, measures to improve occupational safety and health related to cocoa production, and livelihood services to vulnerable families.

Additionally, the framework creates true accountability. It establishes benchmarks with audits and puts in place a credible, transparent monitoring system in 100 percent of cocoa-growing regions in the two countries. The stakeholders also produce an annual report documenting programs in the field.

I am proud of ILAB's determined work in reducing the worst forms of child labor. We should all be proud of these efforts. We and our partners around the world have made significant progress in the monumental task of eliminating this scourge of child labor. Since the year 2000, we have reduced the number of child laborers from 246 million to 168 million—a reduction of almost one-third, or 78 million.

I especially wish to thank former Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis for her great leadership during this period of time that we were hammering out these agreements and these frameworks. I also thank the present Secretary of Labor Tom Perez for his continued support and leadership of ILAB. I might also mention Carol Pier, who heads the International Labor Affairs Bureau, for her dynamic leadership in working to reduce these worst forms of child labor not just in Ghana and the Ivory Coast but around the world.

I might also add that we began, annually—actually, sometimes semiannually—with the governments of Ghana and the Ivory Coast, as well as with the cocoa industry—and I must say I am very encouraged by both of these countries.

I might especially point out Ghana. Ghana has done remarkably well. They are moving in the right direction in reducing this child labor and providing support for education. The Ivory Coast has now come—Cote d'Ivoire, as they call it, is now coming along really well. They have had some problems in the past. They have had some civil wars, disruptions in their economy. Now the new President and especially the First Lady of the Ivory Coast have really taken on this goal of reducing child labor in the Ivory Coast. I compliment both countries for their work with us and with the cocoa industry.

I compliment the cocoa industry as well. They are working as a true partner to try to meet that goal of reducing child labor by 70 percent by the year 2020.

I thank Tulane University for their investigations—for their monitoring, I should say, more than investigations—their monitoring of this process and getting us the true picture of what is happening.

I think all of this demonstrates that when we work together in a bipartisan way, we can confront some of the worst human rights abuses that exist. On the issue of forced and abusive child labor, we are resolved to act without regard to party affiliation and with high regard for the interests of children trapped in abusive labor.

As we are all aware, I am retiring from the Senate next year, but I assure my colleagues that I am not retiring from this fight. I will find some way to continue to be involved, to help make sure we reach those goals of reducing child labor by 70 percent by 2020 in both of those countries, and to use that also as a springboard for further kinds of cooperative efforts with governments around the world to get kids out of this terrible scourge of child labor.

Again, we have to ensure that ILAB has the resources to continue effective U.S. efforts. I look forward to working with my colleagues later this year to finally authorize ILAB so that it has the tools it needs to get children out of these abusive circumstances and into schools where they can gain the knowledge and skills they need not only to build a decent life for themselves but to break the cycle of poverty in the countries in which they live. It has been a vicious cycle of poverty and using and exploiting these kids. They don't learn, they don't go to school, they become impoverished, and the cycle just continues and continues. We have to break that.

In countries where they break that cycle, we have seen they then enter a virtuous cycle where the kids go to school. They learn. They become educated. They are then able to perform jobs with higher skills. They then bring in people to do some of these jobs that are paid a decent wage. They are adults. And we find that the whole country progresses because it is a virtuous cycle, not a vicious cycle.

Again, on this day, June 12, which is, as I said, called World Day Against Child Labor, it is good for us to pause and think about our own policies in this country and what we are doing to help the rest of the world, not in a punitive way of hitting someone over the head but by working together to solve what people thought was an intractable problem of kids not going to school, being forced into terrible labor conditions. It is time for us to think about how we work with other countries to help solve this problem.

If we read the history of the United States, we know we had terrible child labor problems in this country back in the 19th century. In the 1800s we can see all kinds of pictures of kids working in our mills, working on road crews. Again, when we finally stopped it—and it is amazing that the arguments we heard then against stopping child labor are some of the same arguments we hear now about stopping it in other countries. We entered a virtuous cycle of educating our youth, getting them into schools. That led to higher incomes, led to a better gross national product, enabled us to become the most powerful, well-educated country in the history of the world. There are so many countries that would like to do that. They need our help. They need our support. Through our Department of Labor and the International Labor Affairs Bureau we can give them that kind of help and that kind of support so other countries can finally put an end to this scourge of child labor.

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

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator GRAHAM be allowed to engage in a colloquy with me and that we may take such time as we may consume.

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

IRAQ

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I come to the floor this morning with great sorrow and great concern and an even deep alarm about the events that are transpiring rapidly in Iraq.

ISIS, the most extreme Islamist organization, radical terrorist organization, now controls at least one-third of Iraqi territory. It is rapidly gaining more. The areas of Fallujah, Mosul, Tikrit, they are on the outsides of Samarra. With these victories, ISIS controls a swath of territory that stretches from the Syrian-Turkish frontier in the north, down to the Euphrates River, all of the way down to the Iraqi city of Fallujah, just 40 miles west of Baghdad. Of course, hourly they are experiencing greater gains while the Iraqi military and police seem to be dissolving before our very eyes.

ISIS social media published pictures of their fighters demolishing the sand berm which hitherto marked the border between Syria and Iraq, an interesting symbolic gesture. ISIS released footage of large numbers of weapons and armored military vehicles being received by members in eastern Syria, confirming fears that the looted weapons would fuel the insurgency on both sides, both Syria and Iraq.

Sources in the Syrian city of Hasaka confirmed that large numbers of trucks, convoys of trucks, carrying weapons, arrived late on Tuesday and were met by a senior ISIS figure Omar al-Chechani. General Keane, the architect of the surge said:

> This organization [speaking of ISIS] has grown into a military organization that is no longer conducting terrorist activities exclusively but is conducting conventional military operations. They are attacking Iraqi military positions with company—and battalion—size formations. And in the face of that the Iraqi security forces have not been able to stand up to it.

The most frightening part is that ISIS's strength will only grow after today. It will use the cash reserves from Mosul's banks, the military equipment seized from military and police bases, and the release of 3,000 fighters from local jails to bolster its military and financial capacity.

ISIS has now become the richest terror group ever, even after looting $429 million from Mosul's central bank. The governor confirmed Kurdish television reports that ISIS militants had stolen millions from numerous banks across Mosul.

Most disturbing is as the Iraqi security forces are collapsing, Kurdish and Shia militias are, to some degree, filling the vacuum.

The story goes on and on, including the fact that the International Organization for Migration says that as many as 500,000 citizens have fled Mosul. There are reports of tens of thousands of citizens forced from their homes in other areas as fighting escalates across northern and central Iraq.

Then the question arises: Could all of this have been avoided? The answer is absolutely yes—absolutely yes.

I think it is probably the height of ego to quote one's self, but I think it is important to have again on the record what I said during this whole process when the only goal of the President of the United States was to leave Iraq and Afghanistan—and he is about to make the same mistake in Afghanistan that he did in Iraq.

Those of us who knew Iraq, who knew Al Qaeda, who knew how vital and how fragile the Iraqi Government is—the day the President announced that all U.S. troops would leave Iraq by the end of the year, I said on October 21, 2011:

> Today marks a harmful and sad setback for the United States in the world. I respectfully disagree with the President: this decision will be viewed as a strategic victory for our enemies in the Middle East. . . . Nearly 4,500 Americans have given their lives for our mission in Iraq. Countless more have been wounded. I fear that all of the gains made possible by these brave Americans in Iraq at such grave cost are now at risk.

On November 15, 2011, in the Senate Armed Services Committee, when Ambassador Crocker said it was a mistake, I said—and I will not give the whole statement, but I said:

> We cannot avoid the fact that Iraq's progress is now at greater risk than at any time since the dark days before the surge, and that it did not have to be this way.

Finally, on December 14, 2011, the day the President triumphed, visited Fort Bragg to mark the end—in his view, the end of the Iraq war—I said:

> Over 4,000 brave young Americans gave their lives in this conflict. I pray that their sacrifice is not in vain. . . . Unfortunately, it is clear that this decision of a complete pullout of United States troops from Iraq was dictated by politics, and not our national security interests. I believe that history will judge this President's leadership with the scorn and disdain it deserves.

Of course, we know the United States rebuffed, according to the New York Times today, in an article by Michael Gordon and Eric Schmitt, the United States refused Maliki's request to strike against the militants' strategic disaster, assisted by withdrawal from Iraq.

Iraq's terrorists are becoming a full-blown army.

One of the smartest guys I have encountered, a man named Dexter Filkins, has great experience. He has an article in the New Yorker, ''In Extremists' Iraq Rise, America's Legacy.''

> When the Americans invaded, in March, 2003, they destroyed the Iraqi state.

He continues:

> The negotiations between Obama and Maliki fell apart, in no small measure because of a lack of engagement by the White House. Today, many Iraqis, including some close to Maliki, say that a small force of American soldiers—working in non-combat roles—would have provided a crucial stabilizing factor that is now missing from Iraq. Sami al-Askari, a Maliki confidant, told me for my article this spring, ''If you had a few hundred here, not even a few thousand, they would be cooperating with you, and they would become your partners.'' President Obama wanted the Americans to come home, and Maliki didn't particularly want them the to stay.
>
> The trouble is, as the events of this week show, what the Americans left behind was an Iraqi state that was not able to stand on its own. What we built is now coming apart. This is the real legacy of America's war in Iraq.

If I sound angry, it is because I am angry, because during this whole period of time, for example, the Washington Post, in an editorial this morning called ''The Iraq success.''

> Denis McDonough, then deputy national security adviser and now White House chief of staff, told reporters in 2011 that Mr. Obama ''said what we are looking for is an Iraq that's secure, stable and self-reliant, and that's exactly what we got here. So there's no question this is a success.''

Sometime we are going to hold people responsible for their policies as well as their words. To declare that a conflict is over does not mean it necessarily is over.

There is a great piece by Daniel Henninger this morning in the Wall Street Journal entitled, ''While Obama Fiddles.''

> Meanwhile, Iraq may be transforming into (a) a second Syria or (b) a restored caliphate. Past some point, the world's wildfires are going to consume the Obama legacy. And leave his successor a nightmare.

What needs to be done now? Every hour the options become fewer and fewer as ISIS, the most radical Islamist terrorist group alive, sweeps across Iraq and now, according to the latest reports, is even threatening Baghdad, that there are signs of further deterioration of the Iraqi military.

What do we need to do now?

Obviously, the first thing I think we need to do is call together the people who succeeded in Iraq, those who have been retired, and get together that group and place them in positions of responsibility so they can develop a policy to reverse this tide of radical Islamist extremism, which directly threatens the security of the United States of America, and it is time the President got a new national security team.

It is time he got a group of people together who know what it is to succeed in conflict. I would say the leader of that would be General Petraeus. I would say General Mattis is one. I would say General Keane is another one. I would say Bob Kagan is another one.

There is a group of people, along with myself and the Senator from South Carolina, who predicted every single one of these events because of an American lack of reliability and American weakness—and the President of the United States declaring that conflicts are at an end when they are not—an exit from Iraq and now an exit from Afghanistan without a strategy and without victory.

So drastic measures need to be taken. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is one who has gone along with this policy for a long time. We need a new Chairman. We need a new National Security Adviser. We need a new team. We need a new team that knows what America's national security interests are and are more interested in national security than they are in politics.

I come to this floor with great sadness because all of this could have been avoided. There is no inevitability about what is taking place in Iraq.

Iraq is a faraway place, but ask any intelligence leader in this country and that leader will tell you this poses—a takeover of Iraq in the Iraq-Syria area—which is now the largest concentration of Al Qaeda in history—is a direct threat to the United States of America.

Our Director of National Intelligence, General Clapper, has said in open testimony that this concentration of Al Qaeda-oriented and Al Qaeda-affiliated groups will be planning attacks on the United States of America.

The saddest part about all of this to me is the fact that 4,400 young Americans lost their lives, thousands lost their limbs. Thousands are scarred for life because of the experience they had serving in Iraq. They had it won. In the words of General Petraeus: We won the war and lost the peace.

That is a direct responsibility of the President of the United States, who is the Commander in Chief. But I grieve for those families who lost their loved ones, who fought so bravely, and made such sacrifices.

To see all of that, all of that success, where the surge succeeded, thanks to one of the finest generals in history, GEN David Petraeus, we see this all now torn asunder because of a policy of withdrawal without victory.

When those withdrawals and that policy were being orchestrated, the Senator from South Carolina, I, and others, stood and said: Please don't do this. Please leave a small force behind in Iraq. We are begging now, please leave a small force in Afghanistan.

The Afghans have no air capabilities. The Taliban will come back and all of the sacrifice in Afghanistan will be made in vain. So at least take immediate action to try to break the advance of ISIS across Iraq today but also revisit the decision to completely withdraw from Afghanistan because the Taliban is still alive and well.

Because the President of the United States declares a conflict is over does not mean, in the eyes of the enemy, it is over. Conflicts end when the enemy is defeated. The Iraq war did not end because the forces within Iraq were still undefeated.

The conflict in Afghanistan will not be over 2 years from now in 2017, when the final American is scheduled to leave Afghanistan.

Please learn the lessons.

I say to the President of the United States: Get a new national security team in place. You have been ill-served by the national security team and the decisions that you have in place now and the decisions that you made, and have that new national security team come up with a strategy, a strategy to do whatever we can to prevent this direct threat to the national security of this Nation, the security of this Nation.

Of all the visits the former Senator from Connecticut, Joe Lieberman, LINDSEY GRAHAM, and I made every Fourth of July, two or three times a year, traveling the country, and having been in the company of not just great leaders such as General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker but the young men and women: the privates, the corporals, especially the sergeants—these brave men and women who were serving and who were willing to sacrifice on behalf of somebody else's freedom they believe they had won, the surge succeeded. Any military expert will tell us the surge succeeded. But it was won at great sacrifice.

Among other cities, the black flags of Al Qaeda fly over the city of Fallujah today. Ninety-six brave soldiers and marines were killed and 600 wounded. What do we tell their families? What do we tell their mothers?

So it is not too late. America is still the most powerful nation on earth. We still have the finest and strongest military ever. We have the finest young men and women who are serving in it ever.

It is not too late. But we have to have a dramatic reversal of course before the situation gets to the point where, as the Director of National Intelligence has stated, this will be an area where attacks on the United States of America will be orchestrated.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the referenced articles be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the New Yorker, June 11, 2014]

IN EXTREMISTS' IRAQ RISE, AMERICA'S LEGACY

(By Dexter Filkins)

First Falluja, then Mosul, and now the oil-refinery town of Bayji. The rapid advance of Al Qaeda-inspired militants across the Sunni heartland of northern and western Iraq has been stunning and relentless—and utterly predictable. Here's a forecast: the bad news is just beginning.

The capture of Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, by Sunni extremists on Tuesday is the most dramatic example of the resurgence of the country's sectarian war, which began almost immediately after the withdrawal of the last American forces in December, 2011. The fighters who took Mosul are attached to an Al Qaeda spawn called the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, or ISIS, which is now poised to carve out a rump state across the Sunni-dominated lands that stretch from western Baghdad to the Syrian border and beyond.

As I detailed in a recent piece for the magazine, Iraq's collapse has been driven by three things. The first is the war in Syria, which has become, in its fourth bloody year, almost entirely sectarian, with the country's majority-Sunni opposition hijacked by extremists from groups like ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra, and by the more than seven thousand foreigners, many of them from the West, who have joined their ranks. The border between the two countries—three hundred miles long, most of it an empty stretch of desert—has been effectively erased, with ISIS and Nusra working both sides. As the moderates in Syria have been pushed aside, so too have their comrades in Iraq.

The second factor—probably the dominant one—is the policies of Nuri Al-Maliki, Iraq's Prime Minister. Maliki is a militant sectarian to the core, and he had been fighting on behalf of Iraq's long-suppressed Shiite majority for years before the Americans arrived, in 2003. Even after the Americans toppled Saddam, Maliki never stopped, taking a page—and aid and direction—from his ideological brethren across the border in Iran. When the Americans were on the ground in Iraq, they acted repeatedly to restrain Maliki, and the rest of Iraq's Shiite leadership, from its most sectarian impulses. At first, they failed, and the civil war began in earnest in 2006. It took three years and hundreds of lives, but the American military succeeded in tamping down Iraq's sectarian furies, not just with violence but also by forcing Maliki to accommodate Sunni demands. Time and again, American commanders have told me, they stepped in front of Maliki to stop him from acting brutally and arbitrarily toward Iraq's Sunni minority. Then the Americans left, removing the last restraints on Maliki's sectarian and authoritarian tendencies.

In the two and a half years since the Americans' departure, Maliki has centralized power within his own circle, cut the Sunnis out of political power, and unleashed a wave of arrests and repression. Maliki's march to authoritarian rule has fueled the reëmergence of the Sunni insurgency directly. With nowhere else to go, Iraq's Sunnis are turning, once again, to the extremists to protect them.

Which brings us to the third reason. When the Americans invaded, in March, 2003, they destroyed the Iraqi state its military, its bureaucracy, its police force, and most everything else that might hold a country together. They spent the next nine years trying to build a state to replace the one they crushed. By 2011, by any reasonable measure, the Americans had made a lot of headway but were not finished with the job. For many months, the Obama and Maliki governments talked about keeping a residual force of American troops in Iraq, who would act largely to train Iraq's Army and to provide intelligence against Sunni insurgents. (They would almost certainly have been barred from fighting.) Those were important reasons to stay, but the most important went largely unstated: it was to continue to act as a restraint on Maliki's sectarian impulses, at least until the Iraqi political system was strong enough to contain him on its own. The negotiations between Obama and Maliki fell apart, in no small measure because of a lack of engagement by the White House. Today, many Iraqis, including some close to

Maliki, say that a small force of American soldiers working in non-combat roles—would have provided a crucial stabilizing factor that is now missing from Iraq. Sami al-Askari, a Maliki confidant, told me for my article this spring, ''If you had a few hundred here, not even a few thousand, they would be coöperating with you, and they would become your partners.'' President Obama wanted the Americans to come home, and Maliki didn't particularly want them to stay.

The trouble is, as the events of this week show, what the Americans left behind was an Iraqi state that was not able to stand on its own. What we built is now coming apart. This is the real legacy of America's war in Iraq.

[From the Washington Post]

THE IRAQ 'SUCCESS'

THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION NEEDS A STRATEGY AS DANGERS MOUNT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

For years, President Obama has been claiming credit for ''ending wars,'' when, in fact, he was pulling the United States out of wars that were far from over. Now the pretense is becoming increasingly difficult to sustain.

On Monday, a loathsome offshoot of al-Qaeda, the self-styled Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, captured Mosul, one of Iraq's most important cities, seizing large caches of modern weaponry and sending half a million civilians fleeing in terror. ISIS, which can make the original al-Qaeda look moderate, controls large swaths of territory stretching from northern Syria into Iraq. On Tuesday, militants advanced toward Baghdad, capturing Tikrit and other cities.

If Iraq joins Syria in full-fledged civil war, the danger to U.S. allies in Israel, Turkey, Jordan and the Kurdish region of Iraq is immense. These terrorist safe havens also pose a direct threat to the United States, according to U.S. officials. ''We know individuals from the U.S., Canada and Europe are traveling to Syria to fight in the conflict,'' Jeh Johnson, secretary of homeland security, said earlier this year. ''At the same time, extremists are actively trying to recruit Westerners, indoctrinate them, and see them return to their home countries with an extremist mission.''

When Mr. Obama defended his foreign policy in a speech at West Point two weeks ago, he triggered some interesting debate about the relative merits of engagement and restraint. But the question of whether Mr. Obama more closely resembles Dwight D. Eisenhower or Jimmy Carter is less relevant than the results of his policy, which are increasingly worrisome.

In Syria, where for three years Mr. Obama has assiduously avoided meaningful engagement, civil war has given rise to ''the most catastrophic humanitarian crisis any of us have seen in a generation,'' Mr. Obama's United Nations ambassador Samantha Power said in February.

In Libya, Mr. Obama joined in a bombing campaign to topple dictator Moammar Gaddafi and then declined to provide security assistance to help the nation right itself. It, too, is on the verge of civil war.

In Iraq, Mr. Obama chose not to leave a residual force that might have helped keep the nation's politics on track, even as the White House insisted there was no reason to worry. Denis McDonough, then deputy national security adviser and now White House chief of staff, told reporters in 2011 that Mr. Obama ''said what we're looking for is an Iraq that's secure, stable and self-reliant, and that's exactly what we got here. So there's no question this is a success.''

Now Mr. Obama is applying the same recipe to Afghanistan: total withdrawal of U.S. troops by 2016, regardless of conditions.

At West Point, the president stressed that ''not every problem has a military solution.'' That is obviously true. In fact, a goal of U.S. policy should be to help shape events so that military solutions do not have to be considered. The presence of U.S. troops in South Korea, for example, has helped keep the peace for more than a half century.

Total withdrawal can instead lead to challenges like that posed by Iraq today, where every option—from staying aloof to more actively helping Iraqi forces—carries risks. The administration needs to accept the reality of the mounting danger in the Middle East and craft a strategy that goes beyond the slogan of ''ending war responsibly.''

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be recognized for 10 minutes to 15 minutes, as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. We have an order to go to executive session at 11:30.

Mr. GRAHAM. I ask unanimous consent to speak until 11:30.

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

THE MIDDLE EAST

Mr. GRAHAM. Senator MCCAIN was on the floor, and I am sorry I missed him. I was in a briefing.

To the American people, the situation in Iraq is dire. Syria has become a launching pad for attacks against the Iraqi people.

The ISIS—we don't know who these people are, but we are going to get to know them—are Islamic jihadists based in Syria and Iraq. They are an army, and they are not a bunch of hoodlums.

They have a very specific game plan. They want to create an Islamic caliphate and basically dominate Iraq and Syria. Some want to go to Lebanon and want to create an Islamic state that will be ruled under the most extreme version of Islamic law one could imagine—hell on earth for women, not good for us, the end of modern thought in that part of the world. The people of Iraq and Syria are not by their nature radical Islamists. The people who are beginning to win the day on the battlefield come from all over, and they truly are radical Islamists who would put the world in darkness if they could.

The next 9/11 is in the making as I speak. These people are using Syria and now Iraq as a training ground for international jihad. There are European jihadists and American jihadists over in the Syria as I speak. Over 2 weeks ago, the largest truck bomb explosion by a suicide bomber in Syria was by an American citizen. And, I hate to say it, but there are more over there today.

The question for the United States is: Does it really matter if the ISIS dominates Syria and Iraq or any part thereof? I think it does. I think it is a very bad scenario for us. I think it directly impacts our security here at home, and it will throw the region into chaos.

It is clear to me, after the briefing, there is no scenario by which the Iraqi Security Forces can stop the advancement of this group toward Baghdad. I don't think they go much beyond Baghdad, because then they get into the Shia areas of Iraq. That would be one hell of a fight. But Mosul has fallen, Tikrit has fallen, Fallujah has fallen. Now they are marching to Baghdad. Unless something changes, they will be successful.

They are sending the military equipment they are seizing into Syria to help their cause there. This is a very dangerous situation.

I urge President Obama to go on national television, explain what is going on in Iraq and Syria, and make the case to the American people why we should stay out or why we should do something.

I think American air power is the only hope to change the battlefield equation in Iraq. I know no American wants to set boots on the ground, and I don't feel that is a solution worthy of consideration at this point. But I have been told by our military commanders the Iraqi army is in shambles, and without some kind of intervention, Baghdad is definitely in jeopardy, most of the Sunni areas of Iraq will be run by ISIS, and they will join forces with their colleagues over in Syria.

I worry about the King of Jordan. I worry about Lebanon being next. God knows, if we lose the King of Jordan, the last moderate force in the Middle East surrounding Israel, what a calamity that would be.

I end with this thought. I remember discussing Iraq with President Bush as if it was yesterday. I went over on numerous occasions with Senator MCCAIN early on after the fall of Baghdad and every trip it was worse.

I remember the Bush administration telling us: These are just a few deadenders. Everything is fine. The media is hyping all the problems because they don't like President Bush.

The soldiers on the ground were telling us: I am driving around every day. I don't know why I am driving around, but I am getting my ass shot off—pardon my French here—without purpose.

I remember sitting down with President Bush, his administration and his team, and Senator MCCAIN, and we candidly told President Bush: If you don't adjust your strategy, if you don't reinforce Iraq, we are going to lose.

To his credit, he did, and the surge actually worked. We left Iraq in a very good spot. The security forces had won the day. We had driven out Al Qaeda. Politics was beginning to take over. Violence had been reduced tremendously. The surge worked. Our military did their job, fighting alongside their Iraqi counterparts.

But the decision to withdraw from Iraq created a crisis of confidence, a capability crisis. When there is a vacuum in the Middle East, people go back to their corners—and that is exactly what has happened in Iraq with the lack of an American presence.

Here is what is so heartbreaking. Some 10,000 or 15,000 U.S. soldiers strategically placed would have held this together and politics would have taken over. But it is hard to do political agreements when you are subject to being killed by people on the other side. You need a certain level of security to advance society.

That security has completely been lost in Iraq, and Syria is a contagion for the entire region.

Our indecision and indecisive action in Syria—it was bipartisan, by the way. Plenty of Republicans said: Stay out of Syria; it is none of our concern. What Senator MCCAIN and I have been worried about in Syria for about 3 or 4 years is that Iran and Russia were behind Assad. It is not in our interest for Iranians to be in Syria because it is very hard to get them to abandon their nuclear program if they think we are weak in Syria, and it is in our national security interest for Syria not to become an Islamic state.

About 3 years ago there were 500 foreign fighters. Today there are 26,000. So to those Republicans and Democrats who said stay out of Syria, don't use airstrikes or air power, I am sad to say that I think you were wrong. I think Syria has become an absolute breeding ground for radical Islamists, and the next attack against our country could very well originate from the people who are fighting in Syria today. And I have never been more worried about another 9/11 than I am right now.

So, Mr. President, if you are willing to adjust your policies, we will sit down with you. If you are willing to sit down with your generals and get some good, sound military advice, we will stand with you because what happens in Iraq and Syria does matter. I don't think we need boots on the ground. I don't think that is an option for consideration. But if our military leaders say that we need to stop ISIS because it is in our national security interests through the use of our air power, count me in if that is what our generals say.

I will stand with you, Mr. President, if you correct your policies. If you continue to be delusional about the world, I will be your worst critic.

With that, I yield back.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair thanks the distinguished Senator from South Carolina for yielding the floor.

Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF CRYSTAL NIX-HINES 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

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

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination as follows:

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 30 minutes of debate on the nomination equally divided in the usual form.

Who yields time?

No one having yielded time, the time will be charged equally to both sides.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I rise to oppose the nomination of Crystal Nix-Hines to be the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, otherwise called UNESCO. I wanted to speak on this nomination and once again express my firm opposition to the administration's stated intention to circumvent U.S. law—the law that was passed by this body regarding funding of UNESCO—and an intention repeated by Ms. Nix-Hines at her hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee last year.

I have nothing personal against this individual. I have not met her. I am sure she is a woman of good character and qualified for the job. But nevertheless I think it is important that we understand before we take this vote what we are doing here and why we shouldn't be doing it and that Ms. Nix-Hines's previous statement is relevant to her confirmation to this organization.

If confirmed, this nomination will result in the administration sending a representative to an organization which we do not fund and in which we have no vote. That is right. We will be sending a confirmed U.S. Ambassador to an organization which we do not support and in which we have no vote. That contradiction can only mean the administration is still attempting to change those circumstances by seeking waiver authority, and that is the reason why I am speaking today and why I am opposing this nomination.

Let me provide some context. In late 2011 UNESCO offered membership to the Palestinian Authority. This was a consequence of a Palestinian campaign to achieve recognition as a state by appealing unilaterally and directly to the United Nations and its agencies. UNESCO's decision to admit Palestine as a full member has further dimmed prospects for negotiated peace in the Middle East.

My fear is that this step—which the Palestinians regard as a success—will encourage them to press for membership in other U.N. bodies as well, achieving a legitimacy through the U.N. that they don't deserve as a state and that they need to understand presents major obstacles to ever achieving some type of reconciliation between the Israelis and the Palestinians. This will harm Israel, it will harm the Palestinians' own interests, harm the U.N. agencies involved, and damage our own national interests.

To prevent this sort of unilateral maneuver by the Palestinians, U.S. law—it is the law—has long prohibited funding to any U.N. agency that admits Palestine as a member. The purpose of this termination and the will of Congress regarding it was to discourage such reckless behavior by the U.N. and by the Palestinians.

Let me repeat that. The harm that is done through this has caused us—brought us to a point where we passed a law signed by the President that said we will not support any agency that acknowledges and admits Palestine as a recognized state. That is our policy. So funding UNESCO or even providing a waiver for that would be a clear violation of U.S. law.

We have seen the administration try to work around Congress in a number of ways, neglecting to check the law in terms of what they are required to do. We are currently in an embroiled situation here with this detainee release from Guantanamo of five of the top leaders of the Taliban—a blatant violation of the law that exists on the books in terms of consultation with Congress before this is done. Nevertheless, that is not what I am here for today. That is another issue.

Our laws require the United States to cut off budget support to UNESCO, and we will do the same to other agencies that also circumvent the correct path to negotiated settlement. I think that is good policy.

When some administration officials spoke publicly soon after the UNESCO vote about finding a ''work-around'' or seeking a waiver, I introduced legislation not to tolerate such alternatives and said I would not support the waiver. I repeated those efforts in subsequent State and Foreign Operations appropriations bills when the administration included appropriations for UNESCO in its budget request and Secretary Kerry said in his testimony that they would be ''seeking to change or repeal the law.''

In his comments on the subject, Secretary Kerry spoke about the value he saw in this U.N. agency but said nothing about the value of discouraging Palestinian efforts to circumvent negotiations and change its status at the

U.N. before there is an agreed settlement.

Similarly, in Ms. Nix-Hines statement for the Foreign Relations Committee, she spoke forcefully about her views on UNESCO and its importance to U.S. interests. Maybe it is true, maybe it is not true, but nevertheless she said nothing about how the Palestinian end run at the United Nations has harmed our quest for a Middle East settlement. She repeated the administration's intention to seek a waiver of existing law to resume contributions to UNESCO, declaring, ''We are not a country that turns tail when decisions do not go our way. We are not a people who shrink from challenge.''

Well, that is true, we are not. But in stating that, she has equated a principled stance on an important issue—a stance she does not agree with—as an act of cowardice. It is an act of law. It is an act that was passed by this body with support from the House of Representatives and signed by the President of the United States. So her statement makes no sense unless you come to the conclusion that she was handed talking points—as other members of the administration have been—and told: Go ahead and go down and say this if this question comes up. Don't worry about the facts.

I can understand why a nominee to UNESCO would want to restore U.S. funding to the organization and thus restore the U.S. vote there, but to purposely ignore or misconstrue the opposing view—one stated in U.S. law and supported by this Congress for 20 years—and then to go on and imply that such a view is cowardly—that is offensive. That is offensive to those Members who have supported this law, who enacted this law. It is offensive to the President who signed this law. It is offensive to the American people who sent us here to pass laws and to enforce those laws as passed. To call that action cowardly is something that is offensive as well.

The laws that are designed to discourage U.N. bodies from admitting Palestinian authority before a comprehensive settlement are essential if negotiations are to have any chance at all. Far from being anachronistic, as some connected with UNESCO are claiming, they are more current and important now than ever. It is now that the Palestinians are trying to change their status at the U.N. unilaterally, and it is now that we must use the available tools to prevent it.

If we were to grant waiver authority to the administration as they have requested, the floodgates would open. The existence of waiver authority—not to mention the actual exercise of a waiver—would embolden the Palestinians to make even greater unilateral efforts to achieve membership in U.N. bodies, and the result would present repeated funding dilemmas for us and would make a true negotiated peace that much more difficult to achieve.

The nomination of a candidate for the UNESCO position at least gives me this opportunity to restate clearly and unambiguously once again that I remain firmly opposed to providing funds to UNESCO or any other U.N. agency that repeats this serious error, and I hope my colleagues would understand this and support it also. Thus, I cannot support funding UNESCO while Palestine is a member, nor will I support a waiver of existing restrictions, and I don't think anyone else should either because it violates U.S. law.

To repeat, this nomination means the administration wants to send a representative to an organization which we do not fund and in which we have no vote. That contradiction can only mean the administration still wants to change those circumstances by seeking waiver authority, and therefore I will oppose this nomination and hope my colleagues will support the same.

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota. Mr. President, I wish to urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Dr. Stanley Fischer to be Vice Chair of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. I also urge my colleagues to join me in supporting Mr. Jerome Powell and Dr. Lael Brainard to be members of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors.

Each of these individuals has a unique set of skills and experiences to provide the Board of Governors a diverse perspective on how to continue to help the economy recover and promote a more stable financial system.

Dr. Fischer's background is impressive. In May, he was confirmed by the Senate to be a member of the Federal Reserve. Between 2005 and 2013, he was the head of the Bank of Israel. Prior to his service at the Bank of Israel, Dr. Fischer held positions as the vice chairman of Citigroup and the First Deputy Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund. Before the IMF, Dr. Fischer was the Killian professor and Head of the Department of Economics at MIT, where he taught some of the most preeminent economists of our time, including former Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke, former Council of Economic Advisers Chair Greg Mankiw, and European Central Bank President Mario Draghi. Former Fed Chairman Bernanke said of Dr. Fischer: ''Stan was my teacher in graduate school, and he has been both a role model and a frequent adviser ever since. An expert on financial crises, Stan has written prolifically on the subject and has also served on the front lines.''

Mr. Powell became a member of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors in 2012. He has served during a period in which the Fed tackled a number of important issues, including implementing the Wall Street Reform Act and maintaining strong monetary policy that promotes job creation and economic recovery. Prior to his appointment, Mr. Powell was a visiting scholar at the Bipartisan Policy Center, where he focused on Federal and State fiscal issues. Mr. Powell also served as an Assistant Secretary and as Undersecretary of the Treasury under President George H.W. Bush.

Dr. Brainard previously served as Under Secretary for International Affairs at the Treasury from 2010 to 2013. She also served as Deputy Director of the National Economic Council and as the U.S. Sherpa to the G8. She was vice president of the Brookings Institution and an Associate Professor of Applied Economics at MIT Sloan School of Management.

The Federal Reserve Board has many important tasks at hand including effective monetary policy that promotes full employment, continued implementation of Wall Street Reform, and taking steps that will improve financial stability, reduce systemic risk and end ''too big to fail.'' I am confident these three nominees will be extremely valuable in these endeavors and I hope we can confirm them without delay. I urge my colleagues to support Dr. Brainard, Mr. Powell, and Dr. Fischer.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak in support of the nomination of Dr. Stanley Fischer to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. I know Dr. Fischer personally and have worked with him over the years, and I am fully confident that he is well qualified to succeed Janet Yellen as Vice Chairman of the Fed, as she begins her tenure as Chair.

Dr. Fischer has had an extraordinarily impressive and well-rounded career thus far. After receiving his bachelor's and master's degrees from the London School of Economics and his Ph.D. at MIT, Fischer served in high-level positions in academia, the private sector, as well as at multiple international financial institutions. His knowledge and expertise of economic policy is world-renowned—in fact some of the most influential economic policy makers today, including former Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and the head of the European Central Bank, studied under the guidance and influence of Dr. Fischer.

Most recently, Stanley Fischer served as governor of the Bank of Israel. Appointed in 2005 by then-Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Dr. Fischer led Israel's central bank and steered its economy through the global financial crisis. When the global crisis first hit in 2008, Fischer took decisive action to protect the Israeli economy. His decision to lower interest rates actually came a day before the Fed, the Bank of England or the European Central Bank took similar action.

It is largely due to his leadership that while other countries, including the United States, were still struggling in the depths of recession in 2009, Israel emerged more or less unscathed. In fact, by 2009 the Israeli economy had recovered to the point where central bank assistance was no longer needed, and Fischer actually made the decision to raise interest rates. Furthermore, as

the recession spread across the United States and Europe, foreign capital began to flow into Israel, raising the value of its currency, the shekel—which became a big problem for Israeli exports. To offset this inflation, prop up Israeli exporters, and boost the economy, Fischer again had to act quickly to depreciate Israel's currency, buying up $100 million each day in foreign currency. In less than 1 year, he had reduced the value of the currency by 25 percent and given Israel a trade surplus of $5 billion.

His quick and intelligent actions in the face of crisis helped maintain financial and price stability and improve employment. These actions shielded the Israeli economy from the recession and produced strong growth. As Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated in 2013, ''Fischer was a key contributor to Israel's economic growth. His experience and wisdom have helped the Israeli market reach many achievements, even in a time of global crisis.''

Prior to his tenure at the Bank of Israel, Dr. Fischer served as the head of the Economics Department at MIT, chief economist at the World Bank, and as the number two official at the International Monetary Fund, IMF. He also spent time in the private sector as vice president of Citigroup from 2002 to 2005.

Throughout his impressive career, Dr. Fischer has undoubtedly learned valuable lessons in responding to global financial and economic crises. His extensive policymaking experience and expertise make him uniquely qualified to serve in the Fed's number two position and navigate the challenges we face as our economy continues to recover from the worst recession since the Great Depression. Most importantly, I am sure we will see soon, Dr. Fischer is a collaborative leader, a visionary, and an absolute joy to work with. We are truly lucky to have a leader of such courage and character up for this position, and I urge my colleagues to swiftly approve his nomination.

Mr. COATS. 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. DURBIN. 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.

All time has expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to 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?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second. There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

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

The result was announced—yeas 52, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 188 Ex.]

YEAS—52

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

NAYS—41

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

NOT VOTING—7

Boxer	McCaskill	Rockefeller
Burr	Merkley	
Cochran	Moran	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the Majority leader, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 9, treaty document 112–1; that the treaty be considered as having advanced through the various parliamentary stages up to and including the presentation of the resolutions of ratification; that any committee declarations be agreed to as applicable; and that the resolution of ratification be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. Madam President, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Michigan.

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, I now ask unanimous consent that I be recognized immediately following the three voice votes that we expect coming up now.

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

NOMINATION OF MICHAEL J. MCCORD TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (COMPTROLLER)

NOMINATION OF R. JANE CHU TO BE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

NOMINATION OF TODD A. BATTA TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

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

The bill clerk read 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.

Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Todd A. Batta of Iowa on his confirmation as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture for Congressional Relations. I can personally attest that he is very well qualified and will undoubtedly do an outstanding job in his new position.

It has been a pleasure for me to know Todd and his family for many years. He grew up in Lanesboro, IA, where his parents, Rick and Wanda, currently reside. His aunt, Bev Schroeder, was a member of my staff for over 20 years, both in Iowa and here in Washington, working on education policy and other matters. In fact, Todd's first political work was to help hand out HARKIN information at parades when he was just three or 4 years old.

Todd began serving on my staff as an intern in the summer of 2001, after receiving his B.A. from Winona State University, and later worked for me as a researcher, deputy scheduler, and scheduler. In 2005, he moved from my personal office to work as a professional staff member on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, during the time I served as either ranking member or chairman.

It is Todd's good fortune to be married to Adrianna Logalbo. They began dating when Todd was on my staff. So, as I say, Todd and his family have been good friends to me for a very long time

From 2009 to 2011, Todd was a legislative assistant on the staff of Senator Herb Kohl of Wisconsin, handling agriculture and agriculture appropriations for Senator Kohl. He then served as special assistant in the Office of Congressional Relations at the Department of Agriculture, and since 2012, Todd has been senior advisor to the Secretary of Agriculture. In this role, he provides strategic advice and guidance to the Secretary regarding USDA's budget, legislative, and regulatory agenda.

Given Todd's strong personal qualities, experience, and proven abilities, I could not have been happier when I learned that President Obama had chosen him to serve as Assistant Secretary of Agriculture. I look forward to continuing to work with Todd and know that he will do a tremendous job in this new role.

VOTE ON MCCORD NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, if there is no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Michael J. McCord, of Ohio, to be Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller)?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON CHU NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of R. Jane Chu, of Missouri, to be Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON BATTA NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Todd A. Batta, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of Agriculture?

The nomination was confirmed.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will 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.

The Senator from Michigan.

TAX TREATIES

Mr. LEVIN. Madam President, the unanimous consent proposal that I just made a few moments ago that was objected to by the Senator from Kentucky related to the need of the Senate to take up the ratification of five tax treaties that were approved by the Committee on Foreign Relations on a unanimous voice vote, including a revised U.S.-Switzerland tax treaty that was amended in 2009, with a protocol enabling the United States to obtain more information—more information from Switzerland about U.S. taxpayers with hidden Swiss bank accounts.

We have been trying to close down these offshore tax havens and the way in which they aid and abet American tax avoidance for years. Here we have a tax treaty which will help us get more information about the American taxpayers who are trying to avoid paying their taxes to Uncle Sam, and we get an objection to the ratification, even to taking up the ratification of this treaty.

American taxpayers have had it. I would say have had it up to here, except that will not come across on the record. They have had it with profitable corporations and wealthy individuals avoiding taxes through the use of tax havens, shell companies, and tax avoidance schemes. The American people want us to end it. We ought to legislate an end to it.

By the way, it is long overdue. We ought to close the tax loopholes which are used so the most profitable corporations in this country avoid paying taxes by shifting their intellectual property to shell corporations that they create in tax havens or by other kinds of tax dodging.

We can put an end to it. We can close those tax loopholes. We ought to do it but that is not what should be before us today. What should be before us today but for that objection we had from the Senator from Kentucky, are the tax treaties which have been approved by our Foreign Relations Committee, one of which was signed 4 years ago.

We have all heard about Swiss bank accounts that are used to hide money from Uncle Sam. Back in 2008, in a bipartisan report I issued with then the ranking Republican on the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Norman Coleman, with bipartisan support, we disclosed that UBS, the largest bank in Switzerland, had opened as many as 52,000 bank accounts, with about $20 billion in assets, for U.S. citizens who had hidden their accounts from our Treasury.

UBS later signed a deferred prosecution agreement with the U.S. Treasury and the Department of Justice in which they admitted helping; that is, aiding and abetting, U.S. clients evade U.S. taxes. We are talking about UBS now. They paid a $750 million fine. They turned over the names of about 4,700 U.S. clients who had hidden accounts in that bank.

UBS was not alone. Earlier this year in a bipartisan report—this is not a partisan issue—in another bipartisan report that I issued with my current ranking member, Senator MCCAIN, the Subcommittee showed that Credit Suisse, Switzerland's second largest bank, had been engaged in the same type of aiding and abetting. Credit Suisse had opened about 22,000 Swiss bank accounts for U.S. account holders, with up to $12 billion in assets, that were undisclosed to U.S. tax authorities. After its wrongdoing was exposed, Credit Suisse pled guilty to facilitating U.S. tax evasion and paid a fine of about $2.6 billion.

In both those cases, the Swiss banks had quietly sent Swiss bankers to do business on U.S. soil, opening accounts, sometimes in the name of offshore shell corporations, arranging all of that; bringing in cash, by the way, from Switzerland; and slipping account statements between magazine pages to their U.S. clients. In order that there not be anything visible at an airport or wherever, they put the statement of their U.S. account holder in a Sports Illustrated magazine and would hand the magazine to their clients. How surreptitious can you get?

We also heard about how U.S. clients who visited Credit Suisse in Switzerland rode in a secret, remotely controlled elevator to a room with no windows and reviewed documents that were then shredded. Why? Why all of that secrecy and surreptitiousness? They wanted to show those U.S. clients, to dramatize, just how secretly the Swiss banks operate and how those Swiss bank accounts would be hidden from U.S. authorities.

But after years and years of effort, we found out what was going on, and we made it public. Even Switzerland could not defend what its banks were doing.

So in 2009, Switzerland agreed to strengthen the U.S.-Swiss tax treaty to enable us to obtain more information about secret Swiss bank accounts opened by U.S. taxpayers.

It is still not voluminous information which we are going to get under that tax treaty, but it is more information. It would give us a better chance of finding the tax dodgers, those U.S. citizens who try to avoid paying their share of taxes and dumping the tax load on all of their fellow citizens, by the way, who have to pick up the added burden.

So with the existing U.S. treaty—we already have a tax treaty with Switzerland, the one that we want to amend—it requires us to establish something which is very difficult to prove; that is, tax fraud, before Switzerland would hand over the information on U.S. account holders with Swiss bank accounts.

We have treaties with all kinds of countries. No other treaty we have has that standard; that we have to show tax fraud before we can get information from a foreign bank. So the revised tax treaty, approved by the Foreign Relations Committee, again unanimously, would enable the United States to obtain information from Switzerland that ''may be relevant'' to

the ''administration or enforcement'' of U.S. tax laws.

That is the same standard, ''may be relevant,'' that has been in effect for decades in the United States when the Treasury seeks to obtain information in a tax inquiry about American citizens from their own banks. That standard has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

I am not going to go through all of the cases that have upheld this standard but there are two direct Supreme Court opinions on the subject that say it is proper for Congress to legislate a standard of Treasury getting information from banks about our people that ''may be relevant'' to the requirement that taxes be paid.

The standard comes from a 1954 Federal statute that authorizes the IRS, for the purpose of examining a tax return or determining a person's tax liability, ''to examine any books, papers, records, or other data which may be relevant or material to such inquiry.'' The statute is 26 U.S.C. Section 7602(a)(1).

Thirty years ago, the Supreme Court upheld that standard in a 1984 case called United States v. Arthur Young & Co., 465 U.S. 805. The Supreme Court wrote:

> In seeking access to [a corporation's] tax accrual workpapers, the IRS exercised the summons power conferred by Code § 7602, which authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to summon and 'examine any books, papers, records, or other data which may be relevant or material' to a particular tax inquiry. . . .
>
> The language 'may be' reflects Congress' express intention to allow the IRS to obtain items of even potential relevance to an ongoing investigation, without reference to its admissibility. The purpose of Congress is obvious: the Service can hardly be expected to know whether such data will in fact be relevant until it is procured and scrutinized. As a tool of discovery, the § 7602 summons is critical to the investigative and enforcement functions of the IRS. . . .

In short, the Supreme Court upheld the authority of the IRS to request information that ''may be relevant'' to a tax inquiry, and described the ability to examine that information as ''critical to the investigative and enforcement functions of the IRS.''

Last week Senator PAUL indicated on the floor that the IRS can obtain information from a U.S. bank only when it establishes ''probable cause'' that the accountholder was cheating on their taxes. In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected that approach over 50 years ago in a 1964 case called United States v. Powell, 379 U.S. 48, in which the Court wrote: ''[T]he [IRS] Commissioner need not meet any standard of probable cause to obtain enforcement of his summons.''

The revised U.S.-Swiss tax treaty would instead apply the same statutory standard to Americans with bank accounts in Switzerland as already applies to Americans with bank accounts in the United States. Using the same standard makes perfect sense. Otherwise Americans with Swiss bank accounts would have a greater right to stymie IRS information requests than Americans with U.S. bank accounts.

In addition, the Senate has already approved other U.S. tax treaties using the relevance standard. They include a 1999 tax treaty with Denmark, a 2007 tax treaty with Belgium, and a 2008 tax treaty with Canada, among others. Those tax treaties already treat Americans abroad in the same way as Americans at home.

In contrast, Switzerland has long been an exception in need of correction. Back in the 1950s, the Swiss somehow managed to get the United States to agree to make it harder for the IRS to scrutinize Americans with Swiss bank accounts than Americans with U.S. bank accounts, which helps explain why so many hidden bank accounts ended up in Switzerland.

The UBS and Credit Suisse bank scandals show it is long past time to end the Swiss exception.

So if we just keep this current treaty, without modifying it, we are actually giving a standard to the Swiss that would allow them to keep information away from our Treasury that is not permitted in our own banks or to banks in any other country that we have a tax treaty with.

Why would we want to preserve a treaty standard that the Swiss themselves have already agreed to replace with a better standard in terms of tax collection? I mean, if the Swiss agree to a standard which gives us better information, why would we want to keep in place a treaty which denies us that information, denies revenue to the Treasury, creates a double standard? If you want to avoid paying taxes, go to Switzerland and you will have a better chance of evading your taxes than if you stay in the United States. Why would we want to give an incentive like that?

That is what we are doing. As long as we have the current treaty in place and do not ratify the proposed treaty, that is exactly what we are doing.

It is so unfair to give special treatment to Americans who send their money to Switzerland, compared to Americans who keep their money right here at home. It is one thing to advocate lower taxes—that is one thing—but it is quite another to advocate policies that would help U.S. taxpayers use Swiss bank accounts to hide their assets and to offload their tax burdens onto the U.S. taxpayers who are not trying to dodge paying taxes.

It has been now 3 years, as Senator MENENDEZ has pointed out, since the U.S. Senate has ratified a tax treaty. Ratifying this treaty would finally bring the Swiss into alignment with U.S. policy and U.S. tax treaties with other countries. Once ratified, it will take effect from the date it was signed in order to help stop tax dodging from 2009 forward. It is long overdue that we ratify this.

I am very disappointed there has been another objection by Senator PAUL to proceeding to ratify—or to at least consider the ratification of this treaty. I believe Senator MCCAIN will try to come later, if he can, to also speak in support of bringing up these treaties for debate.

I yield the floor.

SWISS TAX PROTOCOL

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I am pleased to join Senator LEVIN today in calling on the Senate to take up and pass by unanimous consent the Swiss tax protocol and other tax treaties pending before the Senate. The importance of these treaties cannot be overstated. They would aid U.S. companies by allowing for certainty in tax treatment when those companies engage in international commerce and trade by preventing double taxation and ensuring they have the backing of the Treasury Department in the case of conflicts with foreign tax authorities. Furthermore, they would allow our government to be on stronger footing in holding tax cheats accountable, an issue Senator LEVIN and I are particularly familiar with given our recent investigation, as chairman and ranking member on the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, into offshore tax schemes carried out by Credit Suisse. On the heels of that investigation, Credit Suisse recently paid a $2.6 billion fine and pled guilty to criminal charges, admitting to facilitating tax evasion for their U.S. clients.

Taking advantage of Switzerland's opaque banking practices, Credit Suisse became a safe haven for tax evasion. The clients seeking these services and the bank itself believed that they were, and would remain, outside the reach of U.S. tax authorities. The recent guilty plea proves that this belief was at least partly mistaken. This criminal penalty was a welcome development, but it was also lacking in several ways, including that, as part of the agreement, the U.S. government did not require the bank to turn over the names of the U.S. clients holding secret bank accounts with Credit Suisse. With more than 20,000 unidentified Americans having held accounts at Credit Suisse in Switzerland during the relevant period (most of whom never disclosed their accounts as required by U.S. law) this agreement provided no direct accountability for those taxes owed.

We need to ensure this does not happen again. The Swiss tax protocol we are discussing today would make it easier to get those names and account information. Working under the assumption that the United States would be unable to pierce the veil of Swiss bank secrecy, U.S. persons have secreted their money away in countries such as Switzerland for far too long. Passing this treaty is necessary to prove this assumption wrong and to deter future attempts at tax evasion. It will send a strong message to those

who would consider violating U.S. tax laws that we enforce our laws, fairly and uniformly, and we have the tools at our disposal to do so.

At the Credit Suisse hearing, the bank's CEO, Brady Dougan, said, ''Credit Suisse is ready, at this moment, to provide the additional information about Swiss accounts requested by U.S. authorities but has been unable to do so because the U.S. Senate has not yet ratified the protocol.'' Let's call his bluff and remove anything that may stand in the way of allowing the bank to provide U.S. authorities with information about those accounts.

These routine and important tax treaties were reported out favorably by the Foreign Relations Committee on April 1. For all of these reasons, I urge the Senate to consider and pass these treaties.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nevada.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. HELLER. Madam President, I would like to begin by thanking my colleague from Pennsylvania Senator CASEY for his dedication in working with me in a bipartisan manner to resolve the backlog of veterans' benefits claims. The care of our Nation's veterans is truly a bipartisan issue.

I would also like to take this moment to commend my colleagues, the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee Senator SANDERS and also the senior Senator from Arizona for bringing together ideas from both sides of the aisle to address the problems facing appointment wait times, VA scheduling practices, accountability, and the overall quality of our care provided at VA medical facilities across our Nation.

A recent VA audit of VA facilities across the Nation found that appointment wait times for new patients at hospitals and clinics were up to several months. No veteran should have to wait that long to get their first appointment. I have talked with the Las Vegas VA Director, Isabel Duff, about plans to reduce their wait times. I am confident the proposals in the veterans bill passed yesterday will help these facilities make immediate improvements in progress to provide the necessary care to these Nevada veterans.

Addressing the serious concerns of health care at the VA is an urgent issue, one that needs quick action from Congress. I am pleased we were able to pass that bipartisan legislation, but there is another side of the coin separate from the Veterans Health Administration; that is, the Veterans Benefits Administration. It is the responsibility of VBA to administer benefits to our veterans. The VHA has undergone intense scrutiny in the last few weeks, but the veterans disability claims backlog is another urgent issue that needs action from this Congress.

The legislation we passed helped get the VHA system in order, but this will do no good. It will not do good unless the veterans can actually get their benefits and utilize these hospitals. The problems with accountability, management, and efficiency with the VA health care nationwide are the same problems the Veterans Benefits Administration is facing.

As we speak, nearly 287,000 veterans across this country and nearly 3,700 veterans in the State of Nevada have waited over 125 days for their claims to be processed. In fact, veterans in Nevada have the longest waiting time in the Nation at 346 days. This week the VA inspector general released its report on the inspection of the Reno VA regional office, which processes claims for veterans in our State. The inspection found that 50 percent of the claims the IG reviewed were not accurately processed. Furthermore, many of these inaccuracies were the result of a lack of proper management.

The problems at the Reno VARO are a prime example of why Congress needs to act now to bring reforms and accountability to the VBA. Just as it is unacceptable for veterans to wait months for appointments, it is just as unacceptable for them to wait months for the benefits they have earned.

To address this issue, Senator CASEY and I introduced the VA backlog working group report along with a bipartisan group of our colleagues, which included Senators MORAN, HEINRICH, VITTER, and TESTER. This report outlines the claims process, explains the history of the VA claims backlog, and offers targeted solutions to help the VA develop an efficient benefit delivery system.

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

I am pleased 18 of our Senate colleagues on both sides of the aisle have cosponsored this legislation and that it has gained the support of the veterans service organizations such as the VFW, DAV, the American Legion, Military Officers Association of America and the AUSN.

Senator CASEY and I recognize that the claims process is complex. There is no easy answer. There is no silver bullet that is going to solve this particular problem, but the VA's current efforts will not eliminate this backlog.

So just as we worked to address the issues at the VHA, I encourage colleagues to work to address some of these issues at the VBA.

I was pleased to see the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs try to move forward with examining our proposal just last week. While I understand that the committee had to cancel this hearing, I encourage the chairman of the committee to reschedule it. Our proposal can no longer afford to wait in the backlog of bills to be considered by this Chamber.

Practical, targeted solutions are needed to address inefficiencies that are keeping veterans from receiving timely decisions on their benefit plans. After all our veterans have sacrificed in service to our country, we owe this to them.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to move this commonsense proposal forward.

With that, I yield for my friend and colleague from Pennsylvania, Senator CASEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. I rise to talk about the issue that my colleague from Nevada just raised.

We had a vote yesterday—which, to say it was overwhelming is probably an understatement—for the Veterans' Access to Care through Choice, Accountability, and Transparency Act. That act will create transparency in the VA system, it will result in the hiring of more doctors and nurses, and it will provide resources for veterans and their spouses to obtain a quality education.

We are grateful that happened. We are grateful for the overwhelming vote, and we are certainly optimistic about the results that will flow from that legislation.

We have more to do in addition to that. We need to continue to look for ways to address the claims backlog that my colleague from Nevada just outlined, as well as other issues that will come before us.

I thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, Chairman SANDERS, who is with us today on floor, and the Committee on Veterans' Affairs for their work on behalf of veterans.

The claims backlog, which my colleague just talked about, is a critically important issue for veterans and their families in Pennsylvania, Nevada, and all the other States as well.

I commend the work of Senator HELLER and his staff. My staff worked very hard on these issues. I want to commend especially Gillian Mueller in addition to John Richter for their work on the issue itself and the working group collaboration that resulted in this report that Senator HELLER cited. This is a substantial report on a very difficult problem.

Here is what the problem is—the problem that the working group addressed, but also our legislation addressed, which I will talk about in a moment. Here is the problem in terms of days. The backlog is especially high across the country. The average backlog in days is 241.

Unfortunately, in Pennsylvania, it is even longer. In about half of our State, in the western part of our State, it is 316 days, and it is 294 days in Philadelphia in the eastern part of our State.

To have a veteran and his or her family wait that long for the processing

claims, is, in a word, unacceptable and should be addressed. That is why we introduced the 21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act, which was developed from the findings of the working group and the report that was produced.

This is a commonsense approach, a bill that focuses on three areas that will ensure a faster and more accurate delivery system.

The bill will help ensure that veterans, the VA, Congress, and all levels of government are working together to bring down the backlog and to get veterans the benefits they deserve in a timely manner.

It does basically three things: one, update the claims submission process; two, improve the VA regional office practices; three, demand more from other VA agencies. This backlog problem is a VA problem, but it is also a problem of other agencies not doing their job to help the VA.

As Senator HELLER noted, we had great support in the working group, as well as 17 bipartisan cosponsors of the 21st Century Veterans Benefits Delivery Act.

I respectfully asked Chairman SANDERS to help us schedule a hearing on the legislation, and we are grateful for his willingness not only to work with us but to help advance this very important legislation.

Let me conclude with one thought. I have often said that one of the obligations of every Member of Congress is to prove ourselves worthy of the valor of our veterans, to make sure that we are keeping the promise to our veterans. You can't prove yourself worthy of their valor by thanking them for their service or patting them on the back and going to public ceremonies. We have to act as we did yesterday. The next problem we should act upon is the claims backlog so that we can truly say that we are worthy of the valor of our veterans and keep our promise to them, to their families, and to our country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. SANDERS. I thank my colleagues and friends from Nevada and Pennsylvania.

Senator HELLER, a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, has been a very active member and a very constructive member. Senator CASEY from Pennsylvania has done an extraordinary job in representing the veterans from his State and on overall veterans policy. I thank them both for working in a bipartisan way in addressing one of the significant challenges confronting the VA; that is, the claims backlog.

I thank them for their support in working to advance not only solutions to the claims problems, but comprehensive legislation that would improve the lives of our Nation's veterans and their families. Both of these Senators supported the two major pieces of legislation for veterans that have come to the floor.

Yesterday, the Senate took a step forward in addressing a very significant crisis, and that is making sure that we provide health care to all of our veterans in a high quality and timely way.

However, as I indicated on the floor yesterday, what we did yesterday is only the beginning. We have a lot more work to do if we are going to represent the interests of the men and women who have put their lives on the line to defend us.

I welcome my colleagues' continued support and look forward to working together with them to pass legislation that would address the challenges of the backlog, as well as the many, many other concerns that have been presented to the committee by the veterans service organizations.

We take their concerns seriously. I applaud them both very much for coming up with some concrete ideas as to how we address the backlog problem, and I pledge to them that we are going to work as aggressively as we can to address the issue.

I thank them both very much for helping us on this issue.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mr. SANDERS. Madam President, yesterday we debated and voted on the need to lower interest rates for students with college debt.

I consider the issue of the high cost of college and student indebtedness to be one of the very serious problems facing our country, impacting millions and millions of young people and their families.

What I did through my Web site is just ask people from Vermont and around the country to briefly write stories about the impact of college debt on their lives.

What I would like to do very briefly is to read some of the very poignant stories we have received. I believe we have received now over 700 stories from people all over America who are talking about what the student debt they have incurred is meaning to their lives.

Let me very briefly read some of the responses we have received.

Shannon Lucy, 29, is from Essex Junction, VT. She is $90,000 in debt. She wrote:

> I currently live in my boyfriend's parents' basement because I cannot afford to pay both rent and my nearly $900 per month student loan payments. Despite working two jobs and living rent-free I am barely making ends meet. I can't even dream of buying a house or supporting a child—I can't even support myself. Getting married would mean burdening someone else with my debt so that's not financially possible either. I thought I did everything right. I thought getting an education was an investment in my future. But now there's not a single day when I don't feel like I'm drowning under this massive load of debt. And the worst part is that even though the president is introducing student loan relief measures because my loans are mostly privately funded there's still no relief for me.

I wish to read a statement that I received from Brittany Holman, 29, who is from Portland, OR, and is $200,000 in debt. She writes:

> I'm scared and am desperately in need of help. I'm nearly $200,000 in debt from student loans all because I wanted to get an education. Was that not what I was supposed to do? I graduated from Syracuse University in 2006 went to Japan for two years to teach English and then came back home to a crashed economy and a bleak job market.
>
> Despite my two B.A. degrees from a great university, I have to settle for underemployment in a minimum wage retail job.

Andrew Englebrecht, 22 years of age from New Lenox, IL, $80,000 in debt, writes:

> It makes me depressed. I have no hope. Nothing will ever get better. I'm scared. I can't go get my masters because my life has already been ruined. I ruined my parents' life. The bank finally was willing to work with us and not take our house; that doesn't mean we can pay the loans back either. I can't move out of the house. I can't propose to the girl I love. I can't live because I can't dream. I'm afraid to have kids because I'm scared they wouldn't have a chance.

This is one from Eric Anders, 29, of Chicago, IL, $125,000 in debt. He writes:

> My law school debt is astronomical. It will keep me from being a homeowner for a long time. I believe serious efforts need to be made to reduce the costs of attending both college and graduate school.

Kelly Weiner, 27, from Brooklyn, NY, is $134,000 in debt, and says:

> I went to law school because I wanted to help people and communities who are underserved by the law. . . . I am currently paying back my loans on an income-based repayment plan with a 7.3% interest rate which means I am not even making a dent in my debt. . . . According to my repayment plan I will be in my fifties before I get out of debt.

Saul Barraza, 23, of Littleton, CO, $35,000 in debt, writes:

> I feel like I'm sinking further and further into debt. The interest rate on my loans is eating me alive. I don't believe that I've ever touched the principal on my loans. I simply pay interest and avoid default. . . . I feel that my debt is holding me back from being able to contribute to society. It is a ball and chain that follows me everywhere I go preventing me from starting the rest of my life.

Lastly, let me read from Dustin Green, 28, of Yukon, OK—$50,000 in debt between him and his wife:

> Between my wife and myself we pay over $600 a month for our student loans. I have a good job and can barely afford these payments along with normal bills. After graduation dealing with each loan company was a task of its own. They do not care if you have enough money to eat but simply to pay them back. My wife and I are wanting to buy our first home but with so much of our salaries going to monthly student loan payments we can't make that step yet. We have both wondered if the yearly income difference with a college education is worth the extra debt.

So those are just some of the 700-plus stories that we have heard from young people and their families all over this country about the crushing impact that student debt is having on their lives.

We have to address this issue. We have to make college affordable for all Americans regardless of income.

I hope that we can do that sooner rather than later.

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

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

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, this has been an interesting week here in the Senate.

When we began this week, there was a great deal of attention focused on what was happening overseas with the release of a prisoner of war who had been in captivity for some 4 to 5 years, Sergeant Bergdahl.

Conversation moved to education, with a measure that Senator WARREN from Massachusetts had introduced. The thought was we would be discussing education issues—the high cost of college and the burden of college debt on our students.

Then we turned later yesterday to veterans and how we address the real scandal we have seen within the VA in failing to provide that level of care in a timely manner for our veterans who have served us so honorably.

It has been kind of a fast and furious week, and I wish to take a few minutes this afternoon to talk about my perspective on not only the legislation that Senator WARREN had put out for discussion, but, really, the concerns so many in this country have when it comes to the issue of student loan debt.

I am the mom of a recent college graduate. Our number two son is going to be entering his senior year of college. So we are fully embroiled as parents in the understanding as to what the current costs of a college education are, what young students go through in order to achieve their dreams of going to college and their struggles as they then face the reality of moving into a working world, but starting off saddled with debt that can be almost breathtaking for them.

In addition to being a mom of kids in this generation, I am also a former commissioner of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education. This is Alaska's State agency lender. So I am coming at the issue wearing a couple of different hats today.

I know full well people are discussing the issue of the high cost of college and student loan debt—and not just here on the floor of the Senate but talking about it around their kitchen tables. They are very concerned about the cost of college and the burden the debt then places on our young Americans.

Young people who are just starting out after college graduation have an average debt of about $27,000. Now, some would say $27,000 is manageable; that is about in the range if you are purchasing a new car. But think about it. For a young person just out of college, starting to make those initial payments, $27,000 can be a staggering amount. Whether we talk to the young people working the phones in either a State office or here, the young interns that I have—who are excited about the prospects of going to college or are in the midst of college or who have just graduated from college—some of that excitement and that enthusiasm dims when they realize what it is they are taking on. So this debt is daunting.

Keep in mind, that debt then assumes the means to pay it back. So many of our young people of course cannot find a job. For the 18- to 24-year-old age bracket, the unemployment rate is twice the national average. For those graduating with a masters or a doctorate, of course, the debt burden is much more.

Then for the parents and those who have taken out loans to help put their kids through college—many families also struggling. So, again, this is something that families are talking about around their dinner table. And I am hearing about this from parents, from high school and college students in Alaska, and talking with my interns here. They all say the same thing. They are all concerned. They are all concerned about the cost of college and job training and the debt they are going to incur and their ability then to move forward, whether it is to buy that first car, whether it is to purchase a home, the decisions about getting married or starting a family. The debt has an impact, and that is absolutely a given.

I do think it is important to know we in Congress have not turned a blind eye to this and we have been working over the years to help address the cost. The College Cost Reduction and Access Act and the Higher Education Opportunity Act are measures that I worked to craft some years ago, and they address these issues in many ways. We created income-based repayment and public service loan forgiveness. There was Active Military loan deferment, graduate student eligibility for income contingent repayment, interest rate reductions, Pell grant increases, TEACH grants, automatic zero expected family contribution for low-income families and much more.

We improved student support programs like TRIO and helped ensure students and parents have access to the kind of information they need to ensure they really do get top dollar for their education dollars and also to help students then persist in college to complete that process to earn the degree. We required counseling for federal loan borrowers prior to the students' graduation on repayment plans, debt management, loan forgiveness, consequences of default, tax benefits, and more. We also required disclosure about the terms and conditions of the Federal Family Education Loan Program. These are the FFEL loan programs before the loans are disbursed, before repayment, and during repayment.

Recently Congress has supported pay as you earn and other programs and just last year enacted a new interest rate structure to protect both students and taxpayers.

Unfortunately, we haven't seen much out of the administration to make Americans aware that these opportunities actually exist, that they are in law. We heard a nominee for a senior policy position at the U.S. Department of Education who tried to justify this lack of action by saying the provisions were just enacted recently. But 7 years ago is not recent when it comes to helping Americans understand the many loan repayment options. Just this week we heard the President give the Department of Education yet another 6 months to figure out how to tell Americans about their loan repayment options. I think we can do better.

I heard just last week a young teacher who was testifying before a Senate committee. She said she was completely unaware of the income-based repayment program which could have saved her about $4,000. Instead, with her unaffordably high loan payments, she basically defaulted on her loans. So it is important that when we put measures in place, we do make sure that education effort is there on the back end so people understand and can take advantage of some of these initiatives that will help to make a difference.

Obviously we do not have the Warren legislation in front of us for consideration. I am certain that it will be a matter that will be brought back before the Senate. I certainly would hope we would have extended debate about what we as a Senate can be doing to help our young people as they deal with the burden of college debt, of job training debt, and what we can do to ensure they are well on their way to good strong careers. But I want to raise just a couple of issues that presented themselves with the legislation that Senator WARREN had put out on the floor, because they speak to a program in my State that has considerable impact.

Madam President, I know that I was scheduled to speak for about 15 minutes this afternoon. I have another colleague that is on the floor. I would ask unanimous consent for about another 5 minutes, if that is acceptable to my colleague and to the Chair.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Presiding Officer, and I thank my friend from Ohio.

First, I would like to bring up the issue of the Alaska State student aid agency. The Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education—or as we call it ACPE—is funded by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation. It is a public corporation in the State of Alaska and it is an agency that originates Federal loans under the old Federal Family Education Loan Program, FFEL, and for 40 years it has originated State loans. Now, before you dismiss ACPE

as just another private lender, let me tell you what this agency does. It is the Alaska agency for authorizing and investigating institutions of higher education. They provide consumer protection for Alaskans. They gather student data to inform policymakers so we know what policies and practices are working and where improvement is necessary. They manage the State's performance scholarships and education grants, which provide both merit and need-based grants to Alaskan students for postsecondary education. They create and manage college readiness and job training programs and help them figure out how to afford it. What ACPE does is promote access to and success in high quality post-secondary education and job training for thousands of Alaskans and non-Alaskans who are attending Alaskan schools. But they also have a special emphasis on outreach to groups that are underrepresented in postsecondary education.

They do such a great job for us in the State that when the late-Senator Ted Kennedy was here, he insisted on creating the College Access Challenge Grant Program to expand what ACPE had been doing for all these years.

But the measure that Senator WARREN has, the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act, would potentially put these programs in peril and potentially end them. It would incentivize borrowers who borrowed their FFEL loans and their State loans through ACPE to refinance. But because this opportunity would only be available to borrowers in good standing on their State loans, it would leave ACPE with only the poorest performing and lowest credit quality loans in its portfolio, leaving behind the borrowers who are the ones the sponsors of the bill say we really need to help so much.

The loss of the FFEL loans would be bad enough, but here is another problem. State student financial aid loans were financed by the Alaska Student Loan Corporation through long-term fixed rate revenue bond issues. These have very restrictive terms with respect to paying them off before their scheduled maturity dates. The impact on the State agencies and the Alaskans they serve and to the corporation's bond rating of having a large percentage of student loan volume prepaid through this refinancing bill would be severe. The money the Treasury would pay ACPE for those loans could not be used to pay off the bonds early, nor can it be reinvested at anywhere near the interest rate on the outstanding bonds. The value of the bonds exceeds $65 million. It is not only the cost to the agency and its ability to function. Whether the State corporation were to default or to perhaps go to the legislature for a bailout, the consequences are not good. Either situation would be toxic for the Alaska Student Loan Corporation in terms of subsequently being able to issue bonds that really would be palatable to any investor.

In addition to the risk of default or a hefty bill placed on the State and being labeled a toxic risk to bond issuers, the combined loss of income across both old FFEL loans and State loans could very well leave ACPE unable to continue to perform any of the services that it performs really quite well.

This is not the only issue I have as it relates to what we have before us this week. We don't want our students, our young people to be struggling when it comes to debt. We have to work together to try to find the solutions that truly are helpful across the spectrum. One of the problems that we noted, though, was that the bill would prohibit Americans who have private loans from banks or State agencies, and who are having trouble paying as agreed, to refinance to a lower rate—a prohibition that does not extend to those who are having trouble paying their Direct and FFEL loans. I cannot understand why we would treat Americans differently based on the kind of debt they have. The sponsors of the bill I think genuinely want to help struggling borrowers, but with this provision they leave a lot of folks out in the cold. So that is something that needs to be addressed.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the cost of college is going up, but State funding for higher education, which went down during the recession, is not rebounding. We are seeing exceptions in Alaska and North Dakota. But according to the CBPP, Louisiana is at the top of the list and contributes a little over $5,000 less per student to higher education than they did prior to fiscal year 2008. Hawaii, New Mexico, and Alabama are seeing $4,000 per student less. Idaho, South Carolina, Massachusetts, Nevada, Connecticut, and Arizona are in the $3,000 less per student range. The list goes on.

So when the States are unable to contribute to their public universities and postsecondary education in general, the cost burden then for our students too often goes up. Even when our colleges tighten their belts and cut their internal costs, we see the costs rise.

So obviously there is a great deal to do. I know that so many of my colleagues are committed to working to find that good solution which works not only for students in my State but around the entire country.

We have our work cut out for us. I appreciate the efforts that many have made. I think the discussion will continue, and I look forward to that.

With that I yield to my colleague from Ohio, and I thank the Senator for his indulgence of an additional 5 minutes.

HONORING PRESIDENT GEORGE H.W. BUSH

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. I hear the remarks from my colleagues from Alaska and appreciate her leadership on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, where I have the privilege to serve, and she makes a lot of great points with regard to some of the student loan issues that affect our State of Ohio as well as Alaska. But today I am here to talk about something else, and that is the 90th birthday of a mentor of mine, a former boss of mine, and the 41st President of the United States, George H.W. Bush.

In addition to honoring him by wearing some colorful socks today, I also want to make a statement in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, so this statement can go down in the ages and some of the young folks who are in the Chamber today and their kids and grandkids will have this as part of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, talking about truly one of our great American patriots and public servants in the history of our country.

Like so many in his generation, President George H.W. Bush, when he heard of the attack on Pearl Harbor, answered the call to serve his country. He was 18 years old. So his service started long before he was sworn in as President of the United States.

At 18 years old he became the youngest naval aviator in the U.S. Navy. He served greatly in the Pacific, famously completing one bombing after his aircraft was fired upon. In fact, his aircraft was on fire. Yet he completed that mission.

For that and many other examples of heroism he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, one of the highest honors any aviator could receive. But he went home, went out to Texas, had a successful business career, raised a growing family, and started to engage in politics.

He became a successful politician and was an accomplished Congressman from Texas and then became a very respected international figure as Ambassador to the United Nations, and as envoy to China. He also headed up the Central Intelligence Agency at a very difficult time and helped to improve the morale and effectiveness of that agency. He then, of course, became Vice President of the United States. Then on January 20, 1989, he was sworn in as the 41st President.

President Reagan, 27 years ago today, in fact, made the famous statement that Mikhail Gorbachev should tear down the Berlin Wall. It was Reagan's successor, George H.W. Bush who actually saw it done and brought an end to the Cold War. He removed a brutal dictator in Panama and gathered the whole world with the United States in the lead to remove Saddam Hussein and turn back the invasion of Kuwait.

At home in a time of divided government, when at the time one party was in control of the Congress and one party in control of the Executive Branch—as we have now to a certain extent—a divided government—he showed how we could work together, how to reach across the aisle and get things done and he did so.

But of all the things he has accomplished, there is probably nothing he is prouder of than his call to volunteerism. He championed and established the Points of Light Foundation, which has been enormously successful in getting Americans in all walks of life more engaged in helping their fellow citizens. He inspired the Nation when he spoke of a thousand points of light to promote volunteerism and community action by all of us. It turns out that a thousand points of light was not as ambitious as he could have been because he underestimated what he would accomplish. It hasn't been a thousand; it has been a million. The latest year I was able to find information was in 2012. In that year alone, the Points of Light Foundation engaged millions of volunteers. It has supported thousands of nonprofits and volunteer organizations across 250 cities in America, providing volunteer services that have been estimated to be valued at over $635 million.

That sort of generosity reflects the heart of the man I have come to know since I first had the honor of meeting him over 30 years ago. That generosity is what I experienced when President Bush took a chance on me—a young, inexperienced lawyer from Cincinnati, OH—when he made me Associate Counsel to the President. The experience I gained in that job was invaluable, and I continue to draw on it today. But even more valuable was what I learned from President Bush. I learned about being a father, being a husband, being a public servant, and serving—serving the folks we are honored to represent in the U.S. Senate.

Today we honor a true American hero, selfless public servant, and a person I consider to be the most honorable and decent person in politics in my lifetime. I wish him the best for a truly happy birthday and blessings on him and his entire family as they celebrate an amazing year.

He is apparently jumping out of an airplane again today on his 90th birthday, and he has received numerous awards this year. It has been a terrific 90th year.

I hope he understands the American response to him, which is one of great appreciation, gratitude, and respect. I hope he has a very happy birthday, and I hope God continues to bless him and his family for years to come.

I thank the Presiding Officer 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.

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

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

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, 40 million people in this country—40 million—are dealing with more than $1 trillion in student loan debt. It is crushing our young people and dragging down our economy. It is a national economic emergency.

Yesterday Senators had a chance to do the right thing. We had a chance to allow young people with high-interest loans to refinance those loans down to a lower rate, a chance to move forward on the Bank on Students Emergency Loan Refinancing Act, and a chance to stand for our young people who are just starting their economic lives.

A majority of Senators voted to seize that chance. Every Democratic Senator, every Independent Senator, and three Republican Senators voted to seize that chance. But despite the majority support, despite this bipartisan support, the bill failed. Why? Because Republicans pulled out their favorite tool—the filibuster. They blocked the Senate from even debating this bill.

Over the past few days we have heard a lot of excuses, but yesterday the Republicans said we should not even consider this legislation until we voted on the Sanders-McCain legislation to address the situation at the VA. The VA legislation is a very good bill. It is a very important bill, and the Senate voted on it yesterday afternoon. So now that the Senate has passed it, where are the Republicans? The veterans vote is over, so where are the Republicans who are now ready to debate the student loan refinancing?

Veterans have spoken out on the student loan bill as well. The spokesperson for Student Veterans of America praised the student loan refinancing bill. He said this bill could provide real relief for his members—veterans who have served our country and who have worked hard to get an education. If the Republicans will let us vote, we can give our veterans that relief.

The Senate can come back to the student loan bill at any point. We can come back today, we can come back tonight, and we can come back tomorrow. We just need the Republicans to let us get back on the important legislation. Democrats are happy to offer a time agreement which would allow for a short debate, would allow for amendments, and would get us to a vote.

Let's be honest. Most of the Senate Republicans made the wrong choice yesterday when they voted to protect billionaires who have already made it instead of the young people who are fighting for a fair shot at a better future. I am still hopeful because despite the rhetoric, despite the excuses, despite the hemming and hawing, a large bipartisan majority of Senators stood for students yesterday. I am hopeful because I know that the minute the Republicans drop their filibuster, this bill will pass the Senate, and I am hopeful because we are just two votes short of breaking that filibuster. Now that we have had a vote on the veterans legislation, let's go back to the student loan bill.

This is not over. We are not done fighting for students. No one is giving up. We just need two more votes to go forward. We are going to push harder than ever for the student loan bill, and we are going to get it passed.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant majority leader.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask, through the Chair, if the Senator from Massachusetts will yield for a question.

Ms. WARREN. Certainly.

Mr. DURBIN. First, through the Chair, I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for her leadership and her effort to refinance student loans.

Is it true that what was at stake yesterday was an opportunity for 25 million student loan borrowers—out of roughly 40 million nationwide—to refinance their student loans at a lower interest rate?

Ms. WARREN. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Illinois for his leadership on this issue, and the answer is yes. This would have permitted 25 million Americans to refinance their student loans down to lower interest rates, thereby putting hundreds, even thousands of dollars back in their pockets.

Mr. DURBIN. Through the Chair, I also ask the Senator from Massachusetts if it is true that the way we paid for this—this loss of interest by the Federal Government—was to impose the Buffett rule, which meant that those who are multimillionaires, for example, would have a higher income tax rate—at least as high as the secretaries who work for them—and that would have meant a tax increase on roughly 22,000 millionaires.

Ms. WARREN. That is exactly right.

Mr. DURBIN. Through the Chair again, the choice yesterday was between helping 25 million student borrowers get a lower interest rate, saving on average $2,000 a year, and asking 22,000 multimillionaires to pay slightly more in income tax, and sadly only three Republicans would join the Democrats in saying: Let's help the student borrowers. Is that what happened?

Ms. WARREN. That is right.

Mr. DURBIN. I say through the Chair to the Senator from Massachusetts that I have been traveling the State of Illinois, the city of Chicago, and every campus I stop on there are students who come forward and tell me their stories of the debt they have incurred because of their degrees and the impact it has had on their lives. There are student teachers who sadly cannot take jobs teaching because they owe too much money from college.

Is the Senator from Massachusetts hearing that in her State and around the country?

Ms. WARREN. Yes, I am hearing that in my State and around the country.

What really strikes me about this bill—there are a lot of things that happen that we can't fix here in Congress, but this is something we can fix. Right

now the Federal Government is charging people who try to get an education 6 percent, 8 percent, 10 percent, 12 percent, and even higher on student loans. We have a very straightforward bill that would bring the interest rate down, put money back in people's pockets, and give people who are just trying to get a fair shot a real opportunity to build an economic future.

Mr. DURBIN. I will ask the last question through the Chair. So yesterday—so everybody can understand what happened—there was a threatened Republican filibuster to stop us from even debating this bill, and in order to stop the filibuster and begin debating the bill so 25 million students could get a lower interest rate on the student loans, we needed 60 votes on the floor. We had all the Democrats and only three Republicans—Senator COLLINS of Maine, Senator CORKER of Tennessee, and Senator MURKOWSKI of Alaska—prepared to vote. No other Republican Senator would join us in starting the debate on lowering the interest rate on student loans.

We need two more Republican Senators to join those three Republicans so we can start bringing relief to student borrowers all across the United States.

Is that where we stand today?

Ms. WARREN. That is exactly where we stand today. We are just two votes shy. What we know now is how the Republicans have voted. So now it is up to all of us to get two more Republicans to agree to just let us bring this bill to the floor. Just let us have the debate. Just let us have the vote.

Mr. DURBIN. I thank the Senator from Massachusetts for her leadership on this important issue.

Madam President, what is the order of business on the floor?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 3 minutes remaining prior to the Senate proceeding to executive session.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I will follow up on the dialogue I just had with Senator WARREN.

These are issues that really hit home for families. We have had four issues on the floor of the Senate in the last several months which really define the difference between the political parties.

The Democrats have argued and urged that we extend unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed in America so they can find work, save their homes, pay their utility bills, and have a cell phone to go look for work. Unfortunately, we didn't have enough support on the other side of the aisle when it came to extending unemployment benefits.

The next issue was to raise the minimum wage—which we have not done for a long time—so that those who are struggling—primarily women—will have a basic minimum wage so they can get by from paycheck to paycheck. Many of us believe that if you are willing to get up and go to work every morning, you should not live in poverty in America.

The third issue was gender equality. If my daughter and my son work the same job, they should get the same paycheck. There should not be discrimination against women. Republicans opposed us on that.

Now comes the fourth issue: renegotiating college student loans so that some 40 million student loan borrowers across America have a chance to pay less interest on their student loans, their monthly payments would go down, and they would be able to pay off their loans sooner so they could get on with their lives. We could only get 3 Republicans out of 45 to join us in an effort to start the debate on the bill yesterday, so we fell short. We needed two Republican Senators to join Senator WARREN, myself, and others—Senator FRANKEN of Minnesota and Senator REED of Rhode Island—to join us in initiating this conversation.

I say to my Republican colleagues, when you go home this weekend, try to find some college students and their families and engage them in this conversation. You will find what we found out on the Democratic side. If you listen to working families who are struggling to put their kids through school, they will tell you they need help. We offered help yesterday, but we fell short by two Republican votes.

I hope the Republican filibuster will be overturned next week when we return.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF LAEL BRAINARD TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

NOMINATION OF JEROME H. POWELL TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

NOMINATION OF STANLEY FISCHER TO BE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

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

The assistant legislative clerk read 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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Lael Brainard, of the District of Columbia, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN).

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

The result was announced—yeas 61, nays 31, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 189 Ex.]

YEAS—61

Alexander	Hagan	Murphy
Baldwin	Harkin	Murray
Begich	Hatch	Nelson
Bennet	Heinrich	Portman
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Pryor
Booker	Hirono	Reed
Brown	Johanns	Reid
Cantwell	Johnson (SD)	Schatz
Cardin	Kaine	Schumer
Carper	King	Shaheen
Casey	Kirk	Stabenow
Collins	Klobuchar	Tester
Coons	Landrieu	Udall (CO)
Corker	Leahy	Udall (NM)
Crapo	Levin	Walsh
Donnelly	Manchin	Warner
Durbin	Markey	Warren
Feinstein	McCain	Whitehouse
Flake	Menendez	Wyden
Franken	Mikulski	
Gillibrand	Murkowski	

NAYS—31

Ayotte	Grassley	Rubio
Barrasso	Heller	Sanders
Blunt	Hoeven	Scott
Boozman	Inhofe	Sessions
Coats	Isakson	Shelby
Coburn	Johnson (WI)	Thune
Cornyn	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Vitter
Enzi	Paul	Wicker
Fischer	Risch	
Graham	Roberts	

NOT VOTING—8

Boxer	Cochran	Moran
Burr	McCaskill	Rockefeller
Chambliss	Merkley	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Jerome H. Powell, of Maryland, to be a Member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System?

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

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

The result was announced—yeas 67, nays 24, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 190 Ex.]

YEAS—67

Alexander	Hagan	Murray
Baldwin	Harkin	Nelson
Begich	Hatch	Portman
Bennet	Heinrich	Pryor
Blumenthal	Heitkamp	Reed
Booker	Hirono	Reid
Brown	Isakson	Schatz
Cantwell	Johanns	Schumer
Cardin	Johnson (SD)	Sessions
Carper	Johnson (WI)	Shaheen
Casey	Kaine	Shelby
Coats	King	Stabenow
Coburn	Kirk	Tester
Collins	Klobuchar	Udall (CO)
Coons	Landrieu	Udall (NM)
Corker	Leahy	Walsh
Donnelly	Levin	Warner
Durbin	Manchin	Warren
Feinstein	Markey	Whitehouse
Flake	Menendez	Wicker
Franken	Mikulski	Wyden
Gillibrand	Murkowski	
Grassley	Murphy	

NAYS—24

Ayotte	Fischer	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Heller	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Cornyn	Inhofe	Sanders
Crapo	Lee	Scott
Cruz	McCain	Thune
Enzi	McConnell	Vitter

NOT VOTING—9

Boxer	Cochran	Moran
Burr	McCaskill	Rockefeller
Chambliss	Merkley	Toomey

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Stanley Fischer, of New York, to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System?

Mr. COATS. 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 California (Mrs. BOXER), the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY), the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON), the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. ROCKEFELLER), and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) are necessarily absent.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Ariona (Mr. MCCAIN), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), and the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY).

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

The result was announced—yeas 63, nays 24, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 191 Ex.]

YEAS—63

Alexander	Franken	Menendez
Baldwin	Gillibrand	Mikulski
Begich	Hagan	Murkowski
Bennet	Harkin	Murphy
Blumenthal	Hatch	Murray
Booker	Heinrich	Portman
Brown	Heitkamp	Pryor
Cantwell	Hirono	Reed
Cardin	Isakson	Reid
Carper	Johanns	Schatz
Casey	Johnson (SD)	Schumer
Coats	Johnson (WI)	Shaheen
Coburn	Kaine	Stabenow
Collins	King	Tester
Coons	Kirk	Udall (CO)
Corker	Klobuchar	Udall (NM)
Cornyn	Landrieu	Walsh
Donnelly	Leahy	Warner
Durbin	Levin	Warren
Feinstein	Manchin	Wicker
Flake	Markey	Wyden

NAYS—24

Ayotte	Grassley	Roberts
Barrasso	Heller	Rubio
Blunt	Hoeven	Sanders
Boozman	Inhofe	Scott
Crapo	Lee	Sessions
Cruz	McConnell	Shelby
Enzi	Paul	Thune
Fischer	Risch	Vitter

NOT VOTING—13

Boxer	McCain	Rockefeller
Burr	McCaskill	Toomey
Chambliss	Merkley	Whitehouse
Cochran	Moran	
Graham	Nelson	

The nomination was confirmed.

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

VOTE EXPLANATION

● Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I was unable to attend the rollcall votes on the following nominations: Crystal Nix-Hines to be Ambassador to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; Lael Brainard to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; Jerome H. Powell to be a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; and Stanley Fischer to be Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. Had I been present for these votes, I would have voted aye.●

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO SENATOR JIM BUNNING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I rise to pay tribute to a great friend of mine and a friend of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, former Senator Jim Bunning. Jim has been an inspiration to Kentuckians for decades in many different roles—as a public servant, a man of integrity, a devoted father of 9 children, grandfather of 35, and a great-grandfather of 12, with 1 more on the way. But few public servants or family men can also claim to be in the Baseball Hall of Fame. Jim Bunning can, for his extraordinary Major League pitching career with the Detroit Tigers and with the Philadelphia Phillies.

With Father's Day approaching this weekend, I thought it appropriate to remember what Jim Bunning accomplished on Father's Day 1964. The date was June 21, and in front of his wife Mary, his eldest daughter Barbara, and more than 32,000 cheering fans, Jim Bunning delivered the perfect Father's Day gift by pitching a perfect game.

Let me take a moment to explain, for those who do not spend their youth playing baseball and collecting baseball cards as some of us did, what pitching a perfect game means and why it is such a legendary feat. To pitch a perfect game, a pitcher must pitch a full nine innings without allowing a batter to get on base for any reason—no hits, no walks, no hits by a pitch, and no errors. Twenty-seven batters must step to the plate and all 27 must sit down. It is an achievement that has been accomplished only 23 times in more than 135 years of Major League Baseball history—23 times in the history of Major League Baseball.

At the time Jimmy's pitching perfection was only the seventh perfect game in Major League Baseball history. It was the first perfect game in regular season play in more than 42 years and the first in the National League since 1880. As the Philadelphia Phillies were the visitors against the New York Mets, it was also the first-ever perfect game pitched in Shea Stadium.

Jimmy's day started as did any other Sunday. He went to 9 a.m. Mass and

had a breakfast of eggs and sausage. He was worried about getting tickets for his wife and daughter to attend the game. He showed up at Shea Stadium to warm up for the first game of a doubleheader. ''I felt good and loose,'' Jim recalls. ''I realized right away that I had exceptional stuff.''

With a combination of fastballs, curveballs, and sliders, Jim began to make short work of the Mets' batting order. By the sixth inning, he began to consider that he was on the cusp of history.

''Everyone is supposed to do perfect work, but perfection in the game of baseball is a rarity I never expected to accomplish.'' That is what the big right-hander had to say about that.

The final Met at bat was John Stephenson, a lefty. Here is how the Philadelphia Inquirer described the game's dramatic conclusion:

> The rookie swung at a low-breaking ball and missed, took a pitch for a second strike, then took two balls, one low outside and the other high and away. Bunning came back with a curve at the knees on the outside part of the plate. Stephenson swung and missed and the Phillies made a bee-line for the mound. They came running from their positions and streamed out of the dugout to pound the former American Leaguer on the back and escort him to the dugout.

The story continues:

> A few minutes later, [Bunning] went on television for an interview during which his wife and daughter rushed up to kiss him. It was the thrill of a lifetime for the pitcher, who richly deserved it.

That he did.

For baseball fans, the statistics on Jim's perfect game are truly numbers to behold. He threw only 90 pitches in the Phillies' 6-to-0 victory—an average of only 10 per inning. He struck out 10. He did not miss the strike zone more than four times in any inning. And he went to a three-ball count on only two batters. Statistically, it may be the most perfect of perfect games ever pitched.

Acclaim was instant. Jim appeared on ''The Ed Sullivan Show'' that night. This man, who was always a fierce competitor both on the pitching mound and in the Halls of Congress, had reached the pinnacle of his profession. But it won't surprise any of my colleagues who know and worked with Jim that he did not let this sudden rush of fame go to his head. ''Fame is fleeting as far as the next hitter at the plate is concerned,'' says Jim. I admire my friend and former colleague's ability to keep such a momentous event in perspective.

It is fitting that his perfect game occurred on Father's Day because family is really what Jim Bunning is all about. The Bunning family celebrated their dad's perfect game not at a fancy Manhattan restaurant but at the Howard Johnson's on the New Jersey Turnpike. And I know his lovely wife Mary has been his rock and his foundation for his entire career in both baseball and politics.

Jim Bunning was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1996. But for any baseball fan, including this Senator, the thrill of Jimmy's perfect game is as fresh as if it happened yesterday, not 50 years ago.

Jim Bunning always stood tall, firm, and unafraid, whether in sports, politics, or life. That is how he became one of Kentucky's favorite sons. That is how he became an inspiration to his family and his friends and his colleagues. And that is how he threw that perfect game on Father's Day 1964. It is his strength of spirit that has enabled Jim to succeed. Kentucky is honored to have had Jim Bunning pitching for our home team for so many years.

I am sure that every Father's Day brings back special memories for the Bunning family. I am proud to wish my friend and former colleague well on the eve of this Father's Day and to extend my best wishes to him and to his family.

Thank you, Jim. Thank you for the example you have set for how to compete, how to win, and how to live a good and full life.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

U.S. MANUFACTURING

Mr. BROWN. Madam President, American manufacturing has taken quite a hit in the last 15 years in this country. Some 30 years ago, U.S. manufacturing made up some 25 percent of gross domestic product. Today that number has declined to somewhere in the vicinity of 10 or 11 percent of gross domestic product. That has meant literally millions of jobs paying good wages in cities and suburbs and rural America that have simply disappeared. Some have been lost to technology. Far too many have been lost to unfair trade practices, as jobs are moved overseas. Some of that responsibility lies with this Congress, which has written laws or refused to change laws that encourage companies through trade agreements and through tax laws to shut down production in Worcester, MA, or Wooster, OH, and move to Wuhan, China.

But we have seen some good news. From 2000 to 2010, we lost about 5 million manufacturing jobs; 60,000 plants closed in this country. The good news we have begun to see is that since the auto rescue in 2008 and 2009 and since this President has been relatively aggressive—better than his predecessors—in enforcing trade laws, we have seen growth in manufacturing. Since 2009—again, because of trade enforcement, because of the auto rescue—about 500,000 manufacturing jobs have been created.

We see new investments in advanced manufacturing. We see new investments in clean energy. Natural gas production is providing domestic manufacturers with an affordable energy source. Natural gas prices have remained pretty constant at $4 or $5, with a likely predictable, stable price for the next several years—maybe for a decade.

This production in natural gas has also increased demand for world-class tubular steel. Nearly 8,000 workers across the United States make what we call oil country tubular goods. That is the steel pipes that are some of the strongest steel ever invented, ever developed, because that steel needs to be able to absorb high-speed, high-rotation deep drilling into water and into stone. Only the best kind of hardened steel can withstand that kind of pressure. These jobs—these 8,000 jobs making oil country tubular goods—support another 7 jobs in the supply chain.

We have an opportunity to grow the economy by investing in manufacturing to create more good-paying jobs. But here is the problem: When foreign steel is dumped into our country, American workers pay the price. What that means simply is that when South Korea—which literally has no domestic market. South Korea has begun to produce oil country tubular goods. They do not use this kind of steel in their domestic economy. So they began this production, they started up, they ramped up this industry all for export, which they are free to do. But global oversupply is a major challenge facing our domestic steel industry. It threatens thousands of steel jobs.

OCTG—oil country tubular goods—imports have doubled since 2008. Imports account for more than 50 percent of the pipes being used by companies drilling for gas and oil. If that were done through fair competition, it would be one thing, but here are some things we know:

We know that in South Korea they need to go to mostly Australia and Brazil to get the iron ore and the coal and the limestone for their steel production. Plants in Ohio, in the Midwest, go to Minnesota to get iron ore or they go to Indiana for their coke, which is made from coal. Their coal is processed into coke. They may go to Ohio to get their limestone. So the Koreans, obviously, to get their raw materials—their raw materials have to travel much longer distances for their Korean steel industry than the U.S. steel industry, No. 1.

No. 2, American workers are paid only slightly more than Korean workers, so there is not much difference in the cost of labor.

No. 3, the U.S. steel manufacturers have upgraded and invested many billions of dollars in their production. There is a 2-year-old steel mill in Youngstown, OH. There are major investments in Lorain and Cleveland to make oil country tubular steel—major investments. I was at the Wheatland steel plant north of Youngstown in Warren, OH. There is a $20 million new

investment there. So our mills are just as modern—maybe more modern—than the Korean mills.

Lastly, after this oil country tubular steel is produced in Ohio or in Pennsylvania, it is transported maybe 50 miles to use in the oil and gas fields at the Marcellus or Utica shale in Ohio or in the region. Korean steel tubes, on the other hand, are transported maybe 10,000 miles to the fields in this country to use in oil and gas drilling.

So clearly we know that the Koreans simply are subsidizing their steel. We call it steel dumping. Call it whatever technical or nontechnical term you want, it is clear that the Koreans are not playing fair.

If they can design an industry—think about this—if Korea can decide: Well, there is a market in the United States for this kind of steel; we will just design an industry, we will subsidize that steel, we will sell into that market, and we may put some of them out of business—if we as a government accept this kind of behavior from Korea, it will show the rest of the world a blueprint on how you take jobs from the United States of America, how you start a business, how you invest in this business, how you illegally subsidize this business, how you export from your country into the United States, throwing American workers out of work, undercutting American companies, and in the end making our manufacturing in the United States of America experience even more decline than we have seen over the last 30 years.

We are asking the Department of Commerce to reconsider its preliminary decision to make sure they look at what, in fact, has happened in this industry. There is no question that the deeper you look—or there is no question on the surface—that Korea is subsidizing its steel, that it is breaking trade rules.

There is clear evidence that our workers and manufacturers are being cheated in another way; that is, by currency. My bipartisan legislation—I have worked with Senator SESSIONS and Senator GRAHAM and others, Senator STABENOW on the Democratic side—our bipartisan legislation would crack down on China's currency manipulation. It would treat currency manipulation as an unfair trade subsidy and require the Commerce Department to investigate that currency manipulation.

If you cheat on currency, if you devalue in playing this game with currency at the rate of 30 percent, what that means is when China exports a product to the United States, it is 30 percent cheaper, making it very hard for U.S. companies to compete—another way of subsidizing is through currency—or if U.S. companies try to sell into the Chinese market, our goods cost 30 percent more than the Chinese goods. So, again, we simply cannot play on a level playing field.

A report released earlier this year said that 254,000 Ohio jobs would be created if currency manipulation were eliminated by 2015.

When foreign steel is dumped into our country, American workers pay the price. When foreign steel is dumped into our country, American businesses pay the price. When foreign steel is dumped into our country, the communities where these mills are, these communities that supply, feed into, and sell items and sell goods into the supply chain, pay the price too. So it means fewer teachers, fewer police officers, fewer people working, less income, less prosperity in those communities.

Again, when foreign steel is dumped into our country, workers pay the price over and over.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. MARKEY). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

IRAQ

Mr. RUBIO. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon to talk about an emerging issue of the highest order for our country's national security. I say that because I believe the coverage in the news over the last few days about Iraq has missed the greater point about the importance of the issue we are now facing.

Much of the attention—and I understand why—has been paid to the fact that the United States invested a tremendous amount of money and unfortunately lost many, many lives in the efforts to liberate Iraq from Saddam Hussein. These views we now see of Al Qaeda-linked groups taking over cities in Iraq rightfully trouble us. We hear the question being asked of why did we do all of this. This is without a doubt a legitimate concern and one I will touch upon in a moment, but the issue of what is happening in Iraq at this moment is much deeper and more serious than simply just that.

Let me begin by describing the emerging situation. There is a radical Islamic group by the name of ISIL, as it is called, or ISIS according to some. It has different terminologies. But it is a group linked to Al Qaeda that emerged in Iraq after the fall of Saddam Hussein in western Iraq. They were involved in efforts against Americans after we liberated Iraq. They killed and maimed countless Americans. However, thanks to the assistance we provided, the Iraqis were able to put that group on a defensive posture.

After the United States left Iraq, however, many of this group were able to reorganize. They did so increasingly with new leadership, and they were able to do it in parts of Syria that became largely ungoverned after the Assad regime began to lose control over large swaths of land in Syria, and they grew stronger. They grew stronger still when foreign fighters from all over the world, who sympathized with their Islamic jihadist cause, began flowing into Syria, providing them new fighters.

Over the last few months, as I warned, by the way, in a hearing that we had late last year when we debated the issue of the use of force in Syria, this group, based largely now in Syria, began to conduct operations in Iraq, initially to limited success, and then limited operations that had some success. But now, over the last 72 hours, they have begun to make dramatic gains in Iraq. In fact, they have overrun the second largest city, and there are expectations that they are on the way toward Baghdad.

The goal of this group is pretty straight forward: to establish what would be known as an Islamic caliphate, basically an Islamic fundamentalist area, country—a terrorist government. By the way, this group does not necessarily respect any borders. They are looking to carve out pieces of land that they can use to train terrorists and to plan operations.

If we look at the situation in Iraq over the last 72 hours, we have legitimate concerns that, in fact, that is what they are on the verge of doing, if they have not done so already. When you add up the land they now control in Syria and the land they now control in Iraq—by the way, in many parts of the towns they are now taking over in Syria, they have already began imposing Sharia law. They have banned music; they have forced women to wear full veils. This is a radical Islamic group. It has shown what it is capable of in its conflict in Iraq when Americans were there and thereafter. This is a brutal and murderous group that has shown what they are capable of doing to those who oppose them. Unfortunately, this is a military-capable group that has made dramatic gains over the last few years in Iraq.

Most startling of all, by the way, has been what has happened with the Iraqi military, which we spent money to train and equip. In many instances the reports are they just abandoned their posts. They took off their uniforms, they put on civilian clothes and just walked away. Our fear should be that even as I speak to you now, emerging in the center of the Middle East, emerging in this area of the world is an Islamic caliphate controlled by the most radical group in that area of the world today. That is saying a lot.

Why should this matter? Well, first, as was pointed out earlier, Americans sacrificed greatly so that Iraq could be freed from tyranny. Now those gains seem to have evaporated almost overnight. But the most concerning long-term aspect of this is that in this part of the world, using territory in what was Syria and now Iraq, is the emergence of a safe haven. A safe haven is what made 9/11 possible. Al Qaeda was able to go into Afghanistan, then controlled by the Taliban, another radical Islamic group, and use it as a place to

train and plan 9/11 and other terrorist acts against the United States.

Perhaps one of the greatest successes in the post-9/11 efforts has been the denial of safe havens where terrorists could do this. But suddenly, rapidly a new safe haven is emerging where radical jihadist fighters from all over the planet are able to go and be trained. They will not simply be satisfied with conducting efforts in that part of the world. Rest assured that their targets and ambitions include us, including right here in the homeland, right here in the United States.

If, in fact, they are able to hold on to this territory, Jordan, an extraordinary ally of the United States in the region and an ally of Israel, is directly threatened. They are the next country—right next door. Already Jordan is facing tremendous challenges because of the conflict in Syria. Beyond Jordan, you can foresee where Israel could be threatened by the existence of the safe haven for a terrorist organization right next door—but ultimately us here in the United States.

The goal of these groups is to carry out Western operations. The goal of these groups is to attack Americans here, to terrorize. They believe and know that perhaps the most effective way to terrorize Americans is to not strike us in remote areas of the world, although they will do that as well, but to strike us right here in the United States. If they have an area where they are able to do this, a piece of land where there is no government to drive them out, where in fact they are the government, where they can attract the most radical people on the planet to come, to train, and to prepare to carry out these attacks, it puts in grave danger the security of every American living here in the United States.

This is the risk before us now emerging in Iraq. It is not simply the fact that we have lost the gains that were once made. That is important and worthy of outrage, but what is most startling and concerning of all is the emergence of this safe haven and what it can mean to the long-term security of every single one of us.

What can we do about it is the next question? I must say that while national security issues should never be of a partisan nature, I am concerned that despite this emergence, we have yet to hear a cohesive policy pronouncement from the White House. In fact, a number of my colleagues on the other side of aisle—Democrats—have shared the same frustration.

I want to make a couple of brief points with regard to the sorts of measures we should be thinking about in outlining a response to prevent the creation of a safe haven. The first good news is that this group is not invulnerable. This group is vulnerable. No. 1, they have not proven to be very good at controlling territory for long periods of time. This creates a vulnerability. Here is the other point. This is a Sunni Muslim group. But they are not popular among the Sunni population in Iraq. Sunnis feel terrorized by them, and they certainly do not like the Maliki government. But this is not a group that is popular among them.

Beyond that, I would say the first action we need to take is to make sure our personnel are protected, particularly in Baghdad and in the Green Zone in Baghdad, the international area, which is vulnerable to suicide attacks. We must ensure that our personnel there are protected. I understand that steps have been taken and continue to be taken to do that. I am encouraged by that. We need to make sure that happens, that the men and women who are representing us and are working on our behalf in Baghdad are protected.

One of the reasons why this is happening is because the Maliki government has been so terrible. It is not just corruption. It is the way this government has created no space for Sunnis living in Iraq that has created the possibility of this occurring. This Maliki government must be worth saving. Right now the Maliki government is a dysfunctional government as evidenced by the collapse of their military forces, but also as evidenced by the way they treated their Sunni population, giving them no space or voice in their government. That must change. That must change.

The third step is that if in fact that begins to change and conditioned upon that change, the United States must continue to provide lethal assistance, to the extent possible, to help these Iraqi forces, particularly those concentrated in Baghdad, to repel and push back against this group. Right now it is my opinion, based on everything I know that they are not capable of doing that and in many instances are not willing to do that. Without our assistance, they will have no chance of doing that.

Ultimately, while the use of force is never popular around here, I want to be blunt and clear about something. We are going to have to take some sort of action against this radical group. That is not the choice before us. The choice before us will be whether we take action now or we take action later, because what we can never allow is for another safe haven like pre-9/11 Afghanistan to emerge anywhere in the world, where terrorists can plan, practice, and ultimately conduct attacks against us here in the homeland or on our interests around the world.

Therefore, I believe that we should not rule out and, in fact, conduct, to the extent they are effective, military actions from the air against this group wherever they are located.

I do not take that lightly. I am not one to come to this floor and call for military engagement as a response to every conflict. I have opposed them in the past when they have made no sense or there was no clear plan moving forward. But this issue rises to that level of urgency. We must never forget the lessons of September 11, 2001, where a group of radical jihadist terrorists used a safe haven in Afghanistan to murder innocent Americans and carry out the most devastating attack in the history of our Nation.

It was not that long ago that this happened. There are groups around the world that aspire to that now. What they need is a place to do that from. We cannot allow that place to emerge. There is no greater responsibility on the Federal Government than to provide for the security of our people. The choice before us will be whether we prevent it now or whether we deal with the consequences of it later. I urge the White House to take this matter with the importance that it deserves and to come to this Congress as soon as possible with a clear and concrete plan on how we are going to deal with it and engage in this emerging emergency situation that we now face and that threatens the national security of the United States and places a grave threat to the national security of our country in the years to come.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

VETERANS HEALTH CARE

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, I appreciate an opportunity to speak on a bill we passed here yesterday, the veterans access reform bill. We passed it 93 to 3, which is amazing when you think about it—in this body—as we struggle to get issues in front of us and work on them. What we saw was an incredible bipartisan piece of legislation basically saying: We are for vets. We want to make sure that veterans have the best care they deserve and they earned fighting wars—not only the recent ones but in the past.

I want to talk a little bit about the piece of legislation, and then I am going to talk about some pieces that are important to Alaska. I will show some examples here in a second. But I ultimately want to talk about what is left still ahead of us. As a member of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, it is not just about passing one bill and saying: We are done; we have done our chore; we have done our job. No, there is a lot more work ahead of us.

This bill we passed is a bipartisan bill, with Democrats and Republicans coming together because veterans are not a partisan issue; it is an American issue. In my State it is an American-Alaskan issue; in the Presiding Officer's State, a Massachusetts issue. It is important for all of us to step to the plate and make sure we do the right thing.

This now provides the VA Secretary the authority to dismiss those senior executives who are not performing, are not doing the jobs. But also it ensures that if there are situations, as we have heard and seen and then had shown to us, where there are people who falsified data, then they are going to be held accountable. As we know, recently we have heard the FBI is now reviewing some of those situations.

Whoever is at fault and has done anything to falsify needs to be held accountable and brought to justice. But it also brings out an issue that we have been dealing with in Alaska for several years—an issue that when I ran for office I remember I called the ''Heroes Health Card'' because I thought it was important, no matter where you were as a veteran, you should be able to go and access health care all throughout Alaska. My State is a very rural State, very vast in its size, and where people are and where they live. It is not easy to describe until you see it or are there.

Just for example, here in Anchorage, flying up here to Barrow is 700 miles, a long distance. But if you lived in Barrow, and you were a veteran, you could not get health care there. A VA facility does not exist. You would have to come down here to Anchorage, and that is just for a clinic, because we do not have a VA hospital in Alaska. So then if you need hospital services, you would have to go to Seattle—long distances.

So for several years we have worked on this issue. I continue to push. I brought General Shinseki out to Alaska, to rural Alaska, to show him the impact on veterans who live in rural Alaska. But yet across the street medical services provided by Indian Health Services through our Native health clinics were being delivered by our tribes—incredible health care. But veterans could not utilize it.

So I tried to show him that the care there is incredible, high quality. We need to be able to access this. It is all paid with Federal dollars so why not figure out how to access it. Why not figure out how to maximize our public resources for the betterment of not only our Alaska Natives but also our veterans in Alaska? So we worked on an idea where today we have now agreements with 26-plus tribes. All of these black dots on this map show all the new areas that veterans can access health care if they want.

This is another choice. It is not a requirement, but if they want to stay in their region, stay close to their homes, be part of their own health care system there, they can and the VA will reimburse them, reimburse the clinic so it is no money out-of-pocket for the Indian Health Service or tribes that deliver health care.

For example, in Nome I was very proud when we debated a big issue a few years ago, trying to figure out how to deal with the stimulus bill and how to bring economic revival to our economy. One of those in that bill I voted for brought a new hospital to Nome, AK, run by a tribe—a $170 million hospital, but again 800 veterans in Nome, AK, could not access that hospital. They still had to fly to Anchorage or Seattle.

But now those 800 veterans, Native or non-Native, can access that hospital, get care, and end up staying closer to home. All throughout Alaska now people can access Indian Health Services run by our tribes and delivering incredible services.

Along with that, in Anchorage, we have a federally qualified health center that now also allows access for our veterans. Again, the bill we passed, the veterans access reform bill, took some of these examples we have been doing in Alaska and showing great success—not perfect but improving.

To give an example of this next item—and these numbers fluctuate a little bit, but I want to give a general understanding of where we were and where we are. Before we had all of this integrated within the Indian tribal system—the Alaska tribal system delivering health care—it used to be 1,000 people, almost 1,000 people on the waiting list; today, a few dozen. This changes, this fluctuates, don't get me wrong. So when people call me and say it is not 10, it is 50 or 5, it does fluctuate, but it is no longer the 1,000.

In the waiting period, in the audit that was just done, as we all know in the 140 facilities they audited throughout the country, we, Alaska, our VA, was tied for first in the best response in regard to appointments on the waiting list. Because that was the big debate, how to improve the number of people who are on the waiting list because it is appalling—appalling—what has been happening in Arizona and other places. I have seen the list now through this audit, in some cases 2,000, in some cases 3,000 on the waiting list, waiting for care.

The bill we passed yesterday will help improve that, and the numbers for Alaska show we have an example, not perfect but yet improving significantly the care for our veterans.

No. 1, appointments, appointments scheduled within 30 days or less.

When we look at a couple of other pieces, for example, mental health, which is a new issue, growing significantly, new patient mental health average wait time in Alaska is in the top 6 percent. Again, it is a great record for us, but we would love to be No. 1 in that category, to be frank, and we are going to continue to strive to do that, but the way we have improved the system was to make sure we had more opportunities to access.

The bill we passed yesterday, again, takes some of the great things we are doing in Alaska to show access. I think this will enhance the capacity for veterans all around the State.

This is something that, again, when I campaigned on the Heroes Health Card, I believed we had this resource we could maximize, that we could move forward on, that we could make a difference for our veterans, and we are seeing it. When we look at this issue 1 year from now, we hope the model we have laid out in Alaska is not only in Alaska but across the country.

I will say we need to also keep track, because when you deliver health care through our Indian Health Service Program—in our case the tribes of Alaska or through our federally qualified clinics—they can provide the health care per patient at a cheaper rate, and no disrespect to the private doctors who are out there whom we do contract with, the VA does. They are more expensive because they work in a different model, a different business model. That is understandable. But this is a more cost-effective way.

Hopefully, by passing the bill we don't just say we passed the bill and we are done, but 6 months from now or 1 year from now we review the cost of delivering this health care to make sure we are getting the most cost benefit but also delivering quality care to our veterans, no matter where they live.

As a matter of fact, 25 percent of veterans live in rural America. That means we have to make sure our federally qualified clinics have the right resources they need so that when a veteran walks in that door, they can get the care.

I will say in the Anchorage ones—again, for people who don't know Alaska—the Federal clinics there, the one Anchorage neighborhood health center—when someone is enrolled as a veteran to utilize that facility for their primary care appointment, it is almost same day, in most cases almost same-day service—incredible. It is the same thing with our Southcentral facility health services. These are incredible clinics run by Alaska Native tribes in the Southcentral region. Again, same thing—same-day service if you are on the list. We want to make sure it is clear that once someone is on the list, they can get pretty good service, very direct service.

Let me put that aside a minute and give a general comment about veterans and veterans services we need. Again, I am going to leave this up so people see it, but the veterans access reform bill was just another step for us to improve the services to veterans. This is just one of many things.

One thing we did do on health care, the President and other Members remember when we had the shutdown, government services all stopped except VA health care, because when I first got here, there was a bill I cosponsored that gave advance appropriations.

Why were advance appropriations important? So when government shutdowns occur, health care still gets delivered for our veterans. They shouldn't be subject to the politics of this place, and we made sure of that.

But to be frank, we still have more work to do. I hear Members come down and start talking about disability claims, which still is a challenge for us. We still have a lot of work in this area to make sure we increase the capacity.

I know as an appropriator we put more money into this system so we can have more capacity to shorten the time of disability claims and make sure we get these done in a fast manner.

But we have to keep in mind, if we don't have advanced appropriations on that side of the equation, the benefits

side of the VA, and there is a government shutdown, guess what happens: GI benefits stop, disability payment claims may not be processed in a timely manner, other benefits that individuals receive as a veteran get stopped.

There is a bill pending, which I am very proud to be one of the prime sponsors of with the Republicans, both the House and the Senate, is a bipartisan bill. Every single veterans group supports it. It is important to improve the delivery system of the benefits side.

The health care side, we did some work yesterday. We have been doing work in Alaska for the last few years. Now we need to work on the benefits side.

There are many different bills out there, and a long list, working on homelessness that we need to keep focused on and making sure our benefits for our GI bill continue to move forward, helping our veterans. But I give you examples of a couple of people, and I want to speak about these case stories and then I will end. It is important to remind people of the work we did yesterday, the work we have been doing for years in Alaska, the results we are getting.

This example is now woven into the veterans access reform bill we passed yesterday—and Alaska is a great example—but here are a couple of cases in Anchorage I received recently.

One Anchorage veteran was in touch with my office and had been trying to get help from the VA since 1995 for an undiagnosed condition related to jet fuel exposure. Last week my office was able to get him an appointment immediately in order to get him service and have this looked at. He called to thank us. He is getting care and the appointments he needs and he appreciates this.

I will say it is the job for our offices—all of our offices as Members—to do everything we can for veterans. But we want to make sure this veteran—when he walks into that clinic or facility, doesn't have to wait this long or be in these situations.

Another veteran in Soldotna, with a back condition, about 150 miles away from Anchorage, which again is where we had the clinic for the VA—about a 3-hour drive in the mountains—needed to be seen closer to home. Again our office helped arrange it so he could get service right there, so he can get service closer to home.

It is important we look at these, and I see these examples all the time that we are working on every single day. I run into veterans all across Alaska who thank us for the work we do to make sure they have the access and capacity to get their benefits or their health care.

I am going to end by saying that there is no better job here than working with the veterans. It is something I enjoy—77,000 veterans in Alaska, the highest per capita in the Nation. Every day I run into a veteran who may have an issue or is just thanking us for the work or thanking this country for the service—what they get and the benefits they receive.

Yesterday was an example of what the Senate can do with veterans, come together unified, negotiate but never forget our principal job is to take care of the American people the best we can in the services we should render, and in this case it is for our veterans.

Again, Alaska is an incredible example—not perfect, let me be clear about that, and the numbers fluctuate, but at the end of the day the trend lines are the right trend lines. They are moving in the right way.

The bill we passed yesterday had some aspects of what we are doing in Alaska. It makes me proud to say Alaskan veterans should be proud that we are doing not only the best we can, but we are using our examples to help veterans all across this country, and I think that is a great statement.

We have more work to do. It is an honor to be here and explain once again what we are doing in Alaska and also yesterday being able to vote on that piece of legislation.

I know the House bill is very close to ours and we will have a compromise bill and veterans will get better care tomorrow than they are getting today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE MARKUP

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I am on the Senate floor, but I should have had the opportunity today to be at an Appropriations Committee meeting.

We were scheduled this morning to mark up—that means to consider and vote on—the labor, health and human services bill for the next fiscal year. The labor, health and human services bill is one of the most important pieces of legislation we have.

It is the bill that spells out the priorities of the American people as worked out by their elected officials on everything from National Institutes of Health to Pell Grants for college students.

Passing an appropriations bill is an appropriate and important check on executive spending. It is one of our most important constitutional responsibilities. It is one we haven't been exercising very well over the last 4 years. Even though the Appropriations Committee has approved most of the bills to go to the floor, the majority leader has not brought most of the bills to the floor for our consideration.

In 2 of the last 4 years we considered zero appropriations bills on the floor. One of those years we considered one and another year we considered five.

I wasn't at the committee meeting this morning because our markup was indefinitely postponed. I asked why, and I couldn't get a clear answer, but apparently it was because some Senators don't want to vote on difficult or tough amendments.

I have repeated a certain line a lot in the past couple of years. I am from Tennessee, so I have said that being in the Senate and not being allowed to vote on amendments is like being asked to join the Grand Ole Opry and not being allowed to sing. That is what we do. I mean, this body, described as the one authentic piece of genius in the constitutional system of the United States, was created to have 100 men and women who come to the Senate and who have the opportunity to have extended debate on important issues until we come to a consensus. Sometimes we do that in a terrific way.

Even recently we have done that in important ways; for example, on the student loan agreement that we reached last year which cut nearly in half interest rates on all undergraduate loans, which are 85 percent of student loans. That was the result of an extended debate, working with the Republican House and a Democratic President. The government worked the way it was supposed to.

Coming to the Senate floor and having a say, offering a bill, offering amendments, and having a vote is the job of Senators. It is not so important that it is my say or my vote, it is the fact that this is what I was hired to do by my constituents, each one of us was. So we have a right to have our say on the issues—whether it is Iran, student loans, Ukraine, or health care. It is what we are expected to do. So I have objected to the fact that we have fallen into a pattern in this body of not having amendments. Senator BARRASSO of Wyoming has actually counted the number of rollcall votes on amendments since last July. He has discovered that Republicans offered only nine amendments that actually had a rollcall vote in that entire period of time. Then he counted what the Democrats have offered. Our friends on the other side of the aisle have offered more than 600 amendments, and they have only had 7 rollcall votes.

But today we have reached a new level of obstruction because it seems that our friends in the Democratic majority are moving the gag rule—which has existed on the floor of the Senate—from the Senate floor to the committee room. They have said we are going to indefinitely postpone a markup of a bill from one of the most important subcommittees in the Senate to decide how to spend more than a hundred billion dollars, apparently, because some Senators don't want to vote on tough amendments.

These aren't extraneous amendments. These aren't political exercises. These are relevant amendments critical to the process of setting spending priorities, and well within the scope of the bill.

So I have no alternative but to bring my tough amendments—the amendments that I planned to offer this morning at the markup—to the Senate floor, at least to talk about them in the hope that soon I will have a chance to offer them in the committee.

I am going to talk about four amendments I had planned to offer this morning—important, relevant amendments, part of what we are supposed to do. Senators shouldn't be afraid to vote on them. If so, we shouldn't be here, because that is what we do.

Amendment No. 1. My first amendment would reverse the trend toward a national school board for elementary and secondary education by protecting a State's control over its academic standards and tests.

My amendment does this by prohibiting the U.S. Department of Education—where I used to be the Secretary—from exercising any influence over the academic standards States use to define what students should know and be able to do, as well as the test States use to determine whether students have met those standards.

It also prohibits the Department from requiring or incentivizing States to adopt common standards and tests as a condition of an award of a Federal grant or a contract, or by providing additional points or a preference in a competitive grant program, or as a condition of approval for waivers of requirements under No Child Left Behind or any Federal law.

In other words, this amendment directs the Federal Government to keep its sticky fingers off State standards and not to interfere with the hard work States are doing to raise expectations for our students.

This is not a new issue. In 1992, 22 years ago, I was the U.S. Secretary of Education for President George H.W. Bush—who celebrated his 90th birthday today by jumping out of an airplane once again—a remarkable event. Happy birthday, President Bush. Democrats in Congress wrote an education bill in 1992 that would have set Federal standards not only for academic content but also for how that content should be delivered to students.

As Education Secretary, I wrote a memo to the President. I advised him to veto the bill if it came to his desk, because, I said then, it:

> . . . creates at least the beginnings of a national school board that could make day-to-day school decisions on curriculum, discipline, teacher training, textbooks, and classroom materials. . . . A federal recipe dictating how to operate a local school board does not make schools better.

I wrote this to President Bush in 1992. The President told the Congress he would veto the bill if it reached his desk. Fortunately, it never did.

The amendment that I would like to have offered this morning should not be necessary because Federal law already includes a number of specific limitations on the Federal Government's involvement in education standards and curriculum.

For example, section 9527 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act prohibits any employee of the Federal Government from mandating, directing or controlling a State, local school district or school's curriculum, program of instruction or allocation of State and local resources.

The Department of Education is prohibited from using any funding, says the law, to endorse, approve or sanction any curriculum of instruction used in the elementary or secondary school. That is the law today.

Furthermore, the law today prohibits requiring any State to have academic content or student academic achievement standards approved by the Federal Government in order to receive funding under the law, with the exception of the requirement that States must demonstrate that they have adopted challenging standards in their title I plan.

By including these prohibitions Congress has made it clear that it does not want a national school board—that primary responsibility for decisions relating to educating students rest with States and local communities, teachers, and parents.

But this administration has used the combination of No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, and waivers from No Child Left Behind to in effect convert itself into a national school board, making decisions that States and local communities ought to make for themselves—particularly decisions about standards and tests.

Under Race to the Top, the Department gave additional points to States which participated in the development of and adopted the Common Core standards, using the prospect of receiving Federal funds to coerce States into joining the Common Core.

Now, the Department might say it didn't write the words ''Common Core'' into their grant application, but Common Core then was the only game in town that could meet the requirements for those points.

More recently, the administration has used its waiver authority under No Child Left Behind to impose on States new requirements about standards that are not contemplated in and, I believe, prohibited by Federal law. So this amendment would strictly prohibit that overreach.

My second amendment would avoid the creation of a taxpayer-funded popularity contest by preventing the Department of Education from developing a rating system for our Nation's 6,000 colleges and universities.

So my first amendment would prevent the Secretary from becoming chairman of a national school board, and my second amendment would prevent the Secretary from claiming the role of national czar of higher education. It is a simple amendment to end what I see as a misguided errand initiated by the President and underway at the Department of Education. That is the rating of our colleges and universities by the Federal Government.

This amendment would prohibit the Department of Education from using any Federal funding to develop, refine, publish or implement a college rating system. In August of 2013, President Obama directed the Department of Education to rate each of our Nation's more than 6,000 colleges and universities based on their affordability and outcomes such as graduation rates and earnings. I am all for ensuring that parents and students have the information they need to make good college choices, but picking winners and losers with a rating system is not an appropriate role for the Federal Government in Washington, DC. Here is what an expert in education policy at the Brookings Institution—not exactly a hotbed of rightwing propaganda—had to say:

> There is a clear case to be made for the federal government using its authority to gather data like these for postsecondary institutions that receive taxpayer funding, but little precedent for the government producing ratings.

The Brookings scholar goes on to say:

> The Securities and Exchange Commission regulates stocks and bonds, but leaves it to private organizations to rate them. The Department of Transportation sets standards for the calculation of cars' gas mileage, but it doesn't opine on whether a Ford is better than a Toyota. The Food and Drug Administration decides which pharmaceuticals can be sold in the U.S., but it does not say whether Advil is better for a headache than Tylenol.

In other words, this is not the job of the Federal Government.

We don't need the Federal Government making these judgments for 22 million college students. What we need is the information so Americans can make these judgments for ourselves.

I also have serious practical concerns about the Department's ability even to begin this effort. I believe it will fall on its face when they try to write it. We already know the Department is struggling. They have had to delay the release of the draft ratings system from the spring to sometime in the fall. If they ever do move forward, I have little confidence in their ability to get it right.

The Federal Government simply can't develop ratings that account for the diversity of our higher education system. We have 6,000 institutions of higher education of all kinds Nashville's auto diesel college, Notre Dame, Randolph-Macon, Yeshiva, Berea College, Dyersburg Community College, Harvard. All of these are different. We need information. We don't need the government issuing ratings.

My third amendment would rein in the Obama administration's out-of-control National Labor Relations Board by stopping it from requiring employers to give labor unions their employees' personal email addresses and cell phone numbers and from forcing employers to let employees use employer-owned and operated email systems to campaign for a union.

Since 1966 the NLRB has required employers to provide a union with a list of names and home addresses of employees eligible to vote in a union representation election. This is called an Excelsior List.

In February of this year, the NLRB reproposed expanding the Excelsior List in its ambush elections proposed rule. Now, ambush elections are another Obama administration initiative which would shorten the time from the union's request to call an election to when the election is held to as little as 10 days.

But here is the NLRB's Excelsior List proposal: It would require employers to include voter-eligible employees' personal telephone numbers, email addresses, work locations, shift times, and job classifications on the Excelsior List. They rejected a suggestion I made that at least an employee ought to be able to opt out of sharing this information.

We have had many examples of unions violating people's privacy and even harassing them.

For example, in 2010, agents of Communications Workers of America Local 1103 in Connecticut used personal information they obtained about one woman who did not support the union to sign her up for hundreds of unsolicited and unwanted magazines and consumer products.

This NLRB-proposed rule has a lot of opposition. Senator GRAHAM was intending this morning to offer in our markup a similar amendment that would prevent funds from going to implement any of the so-called ambush election rule which this is a part of.

As I have said before, the NLRB has become far too politicized under recent administrations. It didn't start with the Obama administration, but it has gotten worse with this administration, as it has moved toward the side of union advocacy with such things as ambush elections and micro-unions and undermining State right-to-work laws.

The National Labor Relations Board should be an umpire rather than an advocate.

The fourth amendment I would have offered this morning—had our subcommittee markup proceeded as it had been scheduled, and had it not been postponed apparently because some Senators didn't want to take ''tough votes''—would simply require the Obama administration to be straightforward with the public about the Affordable Care Act by reporting basic facts on the Federally-run insurance exchange, which is running the exchange for 36 States—facts such as the number of people signed up and making premium payments.

I introduced similar legislation last year. The House of Representatives passed that legislation in January by a bipartisan vote of 259 to 154. A total of 33 House Democrats voted for it. It is very simple, noncontroversial, and shouldn't be considered tough.

It would simply require the Obama administration to provide weekly reports during open enrollment—which now runs from November to February—reports to Congress, to States, and to the public about the Federal exchange, including such easily tracked data as the number of individuals who have visited the site, the number who have successfully enrolled, their zip codes, the level of coverage they have obtained, and also at least monthly a list of the navigators and the brokers operating in each State. This is important especially to serve disadvantaged Americans.

This isn't complicated. This is the Internet age. Even before the Internet age, McDonald's could tell us how many hamburgers it made each day, and RCA could tell us how many Elvis Presley albums it had left on their shelves.

In May Politico reported the administration stopped releasing the barebones reports it had been providing the public every month. This is troubling.

Many Americans can continue to sign up for coverage through special enrollment periods, but we won't know how many Americans have continued paying their premiums after the first month of coverage. We will have no way of knowing the final number of confirmed enrollments.

So these are the four amendments I had expected I would be offering and debating today in the Senate Appropriations Committee. Instead, I am here late in the afternoon on the Senate floor because some Senators must be more worried about their reelection campaigns than about the process of governing and setting priorities.

If we are not willing to do what we are elected to do—no one is making any of us be here.

I hope the markup we had planned today will be rescheduled. I plan to offer these amendments then. I hope they will be voted on by the committee, and I hope I will have the opportunity to represent the people of Tennessee who have sent me here to represent their views.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

STUDENT LOAN DEBT

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, for the first time in our Nation's history the total amount of student loan debt has exceeded the total amount of credit card debt. This very real problem weighs heavily on families in my home State of New Mexico.

Last year Congress narrowly stopped the student loan interest rate hike from going into effect—a rate hike that would have doubled student loan interest rates. As a result, undergraduate students borrowing this year are able to take advantage of reasonable student loan rates. But students who borrowed before this agreement could be paying rates as high as 9 percent. Those who pursued an education to get ahead are literally starting out from behind.

Student loan debt is proving to be a debilitating impediment to achieving the American dream.

Recently, I met a working mother in southern New Mexico who told me about her family's struggle to raise their children while paying her husband's student loans from a degree he had earned more than two decades ago.

Another woman shared her story of going back to school to become a teacher. She is a single mom who wanted to make a better life for herself and her daughter. She got a degree but not without acquiring more than $40,000 in student loan debt. She worries that she will be paying her loans off well into retirement. As a parent, she worries for her daughter who will be entering college and fears that she has no choice but to take out loans to pay for her education.

Unfortunately, these stories are all too common today. Outstanding student loan debt in America totals more than $1.2 trillion—trillion with a ''t.'' In New Mexico, students are graduating with an average of nearly $18,000 in debt.

Outstanding balances not only affect families working to pay those loans, it affects the entire American economy as well. Because of this debt, many are unable to buy a home, to start a business, to save for retirement or even start a family. In today's economy we should be eliminating the obstacles that keep Americans from earning the education they need to get ahead. College should not be a luxury; it should be an opportunity all Americans can at least afford to pursue.

The student loan refinancing legislation that was on the floor this week would have helped address this problem of skyrocketing student loan debt by allowing graduates to refinance and put more money into productive use and strengthen our economy as a whole. However, our colleagues across the aisle decided to filibuster this legislation. They don't seem to understand that crushing student loan debt is a serious issue that forces many Americans to put their American dreams on hold.

Higher education is one of the most important investments any person can make in their own future. From my perspective, making college affordable is an investment in America's future. Republicans should know this and even recently helped to do something about it. Just last year Democrats and Republicans came together in Congress to prevent a student loan interest rate hike that would have doubled student loan rates. This was a great money-saving piece of news for students taking out new loans. However, there are still approximately 134,000 New Mexicans—just in my small State of 2 million people, there are 134,000 New Mexicans who would benefit from passing this newest legislation which would allow them to access those same student loan rates.

We had an opportunity to come together to address skyrocketing student loan debt, and instead our colleagues on the other side of the aisle chose to leave families, students, and really the American economy behind.

A college education opens the doors of opportunity. It provides an avenue into the middle class for families. College graduates are nearly twice as likely to find work as those with only a high school diploma, and they will earn nearly $1 million more over the course of a lifetime.

We should be willing to give our aspiring college students a fair shot. Senate Republicans should reconsider their priorities and allow us to at least debate this student loan refinancing legislation, to end their filibuster so that we can move forward, so that we can provide immediate relief to student loan borrowers and put that money to work in growing the American economy.

I would yield back the rest of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

TAX EXTENDERS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Just last week the majority leader gave his view that tax extenders as an issue is dead in the Senate until the lameduck session. I presume that means we will have a lameduck session. The majority leader blames this on Republicans, the minority in the Senate, but as you all know, the majority leader is uniquely situated under our Senate rules to determine what legislation will be considered on the Senate floor.

The majority leader's excuse that was given for not proceeding to extenders before a lameduck session is that we Republicans are seeking to offer amendments unrelated to tax extenders. Of course, this excuse simply does not fly. Even an introductory report on Senate procedure from the Congressional Research Service will tell all Senators that there is no ''standing rule or general requirement that the amendments offered by Senators on the floor must be germane or relevant to the bill being considered.''

The CRS report states:

> The right to offer non-germane amendments is extraordinarily important because it permits Senators to present issues to the Senate for debate and decision without regard to the judgments of the Senate's committees or the scheduling decisions and preferences of its majority leader.

The majority leader has sought to circumvent the open amendment process by blocking amendments by filling the amendment tree. This allows the majority leader to effectively decide what, if any, amendments ought to receive consideration here on the Senate floor. Essentially, this allows the majority leader to impose his own will at the expense of the will of the Senate as a whole. Another way to say it: The majority leader decides what 99 other Senators can offer as amendments.

The real reason the majority leader does not want to bring extenders back is that he is concerned that Members of his party might have to take tough votes in an election year. Of course, in a parliamentary system, this is a poor excuse for putting off considering legislation that has broad bipartisan support, and this extenders bill does have broad bipartisan support. This approach puts politics before constituents.

Delaying tax extenders legislation until the lameduck session has real consequences for our constituents. We know from previous years what has happened when tax legislation is not passed in a satisfactory amount of time. Late action on tax extenders poses significant tax administration burdens that cause headaches and hardships for millions of taxpayers. When we fail to act in a timely manner, tax forms are not ready and refunds are delayed. We owe it to our constituents to see to it that these added complications are not a factor this year. Tax season is already unpleasant enough without our adding to it by failing to do our job in a timely fashion.

While many view tax extenders as benefiting businesses, the truth is the delay of widely used individual tax provisions will impact millions of taxpayers. I will give a few examples.

Three of the most widely used tax provisions are the State and local sales tax deduction, claimed by over 11 million returns in the latest year for which we have statistics—2011; the above-the-line deduction for teachers' expenses, claimed on over 3.8 million tax returns in that year, 2011; and the college tuition deduction, which was claimed on about 2 million tax returns. These 3 provisions alone give us over 16 million reasons—because of 16 million taxpayers being affected—to act now to ensure that we don't subject these taxpayers to needless delays and complications this coming filing season.

These 16 million tax filers should provide more than enough reason for not putting off tax extender legislation until the lameduck, but if you are in need of another reason, think of the small businesses that are anxiously looking on and wondering what we are going to do about the expiration of the enhanced expensing rules under section 179. I am sure I am not the only one hearing from small business owners and from farmers who are putting off purchasing that new truck or tractor because they do not know the fate of this provision. This is bad for economic growth, bad for jobs.

Then there is the lapse in the renewable energy incentives that support millions of jobs not only in my State of Iowa but in many other States across our country. The expiration of these provisions has already hampered the strides made toward a viable, self-sustainable renewable energy and fuel sector. Delaying extension of these important provisions is hurting the economy and costing jobs.

A biofuels organization found that nearly 80 percent of the U.S. biodiesel producers have scaled back production this year. Sixty-six percent of the biodiesel producers have reduced their workforce and anticipate cutting jobs. This is a direct result of the policy uncertainties here in Washington, DC, including the expiration of the biodiesel tax incentive.

The only thing standing in the way of passing the extenders package here in the Senate is decisions made by the majority leader and getting an agreement on a handful of reasonable amendments.

The delay in passing the extenders package is harming a whole range of renewable energy efforts. A letter delivered to every Senator from about 200 clean energy businesses urged quick passage of the bill.

The letter stated:

> The lack of timely action to extend these provisions injects instability and uncertainty into the economy and weakens confidence in the employment marketplace. Moreover, the extension of the expired provisions should not be delayed until the end of the year since companies are making decisions right now related to taxes that will have an immediate impact on the economy.

I would encourage all of those who support this bill to urge the majority leader to bring it back and allow for a fair amendment process. Could the Senate majority leader possibly argue that it is more important to protect Senators from tough votes than to move forward on clean energy and job creation? For such an important piece of legislation, there is no legitimate reason for the majority leader to refuse to bring extenders to the floor for an open and honest debate.

It has been quite a while since we have had a relatively open amendment process on major tax legislation. Because of this, many Senators view this bill as their one shot at getting tax priorities they have considered on the floor. There is no reason that an agreement cannot be reached that will provide opportunities to Members on both sides of the aisle to offer those amendments. As a former chairman and ranking member of the Finance Committee, this Senator knows this can be difficult, but it is more than doable.

I remember when Senator Baucus and I regularly worked out an amendment process on tax bills. Usually this would consist of alternating votes on a block of 10 or so Democratic and Republican amendments so each side was treated fairly. A tax bill that comes to my mind as an illustration of this process is a bill entitled Jumpstart Our Business Strength Act or, as we use the acronym, JOBS.

Like the extenders package, the JOBS Act had broad bipartisan support and ultimately passed the Senate 92 to 5. Though it had bipartisan support, there was no shortage of Members from the other side seeking to offer their amendments. Many of these amendments were in no way related to tax, although the JOBS Act was a tax bill.

As the bill's chief sponsor and floor manager, I had hoped to keep amendments somewhat relevant—at least related to tax. However, the then Democratic minority pushed for votes on everything from overtime laws to trade

adjustment assistance to unemployment insurance.

All of these amendments were political in nature. They were intended to make Republicans take tough votes. At the time, then minority leader—now Majority Leader—REID vigorously defended the right of the minority to get votes on these and other amendments that were entirely nonrelevant and nongermane. We Republicans took those votes because we wanted to get things done. We wanted to get a very important tax bill passed. That is what the American people need right now—new leaders who want to get things done.

Yet today we were told Republicans are unreasonable for even seeking tax amendments to tax legislation. But it is not just Members of the minority who would like to offer amendments. Members on the other side filed nearly as many amendments as Members of the minority, but under the procedure set by the majority leader, even Members of his own party were not able to offer amendments. We could have been debating amendments to an extender bill this week. Instead, we wasted time on other pieces of legislation that were designed to fail, so the other side could score political points.

We were all sent here by our constituents to represent them in the legislative process. So let's legislate, which means debating and offering amendments. A bipartisan bill, such as the tax extenders bill, would be a perfect opportunity to show our constituents our ability to work together and get things done.

I call upon the leadership of the Senate to bring the tax extenders bill back to the floor and to allow for reasonable amendments that permit individual Senators of both parties to have a say in crafting this legislation.

KADZIK NOMINATION

Madam President, I wish to speak about an issue I spoke to earlier this week that I feel is so important I want to remind colleagues of its importance to me and what I think is an important issue for the oversight work of the Senate.

On Monday I explained my opposition to the nomination of Peter Kadzik to be the Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs at the Justice Department.

In my view, the nominee's record demonstrates contempt for congressional oversight. He has made a habit of providing evasive, nonresponsive, and plainly insufficient answers to congressional inquiries over the years. That practice alone disqualifies him from heading up the Legislative Affairs Office. That office has had a chronic problem with credibility in recent years—going back and forth with Mr. Kadzik as well.

Specifically, I am referring to the false denials regarding Operation Fast and Furious, which Mr. Kadzik's predecessor made and eventually had to retract. So it is pretty evident to me that this administration is sending a message to all of us in the Senate by nominating an individual with a track record as abysmal as Mr. Kadzik. That message is this: Expect more of the same. That is quite a message from the self-professed most transparent administration in history which, quite frankly, has not turned out to be so transparent.

But there is a lot more at stake regarding Mr. Kadzik's nomination than restoring credibility to the Legislative Affairs Office—a lot more. As we all know, at the beginning of this year the President boasted that he had ''a pen and a phone'' and that he intended to use it. What he meant, of course, was that he would bypass the legislative process and proceed with aggressive and unilateral executive action.

So in January I called on the Attorney General to disclose the opinions and memoranda from the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, providing the legal justification for this President's unilateral executive action.

Four months later, Mr. Kadzik replied to me in a 1-page response. He said, in short, he would not disclose those legal opinions. But he said if I had additional questions regarding the legality of the President's actions, I should let him know. That was May 20. Well, 11 days later, on Saturday, March 31, we learned that the President had flouted the congressional notification provisions of the National Defense Authorization Act.

This latest example of the administration's flagrant disregard for its legal obligations to submit to congressional oversight has dominated the headlines. I am referring, of course, to the administration's failure to notify Congress of its plan to release the so-called ''Taliban Dream Team'' from Guantanamo last week.

As every Senator knows, the National Defense Authorization Act—a law this President has signed—required the administration to notify key congressional committees at least 30 days before arranging the release of a prisoner from Guantanamo. The law enumerates exactly what that notification needs to address.

Specifically, the administration was legally required to explain to Congress why the release is in the national security interest of our country. The administration was legally required to explain to Congress what action it had undertaken to mitigate the risk of reengagement of such terrorists by re-releasing the detainees.

The law requires these explanations and other disclosures because the Members of this body have an independent responsibility to ensure the national security of the United States. And, of course, we take this responsibility seriously. Each one of us swore an oath to protect and defend the Constitution—the same oath that the President took. Unfortunately, this administration has locked us out of the process that the National Defense Authorization Act requires. I know I need to be more clear for most of you.

The history of section 1035 and the negotiations surrounding it make it plain that Congress included those provisions because it wanted to avoid release of prisoners like this one. So congressional opposition should not exactly come as a surprise to this administration.

This administration broke not only the law but also the promise it made in 2013 when White House Press Secretary Jay Carney promised that the administration ''would not make any decisions about the transfer of any detainees without consulting with Congress and without doing so in accordance with U.S. law.'' The administration knows it broke the law. Certain Senators on our Select Committee on Intelligence have even reportedly received apologies from the administration officials for not notifying them.

I don't think apologies are enough, and I don't think this administration takes seriously its legal obligation to consult with us before acting. Take the recent statement made by the Deputy White House Press Secretary on June 9. He said that ''this administration continues to be committed to coordinating with our partners in Congress.'' But the law doesn't require mere ''coordination.'' Coordination under the law is not good enough.

The President is required by law to meet certain obligations, and he recklessly ignores those obligations. The President is required by the Constitution—a document the President claims to know a lot about because he was a constitutional law professor—to ''take care that the laws be faithfully executed.'' Yet we all know by now that this President picks and chooses which laws to enforce.

This is not how our constitutional system is designed. The President is not in power to ignore the law. So ''coordination,'' as the Deputy Press Secretary said, is not good enough. We need compliance with the law. This administration needs to commit—on the record—that going forward it intends to comply with the National Defense Authorization Act so that another one of these stealth detainee releases never happens again.

With the exception of the majority leader, this administration has kept every Member of the Senate and the House in the dark about releasing five of the most dangerous terrorists we were holding at Guantanamo. Even the majority leader was not given the 30-day notice the law requires. So it is clear that not a single Senator was notified in compliance with the law prior to the release of the Taliban Five. It is likewise clear that not a single Senator received an explanation regarding national security and risk mitigation that the law requires in advance of releases.

But the failure to notify us in Congress in accordance with the law does

not relieve this administration of its responsibility to justify the releases. There is a lot about this ordeal that is extremely concerning. Part of what is so troublesome is that this administration can't even seem to get its story straight regarding why it ignored the law. The justifications the administration has offered publicly thus far have shifted dramatically from one day to the next day.

I will show how the shift has taken place and the justifications that have been presented to the public.

Shortly, after the release of the Taliban Five on June 1, the administration sent—of all people—National Security Advisor Susan Rice back to the Sunday talk shows—in Benghazi fashion—to explain the administration's rationale.

Adviser Rice told CNN that the ''acute urgency'' of an unspecified ''health condition'' that Sergeant Bergdahl was suffering from had forced the President to act without notifying Congress. We haven't heard much publicly about the acute medical emergency since then. In fact, a number of my colleagues have expressed skepticism at what little information the Pentagon has provided publicly regarding Sergeant Bergdahl's physical condition. But since the administration has said it was an emergency because the terrorists had threatened Bergdahl's life, apparently that was the medical emergency.

But now the story has changed. First, on Monday, following the releases, according to press reports, the White House called the chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to apologize for its so-called oversight in failing to consult with Congress. So they meant to inform Congress about the releases but didn't because it was an ''oversight.''

Is that the story now? No. It didn't take long for the story to change. The White House then offered a new explanation.

On Tuesday, the Deputy White House Press Secretary said that the release was ''a secret military mission in which disclosures of the mission could put into jeopardy not just the life of Sergeant Bergdahl but also the lives of the American servicemen who were involved in the mission, so discretion on this matter was important.''

Let's think about the new justification—this one I just quoted—let's think about it for a moment. The White House is saying essentially that disclosure of the operational details concerning the physical transfer of Sergeant Bergdahl could have jeopardized the mission. But the White House's justification is totally beside the point. To my knowledge, no Senator has claimed that the administration had a legal obligation under section 1035 to disclose the specific operational details of the transfer to our relevant committees. Section 1035 doesn't even require that. On the contrary, the law requires the administration to explain its rationale for the release in terms of national security and risk mitigation, not operational details.

So this particular justification is, of course, a colossal red herring, and it wasn't the last of the shifting justifications this administration has offered. Listen to the next one.

The administration claimed it simply ran out of time to notify us. On Tuesday the administration reportedly claimed that it knew only 1 day in advance that the transfer would take place and only an hour in advance about where it would happen. And then on Wednesday Defense Secretary Hagel told the House Armed Services Committee that the administration had only 96 hours from the time the deal was made to actually release Sergeant Bergdahl.

Again, both of these justifications miss the point. It is clear that the negotiations preceding the deal were in motion for months. According to the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, the administration reported that it had been engaged in negotiations with the Taliban since January 2014. So the administration had weeks—maybe even months—to communicate to Congress that it was in active negotiations that might result in the exchange deal in the near future. That, of course, never happened.

But even that wasn't the last of the shifting justifications. On Wednesday Defense Secretary Hagel told the House Armed Services Committee that the administration couldn't notify Congress because of the risk of a leak. Secretary Hagel said that the Qatari Government—which apparently was acting as a middleman in these negotiations with the Taliban—threatened to end all negotiations if details of the deal leaked.

It is pretty obvious that this justification doesn't wash either. Press reports indicate that the administration told Congress that anywhere between 80 to 90 members of the executive branch knew about the release of the Taliban five before it happened. That number includes officials in the State Department, the Department of Homeland Security, the White House, and the Department of Defense. If that many individuals—80 or 90 people in this town—are in the loop, the administration's stated concern about a leak just doesn't make any sense. The White House could keep all of those officials in the loop, but somehow it couldn't pick up the phone and call the chair and vice chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

Frankly, as we have seen over the last few years, when information is leaked to the press, the leak usually originates in the executive branch and more often than not from the White House itself. So it seems pretty clear that the administration is not being candid with us or with the American people about why it broke the law and locked the representatives of the people of the United States out of the process, contrary to what the law says.

So the bottom line is this: The White House ignored a Federal law that the President signed and that the White House Press Secretary promised it would follow. Yet the White House can't even get its story straight regarding why the law was ignored.

It is for these reasons—getting back to the point about the Office of Legal Counsel and Mr. Kadzik's nomination to be head of the Office of Legislative Affairs—it is for these reasons that I wrote to the Attorney General last week and called on the Office of Legal Counsel to release any and all materials concerning the legal justification for the detainees' release that the Department of Justice provided to the administration. It is the Office of Legal Counsel's job to look at every Presidential action and Executive order and decision to see if it complies with the law. And then it is my approach that if some lawyers are telling the President what he can legally do or not do, constitutionally do or not do, according to the Constitution, why shouldn't the American people know about it?

So this all becomes more important with each passing day, as the White House keeps offering new explanations for why it broke the law.

We know the Justice Department provides legal advice on this question to the Defense Department because that is one of the very first things the administration said publicly about the deal. On June 1 Susan Rice told CNN that the Defense Department consulted with the Justice Department before the decision to move forward was made. We need to know about the nature of that consultation. We need to know what legal justification the Department of Justice provided that would permit the administration to ignore its legal duties to notify Congress and to inform us of the reasons for the release. And, importantly, we need to know what specific facts on which the Justice Department based its legal analysis.

In other words, with all of these shifting explanations we have been hearing about the factual basis for the decision, which one of those many was provided to the Justice Department? Did they tell the Justice Department: We don't have time to tell Congress. If so, did they tell them that these negotiations had been ongoing for months, as they appear to have been? Did these executive branch people tell the Justice Department that Sergeant Bergdahl was, as Susan Rice claims, suffering from an acute condition that required the administration to take immediate action? Did the Justice Department take the view that the administration did not have to comply with the law because of the President's powers under article II of the Constitution, notwithstanding the fact that the White House had already promised it would comply or was none of this even considered? Was all of this just an

''oversight,'' as the White House apparently told the chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence or was it that they didn't have to comply because they didn't trust the members of the select committee to keep a secret or should we expect that yet another justification will be forthcoming?

The bottom line is that Susan Rice went on CNN and said the Justice Department was consulted. But we don't know whether there was a written opinion provided by the Office of Legal Counsel and, if there was, what it concluded and what facts that conclusion was based on.

The General Counsel of the Defense Department testified yesterday that the administration had received legal advice from the Office of Legal Counsel in the form of an email chain. The administration needs to provide us with whatever written advice it received before it decided to contravene Federal law.

Given their failure to respond to my previous requests and considering Mr. Kadzik's track record in this regard, I am not optimistic. As I have stated previously, Mr. Kadzik's nomination embodies this administration's philosophy that it is OK to ignore its obligations with respect to congressional oversight—a constitutional responsibility of the legislative branch of government, by the way.

Let me conclude by saying that this nominee's record is emblematic of the administration's sorry record in complying with congressional oversight. And, of course, both have been abysmal.

If this administration is serious about honoring its legal obligations, the Attorney General would direct Mr. Kadzik to disclose the Office of Legal Counsel's legal reason for why the administration was entitled to ignore the law's requirement to notify Congress. No Senator should cast a vote on this nomination before Mr. Kadzik provides that legal reasoning to us.

If not now, when are all Senators—Republican and Democrat alike—going to take a stand against this President's unilateral decision to ignore the Congress and his obligations under law? If not now, when will Members of this body stand together in defense of our legislative prerogatives and assert our rights as part of a coequal branch of government under the Constitution?

In this Senator's view, a vote for this nominee is a vote endorsing this administration's contempt for our oversight authority and will lend support to the deal that released the Taliban five without adhering to the law. As my colleagues know, I will vote against this nominee. I encourage my colleagues to vote against this nominee as well.

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

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

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF SALVADOR MENDOZA, JR., TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 740.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Salvador Mendoza, Jr., of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, there is a cloture motion at the desk and I ask it be reported.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Salvador Mendoza, Jr., of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Christopher A. Coons, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Al Franken, Jon Tester, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Richard J. Durbin, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Benjamin L. Cardin, Bill Nelson, Dianne Feinstein, Elizabeth Warren, Tom Harkin, Mazie K. Hirono.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF STACI MICHELLE YANDLE TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 741.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Staci Michelle Yandle, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, there is a cloture motion at the desk and I ask it be reported.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Staci Michelle Yandle, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin, Elizabeth Warren, Tim Kaine, Richard Blumenthal, Robert P. Menendez, Barbara A. Mikulski, Debbie Stabenow, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Patty Murray, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall, Christopher A. Coons, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF DARRIN P. GAYLES TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF FLORIDA

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 778.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Darrin P. Gayles, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, there is a cloture motion at the desk and I ask it be reported.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Darrin P. Gayles, of Florida, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Florida.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Richard J. Durbin, Elizabeth Warren, Tim Kaine, Richard Blumenthal, Robert P. Menendez, Barbara A. Mikulski, Debbie Stabenow, Christopher Murphy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Patty Murray, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall, Christopher A. Coons, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to proceed to legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF PETER JOSEPH KADZIK TO BE AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

Mr. REID. Madam President, I move to proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 572.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Peter Joseph Kadzik, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, there is a cloture motion at the desk and I ask it be reported.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Peter Joseph Kadzik, of New York, to be an Assistant Attorney General.

Harry Reid, Patrick J. Leahy, Christopher A. Coons, Sheldon Whitehouse, Christopher Murphy, Al Franken, Jon Tester, Richard Blumenthal, Jeff Merkley, Richard J. Durbin, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Benjamin L. Cardin, Bill Nelson, Dianne Feinstein, Elizabeth Warren, Tom Harkin, Mazie K. Hirono.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, is the motion to proceed to H.R. 4660 now pending?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate needs to proceed to legislative session.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session.

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

That motion is now pending.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask that the cloture motion at the desk be reported.

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

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to calendar No. 428, H.R. 4660, an act making appropriations for the Departments of Commerce and Justice, Science, and Related Agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

Harry Reid, Barbara Mikulski, Richard J. Durbin, Elizabeth Warren, Tim Kaine, Richard Blumenthal, Robert P. Menendez, Debbie Stabenow, Christopher Murphy, Patrick J. Leahy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Sherrod Brown, Patty Murray, Tom Harkin, Tom Udall, Christopher A. Coons, Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived.

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, June 16, 2014, at 5:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session, and that notwithstanding rule XXII, the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Executive Calendar Nos. 740, 741, and 778; further, that if cloture is invoked on any of these nominations, on Tuesday, June 17, 2014, at 11 a.m., all postcloture time be expired and the Senate proceed to vote on confirmation of the nominations in the order upon which cloture was invoked; further, that following Senate action on these nominations on Tuesday, the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Calendar No. 572; further, that there be 2 minutes for debate prior to each vote and all rollcall votes after the first vote in each sequence be 10 minutes in length; further, with respect to the nominations in this agreement, that if any nomination is confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. REID. 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. 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.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

RUSSIA

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, of the many global challenges we face, protecting the environment should find support in all corners of the world. Similarly, we should support those who work on behalf of the environment.

Unfortunately, in some countries, environmental activists are threatened and imprisoned. Such is the case in Russia, where, in the shadow of the Olympic Games in Sochi this past winter, Suren Gazaryan and Evgeny Vitishko were ruthlessly harassed by government officials for their investigative work on the large-scale construction of Olympic facilities that caused significant environmental damage to protected lands. Both were convicted in 2012 of damaging a fence in a forest near the city of Krasnodar, a charge they both deny, and sentenced to 3 years in a labor camp, suspended.

Mr. Gazaryan, a recipient of the prestigious 2014 Goldman Prize for grassroots efforts to protect and enhance the environment, has sought political asylum in neighboring Estonia. Evgeny Vitishko, however, was not fortunate enough to escape and is still paying the price for his work. On February 12, a Russian judge, upholding a decision that Mr. Vitishko violated a curfew clause in his parole agreement, ordered him to serve his 3-year prison sentence. Perhaps not coincidentally, this came as he and his organization, Environmental Watch of the North Caucasus, were preparing to release a report on the damaging effects of construction in Sochi.

I want other Senators to know of Mr. Gazaryan and Mr. Vitishko, and hope that calling attention to them and their work might cause the Russian authorities to recognize that their responsibility is to uphold the law and protect the environment on behalf of the Russian people, not to persecute Russian citizens who have the courage to do so themselves.

LOVING v. VIRGINIA ANNIVERSARY

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, on June 12, 1967, during a period of significant political and racial tension in our Nation, the Supreme Court issued a unanimous landmark decision in Loving v. Virginia that overturned laws banning interracial marriage. This decision ushered in a transformative moment in American history. As we approach the first anniversary of another landmark Supreme Court decision in the Windsor case, we should remember the foundational work that was laid when the Supreme Court came together nearly 50 years ago to uphold the civil rights of all Americans to marry the person they love.

In writing for the majority in Loving, Chief Justice Earl Warren declared ''the freedom to marry, or not marry, a person of another race resides with the individual, and cannot be infringed by the State.'' My wife Marcelle and I had been married just 5 years at the time, and on that June day, we were overwhelmed with pride and joy for the many couples affected by this historic decision. Now married for over 50 years, I cannot bear to imagine a world where I would have been prohibited from marrying the person I love because of something beyond my control.

As I reflect on the landmark Loving decision, I am filled with pride for my home State. Throughout history, Vermont has taken a leadership role in America's journey to build a more just society. Vermont was the first State in the Union to outlaw slavery, and Vermonters offered shelter to runaway slaves seeking refuge while in transit to Canada—serving as one of the last stops on the Underground Railroad. Vermont was also the first to adopt universal manhood suffrage, regardless of property ownership.

It is because of this history that it is not surprising that Vermont has been at the forefront of our Nation's march toward marriage equality: Vermont was the first State to provide civil unions back in 2000, and on April 7, 2009, Vermont once again led the Nation by granting marriage equality for the first time through democratically elected officials on a bipartisan basis instead of through the courts.

This is not to say that it was easy. The initial move toward civil unions fomented heated debate among Vermonters and throughout the Nation. But several courageous leaders, such as the late Republican U.S. Senator from Vermont Bob Stafford, showed us the way, and their advocacy for equality was powerfully moving. Like many Vermonters, I listened to advocates, friends, and neighbors who reminded me that love and commitment are values to encourage and not to fear. I continue to be inspired by the inclusive example set by Vermont.

Five years ago Vermont's State Legislature passed the Marriage Equality Act, which provided marriage equality for all Vermonters. Since then, more than 3,700 same-sex couples have married in the State of Vermont, 19 States and the District of Columbia have marriage equality, and the Supreme Court has decided a landmark case on the issue of same-sex marriage.

One year ago this month, the Supreme Court struck down section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage for purposes of Federal law as ''only a legal union between one man and one woman.'' The Court concluded that the law deprived couples of equal liberty as protected by our fifth amendment. All Americans deserve equal justice under the law, and Marcelle and I celebrated this important decision, which honored the Loving decision and pushed the Nation farther on its path toward equality.

In 2007, on the 40th anniversary of the Loving decision, Mildred Loving reflected on her life and weighed in on the issue of marriage equality. She said:

> Surrounded as I am now by wonderful children and grandchildren, not a day goes by that I don't think of Richard and our love, our right to marry, and how much it meant to me to have that freedom to marry the person precious to me, even if others thought he was the 'wrong kind of person' for me to marry. I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry. Government has no business imposing some people's religious beliefs over others. Especially if it denies people's civil rights.
>
> I am still not a political person, but I am proud that Richard's and my name is on a court case that can help reinforce the love, the commitment, the fairness, and the family that so many people, black or white, young or old, gay or straight seek in life. I support the freedom to marry for all. That's what Loving, and loving, are all about.

As chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I have made civil rights a priority of our Committee's agenda and a priority in the Senate. I often hear from those who think that the struggle for civil rights is over—that this issue is one for the history books. If only that were true. If only every American could marry the love of their life and have that union recognized. If only hate groups stopped targeting communities based on their sexual orientation, race, religion, or national origin. If only racial discrimination in voting was a thing of the past, but it is not. We must keep up the fight on our path toward a more perfect union.

This month we celebrate and honor the real love behind both the Loving and Windsor decisions. Their fight to be with the one they loved spans decades, but their lessons stand the test of time. They are the kinds of Supreme Court rulings that future generations will point to when they consider the Supreme Court's most notable decisions. The march toward equality must and will continue until all individuals—regardless of sexual orientation, gender or gender identity, race, ethnicity, religion, or disability—are protected and respected, equally, under our laws.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT L. WILLIAMS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, for several years now I have had the distinct pleasure of knowing Robert L. ''Bob'' Williams. Bob hails from Independence, KY, and is a member of our Nation's Greatest Generation. Like so many in that generation, he answered the call of duty and fought valiantly in the Second World War. I rise today to honor his service to this country.

Early on the morning of June 6, 1941, Bob was among the first Allied paratroopers dropped into Normandy as a part of Operation Overlord, on the historic day of D-day. Several hours later, the largest amphibious assault in the history of war would commence. For the time being, however, Bob and his fellow paratroopers fought behind enemy lines, securing the roads and bridges that were vital to the operation's success. You could say that these men constituted the tip of the sharpest sword this Nation has ever thrust into battle.

The airborne soldiers' mission that day was extremely dangerous—simply making it to the battlefield through the barrage of German anti-aircraft fire was a feat in itself—yet Bob displayed remarkable courage under fire. Upon landing, an enemy machine-gunner placed 12 bullet holes in his baggy pants pockets. Undeterred, Bob continued to fight that day, and for 10 more days until he was seriously wounded on June 16.

Since the war's conclusion, Bob has done his part to keep alive the memory of those who served. On the 50th anniversary of the D-day invasion, he joined 18 fellow veterans in re-creating their parachute jump into Normandy. He has also written a book containing his, and other veterans' stories from the war. Most recently, Bob was honored to be inducted into the Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame in March of this year.

As the Second World War drifts further and further into the past, it becomes increasingly important that we remember the sacrifices made to secure victory. So today, I ask that my U.S. Senate colleagues join me in honoring Robert L. Williams and his service to his country during the great battle to make the world safe for democracy that was World War II.

Mr. President, the Lexington Herald-Leader recently published an article detailing Bob Williams' and other Kentucky World War II veterans' stories

from the war. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Lexington Herald-Leader, June 5, 2014]

VETERANS FROM LEXINGTON, LOUISVILLE AREAS MARK D-DAY ANNIVERSARY THIS WEEKEND

(By Jim Warren)

On D-day morning, 70 years ago Friday, Winchester's Jonah Thomas was an Army combat engineer in one of the first landing craft to hit Omaha Beach.

German shells obliterated the boat almost the instant it touched the sand.

''I didn't see anybody else there when we hit the beach, so maybe they didn't have anybody else to shoot at,'' Thomas recalled. ''They blew that boat to smithereens.''

A soldier in front of Thomas was struck in the face. Thomas was covered with his blood.

''I would have been hit if he hadn't been there,'' Thomas said. ''There were 44 men crammed in that boat, and hardly anybody survived.''

Thomas, now 89, was one of the few who did.

He'll be among about 80 veterans from the Lexington and Louisville areas who are flying to Washington early Friday, the 70th anniversary of D-day. They'll visit the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Iwo Jima Monument, and the National World War II Memorial before returning Friday evening. A public welcome is planned at Blue Grass Airport when they return.

D-day, June 6, 1944, was when roughly 160,000 American, British and other Allied troops stormed into Nazi-held France along a 50-mile stretch of beaches in Normandy.

It was one of history's biggest military operations. More than 5,000 ships and 11,000 planes supported the landings, which launched the final campaigns that ended World War II in Europe in May 1945.

Within five days after D-day, more than 300,000 soldiers, 54,000 vehicles and 104,000 tons of supplies had come ashore.

But for the first few hours, the D-day invaders struggled just to survive a wave of bullets and shells from German guns. About 12,000 Allied soldiers were killed, wounded or captured, including roughly 6,000 Americans.

London's Owen Edwards, then 18, was a Navy coxswain, steering one of the landing boats headed for Omaha. His job—delivering a 20-man medical team to the beach—looked impossible.

''Eighty-eight millimeter shells were hitting so close they were throwing water into the boat,'' Edwards remembers. ''It was so intense, that I finally turned the boat toward another part of the beach where the shelling wasn't as heavy. I probably wouldn't have made it if I hadn't done that.''

Edwards, now 88, is another veteran who'll be making the trip to Washington Friday. He eventually landed the medical team safely on Omaha, one of two runs he made to the beach that day.

''It was complete chaos,'' Thomas said. ''There were bodies everywhere, wrecked equipment, tanks that never made it, soldiers that drowned going in. It's a miracle that we took that beach.''

Thomas visited Omaha Beach in 1993, and stood on the spot where he landed his boat.

''The beach was so quiet and peaceful then, but I could visualize what it was like on June 6, 1944,'' he said. ''It was pretty emotional.''

The French invited Robert L. Williams to visit Normandy for the 70th D-day anniversary. But Williams, 91, decided to stay home in Kenton County.

''I'm getting too old for nine hours on an airplane,'' he said. ''Besides, I've been there and done that.''

Williams, a 101st Airborne Division paratrooper, had one of D-day's most dangerous jobs. He was among about 13,000 Allied paratroopers who parachuted into Normandy to seize and hold strategic roads and bridges before the invasion.

Williams survived days of heavy fighting in Normandy, but was seriously wounded on June 16, 1944.

Fifty years later, he helped organize a recreation of the original parachute jump for the 50th D-day anniversary on June 6, 1994. Williams and 18 other original D-day paratroopers parachuted into Normandy from a World War II era C–47.

''The government said, 'There's no way we're going to let you do that, you're all too old,' '' Williams recalls. ''We did it anyway.''

He says the 1994 jump was one of the most satisfying things he's ever done.

''People were beginning to forget about World War II back then,'' Williams said. ''I think that jump kind of brought it all back. To me, it was more exciting than D-day.''

The boat carrying Lexington infantryman John A. Palumbo was blown out of the water 100 yards off Omaha Beach on D-day. It was his first taste of combat.

Palumbo splashed shore. But a bullet destroyed his BAR light machine gun and left shrapnel in his right arm.

Eventually, he hooked up with some more experienced soldiers, helped them get through a minefield, and found cover on a bluff behind the beach. He never fired a shot on D-day, but saw much heavy fighting later.

Palumbo, now 93, landed on a sector of Omaha Beach code-named ''Easy Red.''

''There was nothing easy about what we went through there,'' he recalls. ''No one on that beach was rear-echelon. Everybody was a front-line soldier on D-day. Period.''

Palumbo often says that every day of his life since D-day has been a bonus, because he didn't expect to survive.

''I'm glad I went through it,'' he said, ''rather than having any of my heirs go through it.''

Ray Swafford, now 88, of Manchester, was a sailor on the minesweeper YMS–247, destroying underwater mines to clear a safe path for ships taking troops to Normandy.

It was dangerous work. The night before D-day, another minesweeper hit a mine and exploded.

''We had to leave the survivors in the water, and that hurt real bad,'' Swafford remembers.

After clearing mines, Swafford's ship spent D-day guiding landing craft toward shore, picking up survivors, even trying to draw German gunfire away from soldiers on the beach. They also went to assist the destroyer USS *Corry*, which was sinking.

But Swafford was most unnerved by German ''E-boats,'' small fast craft that fired torpedoes.

''We couldn't shoot back at them because we might hit our own ships,'' he said. ''Those torpedoes still bother me today. I really don't like to think about it.''

Swafford isn't going on Friday's Washington trip, but he said he might mark the 70th anniversary by cooking out with some friends.

''The captain of my ship stopped here to visit me once about 20 years ago,'' Swafford said. ''He asked what I thought about D-day, and I said, 'It seems like a bad dream.' ''

''He said, 'That's the way it seems to me too.''''

FY14 INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Madam President, I am pleased to speak today on the Senate's passage last night of the Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014. I would like to speak briefly on the bill itself, as well as the process for its passage.

As Members know, the intelligence committee produces an authorization bill every year that both authorizes funds for the intelligence community and sets out legislation that authorizes and limits intelligence activities. This is the primary vehicle for legislation on intelligence matters and serves as one of the most important tools by which the intelligence committee, and indeed the Congress, is able to carry out its oversight duties.

From the committee's formation in 1976 through 2004, the Congress passed intelligence authorization legislation every year. Unfortunately, that streak came to an end during the last decade, and there was no Intelligence bill signed into law from 2005 to 2009. It is no coincidence that during this period the congressional oversight was also at a low point.

When I became chairman of the committee in January 2009, one of my top priorities was to reinstitute the annual authorization bill process. Fortunately, I was joined in that goal by then-vice chairman of the committee Kit Bond and by the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Silvestre Reyes. We also, importantly, had the support of the majority and Republican leaders in the Senate and the leaders of the two committees with the greatest shared interest in the bill, the Armed Services Committee and the Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense.

I am proud that the Congress has passed and the President has signed Intelligence authorization bills each of the past 4 years. With the Senate's action yesterday, we stand ready to pass a fifth.

The committee's preparation of the Fiscal Year 2014 Intelligence Authorization Act last summer was disrupted by the leaks, beginning in June 2013, of materials taken from the NSA by former contractor Edward Snowden. The committee held roughly a dozen hearings in the following months on NSA programs like the bulk phone metadata program conducted pursuant to title V of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, Section 215 of the USA PATRIOT Act, and the targeted collection of electronic communications of non-U.S. persons outside the United States under section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. These were programs that had already been the subject of considerable committee oversight and discussion over the past several years.

The committee also received briefings on the extent of damage caused by the leaks and on the shortcomings of the internal security measures to prevent someone from accessing,

downloading, and leaving NSA with classified information.

We marked up a separate bill, the FISA Improvements Act, last October and then marked up the Intelligence authorization bill last November.

After approving the authorization bill, we worked with the House Intelligence Committee to produce the legislation that the Senate passed yesterday. We have preconferenced these bills over the past couple of years in order to move them through the process, with good results.

Let me describe a few of the provisions in the bill, as well as one that was not included.

First, the classified annex to the bill authorizes sufficient funding for the intelligence community to collect and analyze intelligence for our national security. Among other intelligence activities, the bill funds counterterrorism, counterproliferation, counterintelligence, and covert action programs.

While classification prevents me from getting into specifics, the bill also continues the committee's practice of adding funding for intelligence agencies to implement a better insider threat detection system. We have been pushing the intelligence agencies to shore up their safeguards before Mr. Snowden and continue to do so afterwards.

The bill recognizes that the intelligence community's funding has been reduced significantly due to budget cuts and sequestration. Director of National Intelligence James Clapper has testified that while the challenges facing the intelligence community have grown, its resources have declined. He has made clear that the community can not do ''more with less''—it is going to have to do less, and that means accepting additional risk.

On the legislative side, the bill contains numerous provisions to strengthen intelligence oversight, protect whistleblowers, and enhance authorities for intelligence operations. Let me describe just a few of them here.

Two provisions in the bill are intended to enhance congressional oversight of significant legal interpretations affecting intelligence activities, particularly when such interpretations result from opinions of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel.

Section 321 amends the National Security Act to require that the general counsel of each intelligence agency notify the congressional intelligence committees, in writing, of any significant legal interpretation of the U.S. Constitution or Federal law affecting intelligence activities conducted by that agency.

While the committee generally is kept apprised of the legal basis for intelligence activities of the U.S. Government, as required by sections 502 and 503 of the National Security Act, there have been times when we have not gotten enough information in this regard for us to provide oversight. This provision is intended to ensure that, in the future, the committee receives a detailed, written notification of significant legal interpretations from these general counsels in a timely manner, to include significant interpretations resulting from opinions of the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel, OLC.

Section 322 requires the Attorney General to establish a process for the regular review for official publication of significant OLC opinions that have been provided to any part of the Intelligence Community.

Section 322 also requires that if any OLC opinion would have been selected for official publication but for the fact that the publication would reveal classified or other sensitive information relating to national security, the opinion shall be provided or made available to the appropriate committees of Congress.

The committee regularly conducts oversight of intelligence activities that are the subject of one or more OLC opinions. These opinions often represent the best and most comprehensive legal analysis of intelligence activities. Further, the opinions are sometimes cited by intelligence community officials as the basis for executive branch policy. The committee regards access to these legal opinions as necessary to the performance of its oversight functions and often requests access to such opinions, or the legal analysis contained in such opinions, when the committee is made aware of their existence.

Unfortunately, the Department of Justice and the intelligence community routinely decline to provide the committee with access to OLC opinions that are relevant to the committee's oversight functions, even when access is specifically requested by the committee. At times, the Department and intelligence agencies will not even advise the committee that relevant OLC opinions exist. Generally, when refusing to provide access to OLC opinions, the executive branch asserts that the information sought by the committee is subject to privilege.

The committee recognizes that, in certain limited cases, OLC opinions or information concerning OLC opinions may be entitled to executive privilege and withheld from Congress on that basis. Nonetheless, the Supreme Court has found in United States v. Nixon, 418 U.S. 683, 1974, that executive privilege is a narrow and qualified privilege that may be overcome by an adequate showing of need.

Section 322 is intended to codify an agreement between the executive branch and the legislative branch with respect to access to OLC opinions provided to an intelligence agency. Specifically, section 322 is intended to ensure the committee is, at a minimum, granted access to all OLC opinions provided to an element of the intelligence community, or information concerning such OLC opinions, that would have been made available to the public had it been unclassified. Section 322 does not alter and is not intended to alter the responsibilities of the executive branch under the National Security Act, the Freedom of Information Act, or any other statute establishing a requirement for the disclosure of information to Congress or to the public, and there remain areas of disagreement between the branches with respect to the scope of the executive branch's responsibilities under such statutes. In particular, the rule of construction set forth in section 322(d) is intended to apply only to official publication under this section and should not be interpreted as congressional affirmation of a ''deliberative process'' privilege or any other privilege as the basis for withholding information from Congress or the public under any other statute.

Title VI of the intelligence authorization legislation includes a number of provisions to enhance whistleblower protections for intelligence community employees. These provisions prohibit taking a personnel action against an intelligence community employee as a reprisal for making a protected whistleblower disclosure to the DNI or his designee, the inspector general of the intelligence community, the head of the employing agency or his designee, the appropriate inspector general of the employing agency, a congressional intelligence committee, or a member of a congressional intelligence committee. In addition, title VI prohibits agency personnel with authority over personnel security clearance or access determinations from taking or failing to take or threatening to take or failing to take any action with respect to any employee's security clearance or access determination in retaliation for a protected whistleblower disclosure. Finally, the title directs the DNI to create procedures to allow appeals of adverse security clearance and access determinations.

These provisions strengthen and reaffirm the mechanisms already in existence for legitimate whistleblowers to bring information regarding violations of law or other concerns to one of several inspectors general throughout the government or to Congress. Importantly, these channels exist because it is not for any one person to decide on his own which intelligence methods are wise or effective.

I would like to note my appreciation for Senator COLLINS for her work on this portion of the bill and for Senator CHAMBLISS and Congressman MIKE ROGERS for engaging in lengthy negotiations to find the workable compromise included in this bill.

Title IV of the bill requires Senate confirmation for the directors and inspectors general of the National Security Agency, NSA, and the National Reconnaissance Office, NRO. The individuals appointed to fill these positions perform critical roles in managing and/or overseeing technically complex,

highly expensive programs, with significant implications for national security. These individuals also play a vital role in ensuring that intelligence activities carried out by the NSA and NRO are conducted in full compliance with the law and in a manner that protects the privacy and civil liberties of Americans. By requiring Presidential appointment and Senate confirmation of these four positions, Congress will be better able to fulfill its responsibility for providing oversight of the activities of these intelligence agencies.

A separate Senate resolution will govern the process for handling the confirmation of individuals nominated to these four positions. I am cognizant that the confirmation process in the Senate is time consuming, and it is my intention to continue the intelligence committee's practice of considering nominees quickly and moving them through the Senate on a swift and bipartisan basis.

Title V of the bill includes a number of provisions that are intended to improve 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. Recent events, including the Snowden disclosures and the navy yard shooting, have highlighted the shortcomings of existing security clearance processes. The provisions in title V continue the committee's practice of seeking improvements to these processes. In particular, section 501 requires the DNI to ensure that the background of each employee or officer of the intelligence community, each intelligence community contractor, 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.

Finally, section 309 continues Congress's push for financial auditability within the intelligence community by requiring key agencies to undergo full financial audits, beginning with their fiscal year 2014 financial statements and to take all reasonable steps to achieve an unqualified opinion on financial statements by fiscal year 2016.

With the budget reductions of the past couple of years, we simply cannot afford to mismanage Federal funds. Achieving financial auditability is a key tool to identify and eliminate wasted funding, and I am pleased to say that intelligence agencies are making progress in this regard—though they still have work to do.

In addition, I want to note one provision that does not appear in the bill as passed by the Senate. During the intelligence committee's consideration of this legislation, I moved an amendment, which was adopted by the committee, regarding U.S. counterterrorism operations. Specifically, the provision would have required that the President issue an annual public report that sets forth the total number of combatants and noncombatant civilians killed or injured during the preceding year through the use of targeted lethal force outside the United States by remotely piloted aircraft.

While the amendment was approved in committee, there was sufficient opposition to its inclusion in both the Senate and the House that the bill would not have passed with the provision included. I agreed to remove the provision from the bill but have engaged with the executive branch on the issue. I received a letter from Director of National Intelligence Clapper, dated April 18, 2014, that says the executive branch is ''currently exploring ways in which it can provide the American people more information about the United States' use of force outside areas of active hostilities'' and is ''committed to . . . sharing as much information as possible with the American people and the Congress.''

I continue to believe that it is important to release these figures concerning the number of people killed or injured by the use of targeted lethal force outside the United States by remotely piloted aircraft, as the public estimates of the number of casualties are so different from the official figures we have received. This will continue to be of interest, and I will continue to address the issue in the Senate and with the administration.

Today, though, I am very pleased that the Fiscal Year 2014 Intelligence Authorization Act has been approved by the Senate and is on its way to the House of Representatives. I believe that the bill includes a number of important measures and that by continuing to enact legislation, the intelligence committee will further strengthen its oversight role of U.S. intelligence activities.

Finally, I would like to thank, as always, the vice chairman of the committee, Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS. We have worked together on this bill, and both of us support the package. We have also had to work both sides of the aisle to achieve unanimous support for the measure, and I thank him for his work and partnership.

I would also like to thank the staff who put the bill together. On the Democratic side, that is principally Eric Losick, SSCI counsel, Jon Rosenwasser, SSCI budget director, deputy staff director Lorenzo Goco, and counsel Mike Buchwald.

On the Republican side, I thank Jack Livingston and Kathleen Rice, our minority counsels, and Hayden Milberg, minority budget director.

I thank my colleagues for their support.

REMEMBERING WILLIAM MACK WATKINS

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, the world lost an amazing man last week. William Mack Watkins was a wonderful husband, father, brother, grandfather and friend. After a lengthy battle with progressive supranuclear palsy, PSP, Mack passed away peacefully on Thursday, June 5, 2014, with his beloved wife Julia and other family by his side.

Mack was born in Tremonton, UT, on May 30, 1936, to Clifford Charles and Lois Oswald Watkins. Rising from humble beginnings, Mack was proud of his rural Northern Utah roots, often saying he was ''just a poor peach picker from Brigham City.'' Those who had the privilege of knowing Mack knew that he was so much more.

Mack was a stern believer in the power of education, evidenced by his own studies at Box Elder High School and his degree in history from the University of Utah, where he was a member of the Sigma Chi fraternity.

A proud and loyal member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Mack served in a variety of capacities including a proselyting mission in the Swiss-Austrian Mission from 1956–1959. Later, he was called to serve as president alongside his wife over the Czech-Prague mission from 1998–2001. He undoubtedly left a lasting legacy at both missions.

Mack had a unique ability to bring people together, and he connected with people of all walks of life. He continued and valued continuing relationships. He created lifelong friendships with missionaries he served with, the Austrian people, business partners and members of the LDS church and community. Mack's keen insight in finances led to his professional success in the finance industry. After working for two renowned Utah companies, Mack formed his own financial services business, WMW Management Inc.

But for all his professional success, Mack's proudest achievements came as a loving husband and proud father of nine children whom he loved dearly.

Mack's love for music and fine arts was evident through the 10 years he sang in the Mormon Tabernacle Choir as well as his talents with the trumpet and guitar. He served as president of the Utah Opera Company and enjoyed his season tickets to the Utah Symphony and The Pioneer Theater Company. And his patience and perseverance was displayed in his love for one of the most humbling hobbies any person can enjoy—golf.

While Mack was taken from us, his legacy will live on. It is my honor to stand with the Watkins family this week and pay tribute to this remarkable Utahn we are so proud of, and who we all loved. He will never be forgotten.

CELEBRATING THE ARMY'S 239TH BIRTHDAY AND FLAG DAY

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, this Saturday—June 14—marks the Army's 239th birthday. For 239 years, the Nation has entrusted the Army with preserving freedom and defending our

democratic values. Commencing on June 14, 1775, the Continental Army led our historic revolution and has continuously served America at home and abroad defending the cause of liberty. As the greatest land force this world has ever known, I firmly believe that the U.S. Army will maintain this proud duty.

The Continental Army had humble beginnings. It was originally comprised of rebellious colonists who had little to no experience in soldiering. Under the leadership of GEN George Washington, the soldiers of the Continental Army overcame overwhelming odds against them to defeat the more seasoned and well-equipped British military and mercenary forces. Since then, our Army has become the standard that all other nations use to measure their forces.

The Army's birthday coincides with Flag Day, a holiday that commemorates our Nation's adoption of the U.S. flag. This is a fitting marriage, as our Nation's flag would not exist were it not for the bravery and sacrifice of our Army; and since the adoption of our flag in 1777, the Army has always carried the flag, the symbol of our most sacred values, into battle. I am reminded of Francis Scott Key's hallowed words after witnessing the bombardment of Fort McHenry by British ships in the Chesapeake Bay during the War of 1812. In describing the sight of Old Glory still flying after the bombardment, Key wrote, ''Oh, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.''

In celebrating the Army's birthday, I would like to highlight a particular Army unit that served our Nation with distinction under the most challenging of circumstances. The unit that I am referring to is the segregated 726th Transportation Truck Company, a part of the Maryland National Guard. The 726th existed as a segregated unit within the Guard well after President Truman integrated the U.S. armed services in 1948 because Maryland, like many other States at the time, had not yet integrated its National Guard units. The 726th was the only Maryland National Guard unit that served in Korea during the Korean war. While in Korea, the 726th Transportation Truck Company was attached to the 70th Transportation Truck Battalion as an integrated unit and served with distinction.

Upon returning to Maryland, the members of the 726th Truck Battalion learned that their unit would be reverted back to its original segregated status. Unwilling to return to segregation, the officers and enlisted personnel of the 726th Truck Battalion resisted, and worked to end segregation within the Maryland National Guard. In November of 1955, the men of the 726th achieved their goal when Maryland's then-Gov. Theodore McKeldin issued an order to end racial segregation in the Maryland National Guard. This order made Maryland the first State below the Mason-Dixon line to integrate its National Guard. The united efforts of the men of the 726th Transportation Truck Company marked an important step towards realizing equal rights in our military and in our society.

With the withdrawal of our military forces in Iraq and the departure of those forces in Afghanistan by the end of 2016, I am concerned that our heroes who have recently entered or who are about to enter—civilian life will not be provided with the tools they need to adapt to life here at home. My concerns have been exacerbated by the recent discoveries of substandard care in the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). Millions are helped each year by the VA health care system, but more than a decade of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has overwhelmed a system already bursting at the seams. Veteran unemployment, post-traumatic stress, and suicides continue to be serious issues that require immediate action. Maryland is home to over 30,000 military members and 460,000 veterans. The Army gives our soldiers the focus and diligence to excel in any and every field they choose, but we have to provide our servicemen and women with the tools they require to recover and adapt to civilian life. Doing so is not just a good idea, but rather our solemn obligation that strengthens our great Nation. As these heroes serve and defend our citizens, rights and values, it is our duty to return the service, as it is the least we can do. Ultimately, we have to continue to give these men and women a stake in their own country, the country they are so willing to dedicate their lives to serving.

I am eternally thankful for our brave men and women, both active and retired, for their willingness to serve domestically and internationally. For 239 years these patriots have been the strength of the Nation. Their steadfast dedication to duty, to our country, and to all Americans is embodied in the Army motto, ''This We'll Defend.'' For 239 years, our Army has lived by these words, protecting our most revered values: freedom, equality, independence, and democracy. Let us remember and celebrate our Army soldiers for this achievement today, and wish them a happy 239th birthday.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

REMEMBERING LEWIS KATZ

• Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I wish to remember and honor Lewis Katz, a business and civic leader, who passed away tragically on May 29, 2014. Mr. Katz was a man of great integrity and ambition, and his contributions to the City of Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the entire Nation leave a lasting legacy. I was honored to join his family, friends, colleagues, and admirers in celebrating his extraordinary life last week at his memorial service.

Throughout his remarkable career, Lewis Katz ventured in to the fields of law, business, sports, education and media. After graduating from Temple University and the Dickinson School of Law, Mr. Katz established the New Jersey based law firm Katz, Ettin, and Levine. He found further success by investing in and leading a number of enterprises, including Kinney Parking Systems, the YES Network, the New Jersey Nets, the New Jersey Devils, and most recently Interstate General Media, which owns the Philadelphia Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News. In pursuing these endeavors, his ingenuity and proficiency was without equal.

Yet this professional career was only a segment of the larger work Lewis Katz embarked on in his life. A dedicated family man and a deeply charitable patron, Mr. Katz's most important contributions came through his boundless interest in helping others. He gave generously to a number of causes and institutions, notably Temple University and the Boys and Girls Clubs of America. He also directed the Katz Foundation, which continues to support a number of charitable, educational, and medical causes. To these efforts, Lewis offered not only money, but a great portion of his energy and spirit.

Mr. Katz came from humble roots, yet he was grateful for all that he had been given. He honored his own life and the life of those around him by living with passion and purpose. Although we mourn his passing, I find solace in knowing that Lewis leaves behind a substantial legacy that will allow us to honor him back for many years to come. My thoughts and prayers are with his son Drew, and his daughter Melissa during this difficult time.•

JEFFERSON COUNTY, IOWA

• Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State, and it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills, but I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Jefferson 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 Jefferson County worth over $5 million and successfully acquire financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $11 million to the local economy.

Of course, one of my favorite memories of working together is the community's success in obtaining over $10 million for airport improvements since 2001. As a strong supporter of small community airports, I have long fought for funding from programs that support service to small communities and infrastructure support to keep these airports modern.

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, Jefferson County has received $171,231 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Jefferson County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling $227,000.

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, Jefferson County has received more than $2 million from a variety of farm bill programs.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Jefferson County has recognized this important issue by securing $358,847 for community wellness activities.

Disability Rights: Growing up, I loved and admired my brother Frank, who was deaf, but I was deeply disturbed by the discrimination and obstacles he faced every day. That is why I have always been a passionate advocate for full equality for people with disabilities. As the primary author of the Americans with Disabilities Act 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 one-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 Jefferson 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 Jefferson 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 Jefferson 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.●

WASHINGTON COUNTY, IOWA

● Mr. HARKIN. Madam President, the strength of my State of Iowa lies in its vibrant local communities, where citizens come together to foster economic development, make smart investments to expand opportunity, and take the initiative to improve the health and well-being of residents. Over the decades, I have witnessed the growth and revitalization of so many communities across my State, and it has been deeply gratifying to see how my work in Congress has supported these local efforts.

I have always believed in accountability for public officials, and this, my final year in the Senate, is an appropriate time to give an accounting of my work across four decades representing Iowa in Congress. I take pride in accomplishments that have been national in scope—for instance, passing the Americans with Disabilities Act and spearheading successful farm bills, but I take a very special pride in projects that have made a big difference in local communities across my State.

Today, I would like to give an accounting of my work with leaders and residents of Washington 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 Washington County worth over $2 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $10 million to the local economy.

Of course, one of my favorite memories of working together is the great work the community has done revitalizing the Triune Block building and to make way for a new fitness center in downtown Washington.

Among the highlights:

Main Street Iowa: One of the greatest challenges we face—in Iowa and all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns and rural communities. This isn't just about economics. It is also about maintaining our identity as Iowans. Main Street Iowa helps preserve Iowa's heart and soul by providing funds to revitalize downtown business districts. This program has allowed towns like Washington to use that money to leverage other investments to jump-start change and renewal. I am so pleased that Washington County has earned $70,500 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, Washington County has received $1,971,496 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Washington County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling $367,796.

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, Washington County has received more than $3 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, Washington County's fire departments have received over $776,144 for firefighter safety and operations equipment and over $335,967 in assistance to law enforcement.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Washington County has recognized this important issue by securing $35,549.

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 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 one-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 Washington 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 Washington 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 Washington 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.●

REMEMBERING MARV TEIXEIRA

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I rise in remembrance of my friend, mentor, and coach, Marv Teixeira, a true Nevada statesman and dedicated public servant.

Mayor Teixeira's legacy as the longest running mayor in Carson City exemplifies his commitment and dedication to the betterment of his community. Marv served three terms as mayor and was always willing to listen to the voice of the people and base his decisions on what citizens wanted. His leadership and exemplary contributions to the State of Nevada are, and continue to remain, unmatched.

There was no disguising Marv's love of Carson City, often referring to it as ''Nevada's best kept secret'' and he was right. Carson City is a wonderful place to live and raise a family, and Marv's mayorship has contributed greatly. There is a long list of accomplishments that he achieved for Carson: the Pony Express Pavilion, the V&T Railway Reconstruction Project, and the Carson freeway. As mayor, he brought new companies and jobs to the area. He was an outstanding public servant. He always supported me, and we were able to work together on a bipartisan basis for the good of Nevada.

Born in 1935, Marv led a long life dedicated to selflessly serving his country and the community. He was a U.S. Air Force veteran of the Korean war, who bravely served in South Korea. As one of our Nation's servicemembers, he made exceptional sacrifices for our country and deserves our deepest gratitude. After his time in the Air Force, Marv attended college and eventually settled in Carson City. He had a long career of 30 years as an IBM Corporation Representative in Carson and after retirement, focused on giving back to the community by becoming mayor. Marv spent much of his free time coaching Pop Warner football and Little League and was active in the development of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Western Nevada. His service to his country, as well as his bravery and dedication to his family and community, earn him a place in history among the many outstanding men and women who have contributed to our Nation and to the great Silver State.

His motivation and selflessness embodies the Battle Born State. With his passing, Nevada lost a great man who is immortalized for his service to our Nation and to the Carson City community.

My entire family extends our thoughts and condolences to Marv's wife Elizabeth and his loved ones, and we thank them for their service as well.

I ask my colleagues to join me in remembering Mayor Teixeira for his unwavering loyalty and dedication to Nevada.●

CONGRATULATING NIA SANCHEZ

● Mr. HELLER. Madam President, I wish to congratulate Nevada's own, Nia Sanchez from Las Vegas, on being crowned Miss USA 2014. Nia is the first beauty queen in the competition's history to ever win from the great State of Nevada, and I am truly honored to congratulate her on this great achievement.

The Miss USA pageant had its start in 1952 as a local ''bathing beauty'' competition that transformed into an international and annual tradition that has been a part of American history for the past 62 years. The women who are awarded the crown and named Miss USA are goal-oriented, knowledgeable and aware of what is going on at home and abroad. These characteristics are exemplified in Nia's everyday life, as a woman who is constantly seeking to improve the lives of others and her local community.

Nia truly is an example of a person who overcame great obstacles to achieve her dreams. When she was 8 years old, she and her mother were forced to live in a women's shelter, and that is one of the driving forces behind her choice to dedicate her life to serving others. As a fourth-degree black belt and instructor, Nia spends her time teaching martial arts to women and ''Stranger Danger'' classes to children in the community. She also volunteers her time teaching Sunday school

at the Shade Tree shelter in Las Vegas, which serves the needs of women, children, and their pets in Southern Nevada. Her volunteerism within the community is just one part of how she serves others. Her service extends far beyond our Nation's borders through her travels to work on mission trips to Mexico, Thailand, and the Great Wall of China. She is an exemplary Nevadan, and we are honored that she calls the Silver State home.

I know the citizens of the Silver State are proud to see a fellow Nevadan succeed in making their dream of winning Miss USA come true. Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating Nia Sanchez on this incredible honor and wish her the best of luck as she pursues the crown for Miss Universe and serves as a global ambassador.●

TRIBUTE TO REAR ADMIRAL THOMAS P. OSTEBO

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I wish to thank RADM Thomas P. Ostebo for his leadership as commander of the U.S. Coast Guard's 17th District. In this role Rear Admiral Ostebo was responsible for all Coast Guard assets and operations in Alaska—operations that were safely executed in some of the country's harshest and most demanding conditions. From May 2011 to June 2014, Rear Admiral Ostebo was the head Coast Guard official in Alaska, leading 2,500 Active Duty, Reserve, civilian, and auxiliary personnel, all charged to keep the largest State, with over 44,000 miles of coastline, safe, secure, and prosperous. Under his leadership, Rear Admiral Ostebo's crews successfully executed this mission by conducting over 1,600 search and rescue cases, saving 519 lives and assisting more than 2,200 individuals.

In addition to commanding this courageous cadre of Coast Guard men and women, Rear Admiral Ostebo remained a consistent champion for the State of Alaska. He was a leader on Arctic issues on many different levels. He recognized the importance of the Arctic trade routes and launched operation Arctic Shield, the Coast Guard's seasonal Arctic operation, to ensure the safe transit of commercial shipping routes, maintain Alaska's wild and sustainably managed fisheries, and sustain a ready response to any rescue mission at a moment's notice. Further, Rear Admiral Ostebo fostered many important partnerships with Alaska Natives and leadership that shared best practices and traditional knowledge of those that rely on the Arctic for subsistence.

On behalf of all Alaskans I want to personally thank Rear Admiral Ostebo for the great work he has performed during his command in Alaska. I wish him the best of luck as he transitions to the next phase of his career. He will be greatly missed in Alaska.●

CONNECTICUT'S AWARD-WINNING TALENT

● Mr. MURPHY. Madam President, we have a lot to be proud of in my home State of Connecticut, and that includes our thriving arts community. Our small but vibrant theatrical arts industry is often overshadowed by that of its more renowned next-door neighbor, New York City. But this week, a homegrown production—''A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder''—took home the top honors at the 2014 Tony Awards, demonstrating the incredible talent and artistic skill that comes from our State's theaters and schools. I could not be prouder of these individuals' historic achievements.

Not only did ''A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder'' win ''Best Musical'' of the year, but director Darko Tresnjak of Connecticut's Hartford Stage took home ''Best Direction of a Musical;'' Yale Drama School graduate Robert L. Freedman won ''Best Book of a Musical;'' and Linda Cho, also a graduate of the Yale Drama School, won ''Best Costume Design of a Musical.''

The musical originally premiered under Mr. Tresnjak's direction in 2012 at the Hartford Stage in Hartford, CT. The musical follows the story of a British commoner, Monty Navarro, who discovers he is ninth in line to inherit an earldom and great wealth, and decides to eliminate the other eight heirs who stand in his way. The musical stars only three actors, all with Connecticut ties. The talented lead actor Jefferson Mays of Clinton, CT plays an incredible total of eight characters throughout the course of the musical. He is supported by Bryce Pinkham and Lauren Worsham, both graduates of the Yale Drama School.

In 2013, the musical and its Connecticut cast moved to Broadway, where it became the most Tony Award-nominated musical of the 2013–2014 season and ultimately took home the night's top honors. Their victories are not only wins for their careers and productions, but also for the State of Connecticut.

I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating these incredible artists on their Tony Award-winning performances, and I wish the company of ''A Gentleman's Guide'' all of the continued success in the world as it goes on to enrich the lives of many more audiences for years to come.●

REMEMBERING TOMAS VILLANUEVA

● Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I would like to pay tribute to an incredible advocate for farmworker rights from the State of Washington, Tomas Villanueva.

Tomas's family immigrated to the United States from Mexico when he was 14 years old. They settled in Toppenish in 1958, where Tomas was able to earn his GED, allowing him the opportunity to enroll in Yakima Valley College. After being inspired by César Chavez's United Farmworkers moment, Tomas and classmate Lupe Gamboa traveled to California in 1967 to learn more about organizing. Upon their return to the Yakima Valley, Tomas and Lupe formed the United Farm Worker Cooperative, one of the first activist Chicano organizations in Washington State. Out of Tomas's activism came the Yakima Valley Farmworker's Clinic and the United Farmworkers Service Center.

After a brief break to focus on a family business, Tomas became the first president of the United Farmworkers of Washington State.

Tomas dedicated his life to improving working conditions and health care standards for farmworkers, and I could always rely on Tomas's wisdom, guidance, and advocacy on the important issues of justice, human rights, and comprehensive immigration reform.

Tomas was gifted in his ability to translate the challenging issues farmworkers face to community leaders and politicians, inspiring their support and work on behalf of farmworker rights.

While Tomas was informed and passionate, he was also pragmatic about how we as a State—and as a nation—can do a better job of caring and advocating for farmworkers and their families.

He will be so missed, but his legacy will live on.

Mr. President, I would like to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring the memory of Tomas Villanueva. During this difficult time my thoughts are with his friends, family, and all whom he inspired.●

TRIBUTE TO ADRIANA ALVAREZ

● Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I recognize Adriana Alvarez, a 2013 press intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Adriana is a sophomore pursuing a major in Public Relations at Florida International University. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Adriana for all the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO RACHEL CREW

● Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I recognize Rachel Crew, a 2013 intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Rachel is a senior at the University of Central Florida, where she is majoring in political science pre-law. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Rachel for all the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO CHRIS DELLAPORTA

● Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I recognize Chris Dellaporta, a 2013 intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Chris is a sophomore at the College of Southern Maryland where he is majoring in Business Administration. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Chris for all the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO RICHARD KINKOFF III

● Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I recognize Richard Kinkoff III, a 2013 intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Richard is a graduate of the University of South Florida, where he received a degree in finance. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Richard for all the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO STEPHEN PATRICK

● Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I recognize Stephen Patrick, a 2013 intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Stephen is a senior at Georgetown University majoring in government. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Stephen for all the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO BRADLEY PUFFENBARGER

● Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I recognize Bradley Puffenbarger, a 2013 intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Bradley is a graduate of Georgetown University in Washington, DC, where he majored in English. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Bradley for all the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO STEPHANIE RIVERA

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I recognize Stephanie Rivera, a 2013 intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work she has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Stephanie is a rising junior at American University in Washington, DC. Currently, she is a public communication and Spanish double major. She is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of her internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Stephanie for all the fine work she has done and wish her continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO DANIEL SZCZESNY

● Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I recognize Daniel Szczesny, a 2013 intern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

Daniel is a graduate of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to Daniel for all the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO JAMES UTHMEIER

● Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, today I recognize James Uthmeier, a 2013 legal extern in my Washington, DC, office for all of the hard work he has done for me, my staff, and the people of the State of Florida.

James is a graduate of the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL. Currently, James is in his second-year of law school at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He is a dedicated and diligent worker who has been devoted to getting the most out of his internship experience.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to James for all the fine work he has done and wish him continued success in the years to come.●

TRIBUTE TO RAY GROSSMAN

● Mr. WALSH. Madam President, today I wish to honor of Ray Grossman, a World War II veteran from Missoula, MT.

It is my honor to share the story of Ray Grossman's service as we remember the fateful events of June 6, 1944.

On that day, which forever changed the course of our history, Grossman and his fellow paratroopers were waiting in the air above Nazi-occupied France. Grossman was 1 of over 20,000 paratroopers who jumped that day.

Then a 24-year-old first lieutenant in the newly formed 82nd Airborne Division, Grossman and his unit fought to protect a small town in France to stop the enemy from attacking the Allies arriving on the beach.

The 82nd Airborne maneuvered to avoid antiaircraft fire, and Grossman's unit finally jumped, landing at approximately 2 a.m. and reaching their rendezvous point 6 hours later.

In the days that followed, Grossman encountered heavy German attacks while fighting to protect a small town and fellow Allied service members.

After serving in France, Grossman's unit freed prisoners from a concentration camp where only half of the prisoners were alive upon his unit's arrival.

Grossman returned to Montana, choosing to continue his life of service as an educator at the University of Montana in Missoula.

For his bravery during World War II, Grossman was awarded the Silver Star, Bronze Star, and Purple Heart.

To Ray Grossman, and each of the 160,000 Allied troops that invaded that 50-mile stretch of coastline, you truly are the ''greatest generation.''

Ray, we thank you for your dedication to our country and the ideals we hold dear. May the memory of all who have served our country and who currently serve, and the events of that momentous day never be forgotten.●

BELGRADE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

● Mr. WALSH. Madam President, I wish to recognize the efforts of a remarkable group of high school students from my State of Montana.

The students volunteered at the Gallatin Valley Food Bank and then came up with a plan to raise money for the organization. Together, these students raised $2,000 for the food bank.

Hunger is something that affects far too many members of our community. It is a testament to the initiative and commitment to community that these young adults saw a need and then came up with a plan to raise money.

First, the students wrote and illustrated a children's book, ''One Garden at a Time,'' depicting people growing foods in their gardens to help ease the hunger of their neighbors. The book was printed and sent to every elementary school in the Belgrade School District.

Next, the students bought wheelbarrows that they dubbed ''mealbarrows,'' had them decorated by local artists, and then used them to

collect food items. The subsequent auction of the wheelbarrows raised additional money for the Gallatin Valley Food Bank.

Thanks to the efforts of the high school sophomores and juniors from Belgrade High School, they raised awareness and funds for the Gallatin Valley Food Bank. These students also won $25,000 for the food bank through the Lead2Feed World Hunger Leadership Challenge.

I commend the students—John Burkenpas, Krista Callantine, Karlissa Dagel, Kaitlin Haglun, Raquelle David, Albert Koenig, Ashley Koenig, Cassie Meccage, Naomi Peterson, John Tatarka, and ag teacher Ashley Newell for their work.

It is because of exemplary young people like this group that we can have faith in a bright future for Montana and for the United States of America.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 11:05 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 4745. An act 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.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bill was read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and placed on the calendar:

H.R. 4745. An act 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.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC–6087. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Reports from the Department of the Treasury Inspector General and the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration for the period from October 1, 2013, through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6088. A communication from the Acting Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Semiannual Report of the Inspector General for the period from October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6089. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–345, ''Transportation Infrastructure and Public Space Impact Mitigation Amendment Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6090. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–347, ''Life and Health Insurance Guaranty Association Consumer Protection Amendment Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6091. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–348, ''Sexual Assault Victims' Rights Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6092. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–344, ''Traffic Adjudication Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6093. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20–346, ''Homeless Services Reform Amendment Act of 2014''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC–6094. A communication from the Deputy General Counsel, Office of Size Standards, Small Business Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''504 and 7(a) Loan Programs Updates'' (RIN3245–AG04) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

EC–6095. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''[alpha]-alkyl-[omega]-hydroxypoly (oxypropylene) and/or poly (oxyethylene) polymers . . . Exemption from the Requirement of a Tolerance'' (FRL No. 9910–87) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6096. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Tricuclazole; Pesticide Tolerances'' (FRL No. 9910–39) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6097. A communication from the Management Analyst, Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Scales; Accurate Weights, Repairs, Adjustments or Replacements After Inspection'' (9 CFR Part 201) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6098. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Review Group, Commodity Credit Corporation, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Continuation of Conservation Reserve Program, Including Transition Incentives Program'' (7 CFR Part 1410) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6099. A communication from the Associate Administrator of the Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Agricultural Marketing Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Kiwifruit Grown in California; Order Amending Marketing Order No. 920'' (Docket No. AMS–FV–12–0008; FV12–920–1 FR) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–6100. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Definition of 'Congressional Defense Committees' '' ((RIN0750–AI23) (DFARS Case 2013–D027)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–6101. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Private Sector Notification Requirements of In-Sourcing Actions'' ((RIN0750–AI05) (DFARS Case 2012–D036)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–6102. A communication from the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Global Strategic Affairs), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report on Proposed Obligations for Cooperative Threat Reduction''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–6103. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled, ''2011 Workplace and Equal Opportunity Survey of Reserve Members''; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–6104. A communication from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Addition of Certain Persons to the Entity List'' (RIN0694–AF86) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–6105. A communication from the Chair of the Board of Governors, Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to the Congress on the Profitability of Credit Card Operations of Depository Institutions''; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–6106. A communication from the General Counsel, Peace Corps, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of Deputy Director of the Peace Corps, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–6107. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to sections 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 14–045); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–6108. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 14–027); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–6109. A communication from the Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Report to Congress on Abnormal Occurrences: Fiscal Year (FY) 2013''; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6110. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans Alabama: Volatile Organic Compounds'' (FRL No. 9911–90–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the

Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6111. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the California State Implementation Plan, Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District'' (FRL No. 9912–03–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6112. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans—Maricopa County PM–10 Nonattainment Area; Five Percent Plan for Attainment of the 24-Hour PM–10 Standard'' (FRL No. 9912–01–Region 9) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6113. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of State Plans for Designated Facilities; New York; Control of Emissions from Existing Sewage Sludge Incineration Units'' (FRL No. 9912–05–Region 2) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6114. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Approval and Promulgation of Implementation Plans; State of Tennessee; Knoxville; Fine Particulate Matter 2008 Base Year Emissions Inventory'' (FRL No. 9911–97–Region 4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–6115. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Application of the General Welfare Exclusion to Indian Tribal Government Programs That Provide Benefits to Tribal Members'' (Rev. Proc. 2014–35) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–6116. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Mid-Year Amendments to Safe Harbor Plans Pursuant to Notice 2014–19 with Respect to the Windsor Decision'' (Notice 2014–37) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–6117. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Alternative Simplified Credit Election'' ((RIN1545–BL79) (TD 9666)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–6118. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Requirements for Taxpayers Filing Form 5472'' ((RIN1545–BK00) (TD 9667)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 10, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–6119. A communication from the Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Priority; Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program'' (CFDA No. 84.016A) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6120. A communication from the Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Priority; Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowships Program'' (CFDA No. 84.015B) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6121. A communication from the Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Priorities; National Resource Centers Program'' (CFDA No. 84.015A) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6122. A communication from the Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Priorities; Centers for International Business Education Program'' (CFDA No. 84.220A) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6123. A communication from the Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Postsecondary Education, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Priority; Language Resource Centers Program'' (CFDA No. 84.229A) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6124. A joint communication from the Executive Director and the Chair of the Board of Governors, Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), transmitting, pursuant to law, the Institute's 2013 Annual Report; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6125. A communication from the Acting Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Priority. National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research—Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers'' (CFDA No. 84.133B–4) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6126. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Regulatory Services, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Priority. National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research—Rehabilitation Engineering Research Centers'' (CFDA No. 84.133E–5) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on June 11, 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–6127. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department's fiscal year 2009 Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Report; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–249. A Senate substitute for a Senate concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Missouri urging the United States Congress to enact legislation to preserve natural resources and provide recreational development and other improvements for the public use; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SENATE SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 22

Whereas, in 1959, Senate Resolution No. 33 and House Resolution No. 19, recognizing the importance of the extraordinary manifestations of nature and recreational attributes of the Current and Jacks Fork Riverways, requested Congress to enact legislation to preserve the natural resources and provide recreational development and other improvements for the public use; and

Whereas, in 1964, Congress answered Missouri's request by enacting legislation to establish the Ozark National Scenic Riverways; and

Whereas, the riverways within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways are, and remain, public highways of the State of Missouri, subject to concurrent jurisdiction between the State of Missouri and the United States under Missouri Senate Bill No. 362 enacted in 1971; and

Whereas, in 2005, the National Park Service began researching for the purpose of drafting a new general management plan for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways; and

Whereas, the National Park Service is advocating the ''Preferred Alternative'' option of the general management plan; and

Whereas, the goal of the ''Preferred Alternative'' option of the general management plan is to shut down public access points to riverways, eliminate motorized boat traffic from certain areas, further restrict boat motor horsepower in other areas, close several gravel bars, and propose that additional areas be designated as federal wilderness; and

Whereas, the ''No-Action Alternative'' option of the general management plan is an appropriate balance between resource preservation and opportunities for recreational use; and

Whereas, the general management plan will guide decisions related to the Ozark National Scenic Riverways for the next 15 to 20 years; and

Whereas, tourism is one of the most critical components of our rural economy; and

Whereas, thousands of hikers, campers, boaters, hunters, fishermen, and horseback riders visit these areas annually generating irreplaceable tax revenue; and

Whereas, any further limitations on the access to these riverways would severely impact this local economy;

Whereas, the Missouri Conservation Commission is charged with the control, management, restoration, conservation, and regulation of bird, fish, game, forestry, and all wildlife resources of the state, including hatcheries, sanctuaries, refuges, reservations, and all other property owned, acquired, or used for such purposes; and

Whereas, in September of 2009, the Missouri Department of Conservation recommended that ''hunting, fishing, and trapping continue to be allowed through the Ozark National Scenic Riverways except in highly developed areas where a reasonable safety zone for public protection may be required'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the members of the Missouri Senate, Ninety-seventh General Assembly,

Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby strongly urge the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service to pursue one of the following three options in regard to the Ozark National Scenic Riverways:

1. Choose the ''No-Action Alternative'' option of the general management plan;

2. Enter into negotiations with the State of Missouri, Department of Conservation for the return of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways to the State of Missouri so that the land will continued to be used for its original and intended purpose; or

3. Enter into a contract with the State of Missouri, Department of Conservation for the management, operation, and maintenance of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways; and be it further

Resolved That the Secretary of the Senate be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for the President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, each member of the Missouri Congressional Delegation, the Director of the National Park Service, the Superintendent of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, the Director of the Missouri Department of Conservation, and Governor Jay Nixon.

POM–250. A Senate concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Missouri urging the United States Congress and the President of the United States to reauthorize the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 31

Whereas, insurance protects the United States economy from the adverse effects of the risks inherent in economic growth and development while also providing the resources necessary to rebuild physical and economic infrastructure, offer indemnification for business disruption, and provide coverage for medical and liability costs from injuries and loss of life in the event of catastrophic losses to persons or property; and

Whereas, the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, produced injured losses larger than any natural or man-made event in history, with claims paid by insurers to their policyholders eventually totaling some $32.5 billion, making this the second most costly insurance event in United States history; and

Whereas, the sheer enormity of the terrorist induced loss, combined with the possibility of future attacks, produced financial shockwaves that shook insurance markets causing insurers and reinsurers to exclude coverage arising from acts of terrorism from virtually all commercial property and liability policies; and

Whereas, the lack of terrorism risk insurance contributed to a paralysis in the economy, especially in construction, tourism, business travel, and real estate finance; and

Whereas, the United States Congress originally passed the Terrorism Risk Insurance Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107–297 (TRIA), in which the federal government agreed to provide terrorism reinsurance to insurers and reauthorized this arrangement via the Terrorism Risk Insurance Extension Act of 2005, Pub. L. 109–144, and the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007, Pub. L. 110–160 (TRIPRA); and

Whereas, under TRIPRA the federal government provides such reinsurance after industry-wide losses attributable to annual certified terrorism events exceed one hundred million dollars; and

Whereas, coverage under TRIPRA is provided to an individual insurer after the insurer has incurred losses related to terrorism equal to twenty percent of the insurer's previous year earned premium for property-casualty lines; and

Whereas, after an individual insurer has reached such a threshold, the insurer pays fifteen percent of residual losses and the federal government pays the remaining eighty-five percent; and

Whereas, the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program has an annual cap of one hundred billion dollars of aggregate insured losses, beyond which the federal program does not provide coverage; and

Whereas, TRIPRA requires the federal government to recoup one hundred percent of the benefits provided under the program via policy holder surcharges to the extent the aggregate insured losses are less than twenty-seven billion five hundred million dollars and enables the government to recoup expenditures beyond that mandatory recoupment amount; and

Whereas, without question, TRIA and its successors are the principal reason for the continued stability in the insurance and reinsurance market for terrorism insurance to the benefit of our overall economy; and

Whereas, the presence of a robust private/public partnership has provided stability and predictability and has allowed insurers to actively participate in the market in a meaningful way; and

Whereas, without a program such as TRIPRA, many of our citizens who want and need terrorism coverage to operate their businesses all across the nation would be either unable to get insurance or unable to afford the limited coverage that would be available; and

Whereas, without federally provided reinsurance, property and casualty insurers will face less availability of terrorism reinsurance and will therefore be severely restricted in their ability to provide sufficient coverage for acts of terrorism to support our economy; and

Whereas, unfortunately, despite the hard work and dedication of this nation's counter terrorism agencies and the bravery of the men and women in uniform who fought and continue to fight battles abroad to keep us safe here at home, the threat from terrorist attacks in the United States is both real and substantial and will remain as such for the foreseeable future: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the members of the Missouri Senate, Ninety-seventh General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby urge the United States Congress and the President of the United States to reauthorize the Terrorism Risk Insurance Program; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Missouri Senate be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for the President of United States, the President Pro tempore of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and each member of the Missouri Congressional delegation.

POM–251. A Senate joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Alabama urging the Congress of the United States to propose a federal balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution and applying to the Congress, pursuant to Article V of the United States Constitution, to call a convention for proposing a balanced budget amendment; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 100

Whereas, the reluctance of the federal government to incur debt and other obligations was established early in American history, with deficits occurring only in relation to extraordinary circumstances such as war; yet for much of the 20th century and into the 21st, the United States has operated on a budget deficit, including the 2010 budget year, which surpassed an astounding $1,300,000,000,000, an annual deficit that exceeded the entire gross state product of many of the states; and

Whereas, an exception to this pattern was at the turn of the 21st century; in FY 2001, America enjoyed a $128 billion budget surplus; and

Whereas, since FY 2001, America has been burdened with 10 consecutive years of deficits, to-wit:

FY 2002: $158 billion deficit
FY 2003: $377 billion deficit
FY 2004: $413 billion deficit
FY 2005: $318 billion deficit
FY 2006: $248 billion deficit
FY 2007: $161 billion deficit
FY 2008: $459 billion deficit
FY 2009: $1.4 trillion deficit
FY 2010: $1.3 trillion deficit
FY 2011: $1.5 trillion deficit (estimated); and

Whereas, as of January 2011, America's accumulated national debt exceeded $12 trillion now estimated at over $13 trillion; and

Whereas, the Congressional Budget Office projects that, if current trends continue under the White House's proposed budget, each of the next 10 years has a projected deficit exceeding $600 billion; and

Whereas, the budget deficits of the United States of America are unsustainable and constitute a substantial threat to the solvency of the federal government as evidenced by the comments of Standard and Poor's on April 18, 2011, regarding the longer term credit outlook for the United States; and

Whereas, Congress has been unwilling or unable to address the persistent problem of overspending and has recently increased the statutory limit on the public debt and enacted a variety of legislation that will ultimately cause the federal government to incur additional debt; and

Whereas, the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform in its report The Moment of Truth includes recommendations to reduce the federal deficit that have not been considered by the United States Congress; and

Whereas, the consequences of current spending policies are far-reaching; United States indebtedness to governments of foreign nations continues to rise; costly federal programs that are essentially unfunded or underfunded; mandates to states threaten the ability of state and local governments to continue to balance their budgets; moreover, future generations of Americans inevitably face increased taxation and a weakened economy as a direct result of the bloated debt; and

Whereas, many states have previously requested that Congress propose a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced budget, but Congress has proven to be unresponsive; anticipating situations in which Congress at times could fail to act, the drafters of the United States Constitution had the foresight to adopt the language in Article V that establishes that on application of the Legislatures of two-thirds of the several states, Congress shall call a convention for proposing amendments; and

Whereas, in prior years the Alabama Legislature has called on Congress to pass a Balanced Budget Constitutional Amendment, many other states have done the same, all to no avail; and

Whereas, a balanced budget amendment would require the government not to spend more than it receives in revenue and compel

lawmakers to carefully consider choices about spending and taxes; by encouraging spending control and discouraging deficit spending, a balanced budget amendment will help put the nation on the path to lasting prosperity: Now therefore, be it

Resolved by the Legislature of Alabama, both Houses thereof Concurring, That the Legislature of the State of Alabama hereby respectfully urges the Congress of the United States to propose and submit to the states for ratification a federal balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution, and be it

Resolved, That, in the event that Congress does not submit a balanced budget amendment to the states for ratification on or before December 31, 2011, the Alabama Legislature hereby makes application to the United States Congress to call a convention under Article V of the United States Constitution for the specific and exclusive purpose of proposing an amendment to that Constitution requiring that, in the absence of a national emergency (as determined by the positive vote of such members of each house of Congress as the amendment shall require), the total of all federal appropriations made by Congress for any fiscal year not exceed the total of all federal revenue for that fiscal year, and be it further

Resolved, That, unless rescinded by a succeeding Legislature, this application by the Alabama Legislature constitutes a continuing application in accordance with Article V of the United States Constitution until at least two-thirds of the Legislatures of the several states have made application for a convention to provide for a balanced budget, and be it further

Resolved, That, in the event that Congress does not submit a balanced budget amendment to the states for ratification on or before December 31, 2011, the Alabama Legislature hereby requests that the legislatures of each of the several states that compose the United States apply to Congress requesting Congress to call a convention to propose such an amendment to the United States Constitution, and be it further

Resolved, That this application is rescinded in the event that a convention to propose amendments to the United States Constitution includes purposes other than providing for a balanced federal budget, and be it further

Resolved, That the copies of this resolution be provided to the following officials:

1. The President of the United States.
2. The Speaker of the United States House of Representatives.
3. The President of the United States Senate.
4. All members of the Alabama Delegation to Congress with the request that this resolution be officially entered in the Congressional Record as an application to the Congress of the United States of America for a convention to propose an amendment to provide for a federal balanced budget in the event that Congress does not submit such an amendment to the states for ratification on or before December 31, 2011, and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be provided to the Secretaries of State and to the presiding officers of the Legislatures of the other states.

POM–252. A House bill adopted by the Legislature of the State of South Dakota rescinding all previous applications of the State of South Dakota for the calling of a federal constitutional convention to amend the Constitution of the United States; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE BILL NO. 1135

Be it Enacted by the Legislature of the State of South Dakota:

Section 1. The Legislature finds that it is not, at the present time, desirable to call a federal constitutional convention to amend the Constitution of the United States.

Section 2. The specific provisions of the following Joint Resolutions, all making application for the calling of a federal constitutional convention, are hereby repudiated and rescinded:

(1) Chapter 309, 1953 South Dakota Session Laws;
(2) Chapter 259, 1955 South Dakota Session Laws;
(3) Chapter 344, 1963 South Dakota Session Laws;
(4) Chapter 345, 1963 South Dakota Session Laws;
(5) Chapter 276, 1965 South Dakota Session Laws;
(6) Chapter 1, 1977 South Dakota Session Laws;
(7) Chapter 1, 1979 South Dakota Session Laws;
(8) Chapter 1, 1986 South Dakota Session Laws;
(9) Chapter 1, 1989 South Dakota Session Laws; and
(10) Chapter 1, 1993 South Dakota Session Laws.

The repudiation and recision provided for in this Act is strictly limited to the portions of the Joint Resolutions making application for the calling of a federal constitutional convention and do not apply to the alternative call embodied in the Joint Resolutions for Congress to propose specific constitutional amendments to the states for adoption.

POM–253. A Senate joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Oklahoma rescinding all previous applications by the Legislature to the United States Congress to call a constitutional convention; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11

Whereas, the Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, acting with the best of intentions, has, at various times and during various sessions, previously made applications to the Congress of the United States of America to call one or more conventions to propose either a single amendment concerning a specific subject or to call a general convention to propose an unspecified and unlimited number of amendments to the United States Constitution, pursuant to the provisions of Article V thereof; and

Whereas, Warren E. Burger, former Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Arthur J. Goldberg, former Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and other leading constitutional scholars agree that such a convention may propose sweeping changes to the Constitution, any limitations or restrictions to the contrary imposed by the states in applying for such a convention notwithstanding, thereby creating an imminent peril to the well-established rights of the citizens and the duties of various levels of government; and

Whereas, the Constitution of the United States of America has been amended many times in the history of this nation and may be amended many more times, without the need to resort to a constitutional convention, and has been interpreted for more than 200 years and has been found to be a sound document which protects the lives and liberties of the citizens; and

Whereas, there is no need for, and in fact, there is great danger in, a new constitution or in opening the Constitution to sweeping changes, the adoption of which would only create legal chaos in this nation and only begin the process of another two centuries of litigation over its meaning and interpretation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the 1st Session of the 52nd Oklahoma Legislature:

Section 1. The Legislature does hereby rescind, repeal, cancel, nullify and supersede to the same effect as if they had never been passed, any and all extant applications by the Legislature to the Congress of the United States of America to call a convention to propose amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America pursuant to the terms of Article V thereof, regardless of when or by which session or sessions of the Legislature such applications were made and regardless of whether such applications were for a limited convention to propose one or more amendments regarding one or more specific subjects and purposes or for a general convention to propose an unlimited number of amendments upon an unlimited number of subjects.

Section 2. The Legislature urges the legislatures of each and every state which has applied to Congress to call a convention for either a general or a limited constitutional convention to repeal and withdraw such applications.

Section 3. A copy of this resolution shall be distributed to the Secretary of State, to the presiding officers of both houses of the legislatures of each state in the Union, to the President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, to all members of the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation and to the Administrator of the United States General Services Administration.

POM–254. A Senate resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Georgia making renewed application to the United States Congress calling for a convention of the states under Article V of the United States Constitution for the purpose of proposing a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE RESOLUTION 371

Whereas, in 1976, by House Resolution 469–1267, Resolution Act No. 93 (Ga. L. 1976, p. 184), the Georgia General Assembly applied to the Congress to call a convention for the specific and exclusive purpose of proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to require a balanced federal budget and to make certain exceptions with respect thereto; and

Whereas, in 2004, by House Resolution No. 1343, Act No. 802 (Ga. L. 2004, p. 1081), the Georgia General Assembly rescinded and repealed all prior applications for constitutional conventions, including but not limited to said 1976 application; and

Whereas, the need for such a balanced budget amendment remains and has become far more apparent and urgent: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the General Assembly of Georgia That this body hereby applies again to Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the Constitution of the United States, for the calling of a convention for proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States and recommends that the convention be limited to consideration and proposal of an amendment requiring that in the absence of a national emergency the total of all federal appropriations made by the Congress for any fiscal year may not exceed the total of all estimated federal revenues for that fiscal year; and be it further

Resolved That the Secretary of the Senate is authorized and directed to transmit appropriate copies of this application to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, and members of the Georgia congressional delegation

and to transmit appropriate copies also to the presiding officers of each of the legislative houses of the several states, requesting their cooperation; and be it further

Resolved That this application is to be considered as covering the same subject matter as the presently-outstanding balanced budget applications from other states, including but not limited to previously adopted applications from Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas, and this application should be aggregated with same for the purpose of reaching the two-thirds of states necessary to require the calling of a convention, but should not be aggregated with any applications on any other subject; and be it further

Resolved That this application shall constitute a continuing application in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States until:

(1) The legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several states have made applications on the same subject and Congress has called for a convention for proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States;

(2) The Congress of the United States has in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States proposed an amendment to said Constitution which is consistent with the balanced budget amendment referenced in this application; or

(3) January 1, 2020, whichever first occurs.

POM–255. A Senate resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Georgia applying to the United States Congress calling for a convention of the states under Article V of the United States Constitution for the limited purpose of proposing amendments to the United States Constitution related to fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials and for members of Congress; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 736

Whereas, the founders of the Constitution of the United States empowered state legislators to be guardians of liberty against future abuses of power by the federal government; and

Whereas, the federal government has created a crushing national debt through improper and imprudent spending; and

Whereas, the federal government has invaded the legitimate roles of the states through the manipulative process of federal mandates, most of which are unfunded to a great extent; and

Whereas, the federal government has ceased to live under a proper interpretation of the Constitution of the United States; and

Whereas, it is the solemn duty of the states to protect the liberty of our people, particularly for the generations to come, by proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States through a convention of the states under Article V of the United States Constitution to place clear restraints on these and related abuses of power: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the General Assembly of Georgia, That the General Assembly of the State of Georgia hereby applies to Congress, under the provisions of Article V of the Constitution of the United States, for the calling of a convention of the states limited to proposing amendments to the United States Constitution that impose fiscal restraints on the federal government, limit the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, and limit the terms of office for its officials and for members of Congress; and be it further

Resolved, That this application shall be deemed an application for a convention to address each or all of the subjects herein stated. For the purposes of determining whether two-thirds of the states have applied for a convention addressing any of the subjects stated herein, this application is to be aggregated with the applications of any other state legislatures for the single subjects of balancing the federal budget, limiting the power and jurisdiction of the federal government, or limiting the terms of federal officials; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate is hereby directed to transmit copies of this application to the President and Secretary of the United States Senate and to the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, to transmit copies to the members of the United States Senate and United States House of Representatives from this state, and to transmit copies hereof to the presiding officers of each of the legislative houses in the several states, requesting their cooperation; and be it further

Resolved, That this application constitutes a continuing application in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the United States until the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the several states have made applications on the same subject.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. TESTER, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

S. 1603. A bill to reaffirm that certain land has been taken into trust for the benefit of the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatami Indians, and for other purposes.

By Mr. LEAHY, from the Committee on the Judiciary, without amendment:

S. 1799. A bill to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. LEAHY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Lydia Kay Griggsby, of Maryland, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Geoffrey W. Crawford, of Vermont, to be United States District Judge for the District of Vermont.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

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. PRYOR:

S. 2467. A bill to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from altering available health care and wait times for appointments for health care for certain veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself and Mr. MORAN):

S. 2468. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand eligibility for reimbursement for emergency medical treatment and to require that the Department of Veterans Affairs be treated as a participating provider for the recovery of the costs of certain medical care, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 2469. A bill to amend title 40, United States Code, to require that the Administrator of General Services verify that a building to be leased to accommodate a Federal agency is located a certain distance from public transportation before entering into the lease agreement; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. UDALL of New Mexico (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 2470. A bill to provide for drought relief measures in the State of New Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE (for himself and Ms. WARREN):

S. 2471. A bill to amend title 11 of the United States Code to provide bankruptcy protections for medically distressed debtors, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Ms. CANTWELL, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BROWN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. COONS, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. FRANKEN, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2472. A bill to establish in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights , and Labor of the Department of State a Special Envoy for the Human Rights of LGBT Peoples; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 2473. A bill to reallocate Federal Government-held spectrum for commercial use, to promote wireless innovation and enhance wireless communications, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. WICKER, and Ms. LANDRIEU):

S. 2474. A bill for the relief of Meriam Yahya Ibrahim, Martin Wani, and Maya Wani; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. CRAPO:

S. Res. 473. A resolution celebrating the 20th Anniversary of National Men's Health Week; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PRYOR, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. REID, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. PAUL, Mr. COONS, Mr. CRUZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. WICKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BEGICH, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BOOKER,

Mr. BENNET, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BROWN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. LEE):

S. Res. 474. A resolution designating June 19, 2014, as ''Juneteenth Independence Day'' in recognition of June 19, 1865, the day on which slavery legally came to an end in the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. BEGICH (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI):

S. Res. 475. A resolution congratulating the Alaska Aces hockey team on winning the 2014 Kelly Cup as champions of the East Coast Hockey League; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. Res. 476. A resolution recognizing the 350th Anniversary of the founding of the State of New Jersey and honoring the valuable contributions of people of the Garden State; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 316

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 316, a bill to recalculate and restore retirement annuity obligations of the United States Postal Service, to eliminate the requirement that the United States Postal Service prefund the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund, to place restrictions on the closure of postal facilities, to create incentives for innovation for the United States Postal Service, to maintain levels of postal service, and for other purposes.

S. 961

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 961, a bill to improve access to emergency medical services, and for other purposes.

S. 1027

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1027, a bill to improve, coordinate, and enhance rehabilitation research at the National Institutes of Health.

S. 1040

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) 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. 1114

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1114, a bill to provide for identification of misaligned currency, require action to correct the misalignment, and for other purposes.

S. 1188

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1188, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of the individual mandate in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 1332

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1332, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 1368

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1368, a bill to facilitate nationwide availability of volunteer income tax assistance for low-income and underserved populations, and for other purposes.

S. 1562

At the request of Mr. SANDERS, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1562, a bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 1733

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1733, a bill to stop exploitation through trafficking.

S. 1799

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER), the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN), the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1799, a bill to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

S. 1997

At the request of Mr. WALSH, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1997, a bill to authorize the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System.

S. 2004

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the names of the Senator from Florida (Mr. NELSON) and the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 2004, a bill to ensure the safety of all users of the transportation system, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, children, older individuals, and individuals with disabilities, as they travel on and across federally funded streets and highways.

S. 2094

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2094, a bill to provide for the establishment of nationally uniform and environmentally sound standards governing discharges incidental to the normal operation of a vessel.

S. 2192

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2192, a bill to amend the National Alzheimer's Project Act to require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to prepare and submit, directly to the President for review and transmittal to Congress, an annual budget estimate (including an estimate of the number and type of personnel needs for the Institutes) for the initiatives of the National Institutes of Health pursuant to such an Act.

S. 2295

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2295, a bill to establish the National Commission on the Future of the Army, and for other purposes.

S. 2320

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2320, a bill to redesignate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 162 Northeast Avenue in Tallmadge, Ohio, as the ''Lance Corporal Daniel Nathan Deyarmin, Jr., Post Office Building''.

S. 2329

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 2329, a bill to prevent Hezbollah from gaining access to international financial and other institutions, and for other purposes.

S. 2336

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2336, a bill to eliminate the payroll tax for individuals who have attained retirement age, to amend title II of the Social Security Act to remove the limitation upon the amount of outside income which an individual may earn while receiving benefits under such title, and for other purposes.

S. 2373

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2373, a bill to authorize the appropriation of funds to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for conducting or supporting research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention.

S. 2400

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2400, a bill to provide for improvement of field emergency medical services, and for other purposes.

S. 2434

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) 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. 2436

At the request of Mr. SCOTT, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Mr. VITTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2436, a bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide that agencies may not deduct labor organization dues from the pay of Federal employees, and for other purposes.

S. 2443

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2443, a bill to direct the Attorney General to make grants to States that have in place laws that terminate the parental rights of men who father children through rape.

S. 2462

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2462, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt certain educational institutions from the employer health insurance mandate.

S.J. RES. 15

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S.J. Res. 15, a joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the equal rights amendment.

S.J. RES. 37

At the request of Mr. GRAHAM, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON) and the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH) were added as cosponsors of S.J. Res. 37, a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relating to parental rights.

S. RES. 303

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 303, a resolution declaring that achieving the primary goal of the National Plan to Address Alzheimer's Disease of the Department of Health and Human Services to prevent and effectively treat Alzheimer's disease by 2025 is an urgent national priority.

S. RES. 469

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN), the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) were added as cosponsors of 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.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 473—CELEBRATING THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF NATIONAL MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

Mr. CRAPO submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 473

Whereas, despite advances in medical technology and research, men continue to live an average of 5 years less than women, and African-American men have the lowest life expectancy;

Whereas 9 of the 10 leading causes of death, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, affect men at a higher percentage than women;

Whereas, between ages 45 and 54, men are more than 1½ times more likely than women to die of heart attacks;

Whereas men die of heart disease at 1½ times the rate of women;

Whereas men die of cancer at almost 1½ times the rate of women;

Whereas testicular cancer is one of the most common cancers in men between ages 15 and 34, and, when detected early, has a 96 percent survival rate;

Whereas the number of cases of colon cancer among men will be over 48,000 in 2014, and more than half of those men will die from the disease;

Whereas the likelihood that a man will develop prostate cancer is 1 in 6;

Whereas the number of men who develop prostate cancer in 2014 is expected to reach more than 230,000, and an estimated 29,480 of those men will die from the disease;

Whereas African-American men in the United States have the highest incidence of prostate cancer;

Whereas significant numbers of health problems that affect men, such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, colon cancer, and infertility, could be detected and treated if awareness among men of those problems was more pervasive;

Whereas more than half of the elderly widows now living in poverty were not poor before the death of their husbands;

Whereas educating both the public and health care providers about the importance of early detection of male health problems will result in reducing rates of mortality for those diseases;

Whereas appropriate use of tests such as prostate specific antigen exams, blood pressure screens, and cholesterol screens, in conjunction with clinical examination and self-testing for problems such as testicular cancer, can result in the detection of many of those problems in their early stages and increase the survival rates to nearly 100 percent;

Whereas women are 2 times more likely than men to visit their doctors for annual examinations and preventive services;

Whereas men are less likely than women to visit their health centers or physicians for regular screening examinations of male-related problems for a variety of reasons;

Whereas Congress established National Men's Health Week in 1994 and urged men and their families to engage in appropriate health behaviors, and the resulting increased awareness has improved health-related education and helped prevent illness;

Whereas the Governors of all 50 States have issued proclamations declaring Men's Health Week in their respective States, as have Mayors of over 40 cities;

Whereas, since 1994, National Men's Health Week has been celebrated each June by dozens of States, cities, localities, public health departments, health care entities, churches, and community organizations throughout the United States that promote health awareness events focused on men and family;

Whereas the National Men's Health Week Internet website has been established at www.menshealthweek.org and features Governors' proclamations, Mayoral proclamations, and National Men's Health Week events;

Whereas men who are educated about the value that preventive health can play in prolonging their lifespans and their roles as productive family members will be more likely to participate in health screenings;

Whereas men and their families are encouraged to increase their awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle, regular exercise, and medical checkups;

Whereas June 9 through 15, 2014, is National Men's Health Week; and

Whereas the purpose of National Men's Health Week is to heighten the awareness of preventable health problems and encourage early detection and treatment of disease among men and boys: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) celebrates the 20th anniversary of National Men's Health Week;

(2) supports the annual National Men's Health Week; and

(3) calls upon the people of the United States and interested groups to observe National Men's Health Week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

SENATE RESOLUTION 474—DESIGNATING JUNE 19, 2014, AS "JUNETEENTH INDEPENDENCE DAY" IN RECOGNITION OF JUNE 19, 1865, THE DAY ON WHICH SLAVERY LEGALLY CAME TO AN END IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. LEVIN (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. PRYOR, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. WARNER, Mr. CASEY, Mr. KAINE, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. NELSON, Mr. REID, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. UDALL of Colorado, Mr. PAUL, Mr. COONS, Mr. CRUZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. WICKER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. BEGICH, Ms. MIKULSKI, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BENNET, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. BROWN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. LEE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 474

Whereas news of the end of slavery did not reach the frontier areas of the United States, in particular the State of Texas and other Southwestern States, until months after the conclusion of the Civil War, more than 2½ years after President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was issued on January 1, 1863;

Whereas, on June 19, 1865, Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas, with news that the Civil War had ended and that the enslaved were free;

Whereas African-Americans who had been slaves in the Southwest celebrated June 19, commonly known as "Juneteenth Independence Day", as inspiration and encouragement for future generations;

Whereas African-Americans from the Southwest, for nearly 150 years, have continued the tradition of observing ''Juneteenth Independence Day'';

Whereas 43 States, the District of Columbia, and other countries, have designated ''Juneteenth Independence Day'' as a special day of observance in recognition of the emancipation of all slaves in the United States;

Whereas ''Juneteenth Independence Day'' celebrations have been held to honor African-American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures;

Whereas the faith and strength of character demonstrated by former slaves and their descendants remain an example for all people of the United States, regardless of background, religion, or race;

Whereas slavery was not officially abolished until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution in January 1865;

Whereas Frederick Douglass, born in the State of Maryland in 1818, escaped from slavery and became a leading writer, orator, publisher, and one of the United States' most influential advocates for abolitionism and the equality of all people;

Whereas Frederick Douglass was recognized for his accomplishments with a statue that was unveiled during a ceremony on June 19, 2013, in Emancipation Hall of the United States Capitol;

Whereas 2014 marks the 50th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000a et seq.), signed into law on July 2, 1964, a milestone in providing equal protections for African-Americans, including former slaves and their descendants; and

Whereas, over the course of its history, the United States has grown into a symbol of democracy and freedom around the world: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates June 19, 2014, as ''Juneteenth Independence Day'';

(2) recognizes the historical significance of ''Juneteenth Independence Day'' to the United States;

(3) supports the continued nationwide celebration of ''Juneteenth Independence Day'' to provide an opportunity for the people of the United States to learn more about the past and to better understand the experiences that have shaped the United States; and

(4) recognizes that the observance of the end of slavery is a part of the history and heritage of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 475—CONGRATULATING THE ALASKA ACES HOCKEY TEAM ON WINNING THE 2014 KELLY CUP AS CHAMPIONS OF THE EAST COAST HOCKEY LEAGUE

Mr. BEGICH (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 475

Whereas on June 9, 2014, the Alaska Aces hockey team claimed the championship of the East Coast Hockey League with a 4-0 series-clinching win over the Cincinnati Cyclones, which resulted in the Alaska Aces winning the East Coast Hockey League's Kelly Cup trophy;

Whereas the June 9 victory gave the Alaska Aces a 4-2 series win in the championship round and resulted in a 16-5 win-loss record for the Alaska Aces in the 2014 playoffs;

Whereas the 2014 East Coast Hockey League championship is the 3rd championship for the Alaska Aces in the past 9 years, making the Alaska Aces only the 2nd East Coast Hockey League team to win more than 2 East Coast Hockey League championships;

Whereas in 2014, the Alaska Aces set an East Coast Hockey League record by winning the team's 4th straight Brabham Cup, which honors the East Coast Hockey League's best regular-season record and guarantees home-ice advantage throughout the entire postseason;

Whereas the East Coast Hockey League is a premier ''AA'' hockey league featuring 22 teams from around the country playing a 72-game regular season schedule;

Whereas the Alaska Aces are affiliated with the Calgary Flames of the National Hockey League, opening a pathway to allow promising players to advance to the top tier of professional hockey in the United States and Canada; and

Whereas the people of the State of Alaska are proud of the dedication, hard work, and gritty determination of the players, coaches, and management of the Alaska Aces: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the Alaska Aces hockey team for winning the 2014 Kelly Cup as champions of the East Coast Hockey League;

(2) recognizes the players, coaches, students, staff, and fans whose dedication helped the Alaska Aces win the East Coast Hockey League championship; and

(3) respectfully requests the Secretary of the Senate to transmit an enrolled copy of this resolution to—

(A) the managing owner of the Alaska Aces, to be shared with the other team owners;

(B) the head coach of the Alaska Aces; and

(C) the assistant coach of the Alaska Aces.

SENATE RESOLUTION 476—RECOGNIZING THE 350TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY AND HONORING THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF PEOPLE OF THE GARDEN STATE

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 476

Whereas, in 1664, the parcel of land between the Delaware and Hudson Rivers came under the control of the English, who named the land New Jersey;

Whereas the State of New Jersey played an instrumental role in the success of the 13 original colonies during the American Revolutionary War, serving as the location of more military engagements than any other colony during the American Revolutionary War, including 2 pivotal colonial victories at Trenton and Princeton in the winter of 1776;

Whereas, in 1789, the State of New Jersey became the first state in the United States of America to ratify the Bill of Rights, which is the first 10 amendments to the United States Constitution;

Whereas men and women of the State of New Jersey, such as Thomas Mundy Peterson, Alice Paul, and Paul Robeson, bravely challenged our country to recognize and support equal and just rights of citizenship for all people of the United States;

Whereas the State of New Jersey has been a veritable cauldron of culture, contributing iconic and talented artists in literature, film, theater, dance, music, and visual arts;

Whereas world renowned scientists and scholars, including Thomas Alva Edison and Albert Einstein, conduct their research and launch their discoveries in laboratories and institutions throughout the State of New Jersey, resulting in the State of New Jersey serving as a birth place for inventions and innovations that fundamentally change the way humans interact with each other and the world around them;

Whereas the State of New Jersey has been a leader in developing and engineering formative infrastructure and transportation accomplishments, from the Morris Canal and the Delaware and Raritan Canal to the iconic Garden State Parkway, as well as the now ubiquitous ''Jersey Barriers'' that provide for the safety of drivers and passengers on roads throughout the United States;

Whereas, in 1954, the New Jersey State Legislature passed legislation for the State of New Jersey to officially adopt the nickname of the ''Garden State'', a proud acknowledgment of the State of New Jersey's strong agricultural heritage and reflection of the continued abundance of blueberries, cranberries, peaches, and other produce that contribute to the State of New Jersey's robust agricultural industry;

Whereas New Jerseyans take pride in enjoying and preserving the State of New Jersey's vast natural resources, including the 130 miles of sandy beaches along ''the shore'', as well as the 1,000,000 acres of Pine Barrens that constitute the United State's first National Reserve; and

Whereas it is fitting and desirable that the people of New Jersey and the United States celebrate the current and historic role of the State of New Jersey in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate recognizes and celebrates the 350th aniversary of the founding of the State of New Jersey.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3240. Mr. MCCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2363, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3241. Mr. MCCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2363, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3242. 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.

SA 3243. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2410, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3240. Mr. MCCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2363, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 41, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following:

SEC. 109. WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AT UNITS OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AUTHORIZED INDIVIDUAL.—The term ''authorized individual'' means an individual that possesses—

(A) a valid resident big-game hunting license issued by the appropriate State agency; and

(B) any other qualification that the Secretary, in consultation with the appropriate State agency, may require.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(b) WILDLIFE REDUCTION.—Nothing in section 4 of the Act of March 2, 1929 (16 U.S.C. 198c), or any other provision of law, prohibits the Secretary from permitting an authorized individual—

(1) to use lethal means to reduce the population of wildlife at a unit of the National Park System that the Secretary determines is causing habitat or culture resources damage; or

(2) to remove the full animal harvested under paragraph (1) from the unit of the National Park System.

SA 3241. Mr. MCCAIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2363, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 41, between lines 4 and 5, insert the following:

SEC. 109. MITIGATION FISHERY ACTIVITIES.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) FEDERAL WATER DEVELOPMENT AGENCY.—The term ''Federal water development agency'' means—

(A) the Bureau of Reclamation;

(B) the Corps of Engineers; and

(C) the Tennessee Valley Authority.

(2) MITIGATION HATCHERY.—The term ''mitigation hatchery'' means a facility owned and operated by the Secretary through the National Fish Hatchery System, a purpose of which is the rearing and stocking of native and nonnative fish to replace or maintain fishery resources or harvest levels lost as a result of a Federal water resource development project.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior (acting through the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service).

(b) PRIORITY CONSIDERATION.—Annually, the Secretary, in consultation with affected States, Indian tribes, and other relevant Federal agencies, shall—

(1) determine the needs of the National Fish Hatchery System; and

(2) for purposes of the determination under paragraph (1), give equal priority consideration to—

(A) the rearing and stocking of native and nonnative fish; and

(B) the propagation of species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

(c) REIMBURSEMENT.—Consistent with the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a et seq.) and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), the heads of Federal water development agencies shall fully reimburse the Secretary, on an annual basis, for the operation and maintenance of mitigation hatcheries.

SA 3242. 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 end, add the following:

TITLE __—HEALTH SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

SEC. __01. INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR VETERANS BENEFITS FOR A SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Paragraph (1) of section 223(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) SPECIAL RULE FOR INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS BENEFITS.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii), an individual shall not be treated as covered under a health plan described in such subparagraph merely because the individual receives periodic hospital care or medical services for a service-connected disability under any law administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs but only if the individual is not eligible to receive such care or services for any condition other than a service-connected disability.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SA 3243. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 2410, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2015 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle H of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1087. SINGLE STANDARD MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR PRIVATELY OWNED AUTOMOBILES OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES AND MEMBERS OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES.

(a) INCORPORATION OF IRS RATE AS SINGLE STANDARD MILEAGE RATE APPLICABLE TO AUTOMOBILES.—Section 5704(a)(1) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by striking ''established by the Administrator shall not exceed'' in the last sentence and inserting ''shall be''.

(b) ESTABLISHMENT OF MILEAGE REIMBURSEMENT RATES.—

(1) ELIMINATION OF AUTOMOBILES FROM PERIODIC INVESTIGATIONS OF COST OF TRAVEL.—Paragraph (1)(A) of section 5707(b) of such title is amended—

(A) by striking '', in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Defense, and representatives of organizations of employees of the Government,''; and

(B) by striking ''vehicles to'' and inserting ''airplanes and privately owned motorcycles by''.

(2) REIMBURSEMENT RATE FOR AUTOMOBILES.—Paragraph (2)(A)(i) of such section is amended by striking ''prescribe a mileage reimbursement rate which reflects the current costs as determined by the Administrator of operating privately owned automobiles, and which shall not exceed,'' and inserting ''provide that the mileage reimbursement rate for privately owned automobiles,''.

NOTICE OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I would like to announce for the information of the Senate and the public that a business meeting has been scheduled before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. The business meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 18, 2014, at 10:30 a.m. in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building in Washington, DC.

The purpose of the business meeting is to consider the five nominations and eight bills listed on the attached agenda.

Because of the limited time available for the business meeting, witnesses may testify by invitation only. However, those wishing to submit written testimony for the hearing record should send it to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510–6150, or by email to Sallie_Derr@energy.senate.gov.

For further information, please contact Sam Fowler at (202) 224–7571 or Sallie Derr at (202) 224–6836.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 12, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SR–328A of the Russell Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''A National Priority: The Importance of Child Nutrition Programs to our Nation's Health, Economy and National Security.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 12, 2014, at 10:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 12, 2014, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Regional Implications of a Nuclear Deal with Iran.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 12, 2014, at 3 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''Thailand's Political Crisis.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. DURBIN. 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 12, 2014, at 10:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Securing Raiological Materials: Examining the Threat Next Door.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 12, 2014, at 10 a.m., in SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 12, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Elizabeth Larson, Casey Brynn DiNino, and Jackson O'Brien, interns in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of today's session.

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

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I request that the following interns from my office be given privileges of the floor for the balance of the day: Emily Hartley, Alfonso Sitenga, Rachel Tougas, Michaela Spaulding, Deirdre Creed, Maria Villa, Lyndsey Brollini, Nicole Eldred, Austin Ramsay, Mckenzie Stepovic, Kendall Eilo, Ben Gilman, Gabrielle Gilbertson, and Luke Hopkins.

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

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Casey Scott, a detailee, and Douglas Wiitala, Grant Loftesnes, Betsy Silverstein, and Julia Sferlazzo, interns for the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, be granted privileges of the floor for the session today, June 12, 2014.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by me, in consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar Nos. 538, 770, 766, and 712; that there be 2 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form on each nomination; that upon the use or yielding back of that time the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that all rollcall votes after the first be 10 minutes in length; the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any related statements be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration en bloc of the following resolution, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 473; S. Res. 474; S. Res 475; and S. Res. 476.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles, where applicable, be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolutions en bloc were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2014

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m. on Monday, June 16, 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 will be in a period of morning business until 5:30 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; that at 5:30 p.m. the Senate proceed to executive session as provided for under the previous order.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. Madam President, there will be three rollcall votes at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, JUNE 16, 2014

Mr. REID. Madam President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:47 p.m., adjourned until Monday, June 16, 2014, at 2 p.m.

CONFIRMATIONS

Executive nominations confirmed by the Senate June 12, 2014:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

MICHAEL J. MCCORD, OF OHIO, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (COMPTROLLER).

FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM

STANLEY FISCHER, OF NEW YORK, TO BE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS.

LAEL BRAINARD, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR A TERM OF FOURTEEN YEARS FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2012.

JEROME H. POWELL, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM FOR A TERM OF FOURTEEN YEARS FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2014.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD A. BATTA, OF IOWA, TO BE AN ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

R. JANE CHU, OF MISSOURI, TO BE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS.