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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, before the mountains were settled and the hills brought forth, Your power and majesty were known. Come to our lawmakers on Capitol Hill today. Come as light to enlighten their minds. Come as truth to teach them Your precepts. Come as Spirit to transform their hearts. Come as fire to purge from them the dross of transgression. Come as power to use them in Your service. May Your presence provide them with such patience, steadiness, and encouragement that they will be instruments for Your glory.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will 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 18, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable EDWARD J. MARKEY, a Senator from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MARKEY thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of the appropriations bill led by Senator MIKULSKI.

We hope to begin the consideration of the bill today. We are now postcloture. We had to file cloture to get on the bill, as usual, and I think we have wasted the 30 hours. But that is where we are. So we hope to begin consideration of the bill today and work through the amendments. Senators will be notified when votes are scheduled.

IRAQ

Mr. REID. Over the last several days the world has looked in horror as the terrorist organization ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, has swept across Iraq. As we speak they are sweeping even closer to Baghdad. They are murdering and they are pillaging. The group is now positioned outside Baghdad. It threatens to unleash its violent extremism on the capital of Iraq. ISIS poses a threat to Iraq and the surrounding region—and that is an understatement.

As President Obama and his advisors consider options to combat the threat, conservative Members of Congress—or I should say Republican Members of Congress and their pundit cheerleaders—are more interested in playing their favorite game—their favorite game: blame Obama. It doesn't matter what it is, it is his fault for putting people's lives in jeopardy—our military, special forces. The FBI captured someone who was the ringleader of the Libya Benghazi attack. They have criticized the President for bringing this man to justice.

Yesterday I listened with dismay when the Republican leader suggested and claimed that President Obama prematurely withdrew troops from Iraq. Think about that for a minute—5,500 dead Americans, tens of thousands wounded. Thousands and thousands have been wounded grievously.

I ask my friend and Republicans he leads, would they have preferred the United States stay in Iraq? Would they have preferred our soldiers have stayed in Iraq in harm's way? Is he—are they, the Republicans—willing to risk more American lives?

The Republican leader and other Republicans seem to have forgotten why President Obama initiated the troop drawdown in June of 2009. Why? The Iraqis wanted us out. The Iraqi government didn't want American forces to stay. Is the Republican leader and the Republicans he leads suggesting that American servicemembers should risk their lives even more, even as the Iraqi people were telling our military to leave?

What has been taking place in Iraq is a civil war. Do the Republicans and their leader believe that service men and women from Kentucky and the other 49 States across this great country should be inserted in the middle of their civil war? I don't think so. Fighting between factions in Iraq has cost thousands of Iraqi and American lives over the last decade, and it spawned a new breed of terrorism now. Yet the original architects of the war—of the invasion of Iraq—would have us believe that this is all President Obama's fault. Think about that.

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

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Is there anything further from the truth?

I don't think so. This is an Iraqi civil war, and it is time for the Iraqis to resolve it themselves. Those who attack President Obama for bringing our troops home from Iraq are wrong and out of step with the American people. After a decade of war the American people have had enough. American families have had enough. I do not support in any way putting our men and women in the midst of this civil war in Iraq. It is not in the national security interests of our country. It is not worth the blood of American soldiers. It is not worth the monetary cost to the American taxpayer.

Rather than spending hundreds of billions of dollars—the war in Iraq is at about $1.5 trillion. Rather than spending more money doing that—fighting George W. Bush's war—how about we use that money to rebuild our Nation's infrastructure—roads, bridges, dams, water systems, sewer systems. We have a deficit in infrastructure of trillions of dollars.

How about doing a better job of educating our children? Maybe we could raise the minimum wage or give the long-term unemployed unemployment compensation or maybe we could help men and women draw the same amount of money for doing the same work or maybe we could fully fund the Veterans' Administration and ensure that our veterans—more than a million have come back from Iraq—are getting the care they need and deserve. Instead of addressing these issues at home, they are stuck in the same game. And it is not blame Obama; this is a new one—new yesterday or the day before. They are stuck listening to the very same neocons—obviously, that is where the Republicans are getting their information again—the same neocons who pushed us into the Iraq war in the first place, as they try to plunge our military in yet another foreign misadventure.

What is absurd is the fact that after all these years their suggestions haven't changed. They are in a time warp. Those who are the so-called experts are so eager to commit American soldiers to another war. Why is their advice so valuable?

Take President Bush's Paul Wolfowitz, who some say was the architect of the war. He has accused President Obama recently of not taking a strong position in Iraq. Wolfowitz took a strong position on Iraq's sectarian violence when he stated—listen to this bizarre statement—and this is a quote: ''There's been none of the record in Iraq of ethnic militias fighting one another.'' No, only for centuries. Look at what he said: There is none of the record in Iraq of militias fighting each other. That is Wolfowitz.

How about Bill Kristol—not the comedian. He is a writer. Bill Kristol is another one of the architects of the Iraq war who infamously predicted that American soldiers would be welcomed as liberators in Iraq. He said the war would last 2 months. Well, he was only wrong by about 9 years and 10 months. Kristol also claimed there was no evidence of discord among Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq. No? Only centuries of discord—centuries. Yet even in light of this incorrect assertion about Iraq, Kristol went on to say that we need to have more fighting in Iraq, beating the drum alongside all the neoconservative friends.

This morning there was an op-ed piece in the Wall Street Journal. Who would write that? How about Dick Cheney? Just to remind everyone, he is the former Vice President of the United States, who clearly was the chief architect of the war. If there is one thing this country does not need, it is that we should be taking advice from Dick Cheney on wars. Being on the wrong side of Dick Cheney is being on the right side of history.

To the architects of the Iraq war, who are now so eager to offer their expert analysis, I say thanks but no thanks. Unfortunately, we already tried it your way, and it was the biggest foreign policy blunder in the history of the country. Now people come back and say they can give me some examples that have been worse, and I listen. But for me—I know a little bit about history—this was a foreign policy blunder that would be hard to take away from being the number one foreign policy blunder in the history of the country.

President Obama and his military advisors are considering their options to address ISIS, but putting combat troops back in Iraq isn't one of them. I have no doubt that President Obama and America will meet this threat head-on without the advice of Wolfowitz, Cheney, Kristol—the architects of the invasion of Iraq. President Obama will meet the threat with the same smart foreign policy which has been the hallmark of his administration. The President will continue to identify and protect what is truly in our national security interests, using our full array of national security tools and standing up to terrorism where it threatens our national stability.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. MCCONNELL. For 5½ years the Obama administration and its allies in Congress have sought cover for their disastrous economic agenda with routine broadsides against an endless procession of straw men. It is hard to recall a single speech from a Democratic leader in Washington that didn't involve some spirited defense of a principle nobody ever challenged or some attack on a villain that doesn't exist. Instead of working with us on ideas that would actually do something to alleviate the concerns and anxieties of the middle class, these Democratic leaders have been blissfully content to play politics year after year after year.

Instead of delivering relief, they have delivered a steady diet of bad political theater day in and day out with the same ridiculous and predictable moral every single time: Democrats care. So vote for them and all will be well.

If you haven't noticed, all is not well for working families in this country. Four years after administration officials trumpeted ''recovery summer'' in June 2010, working men and women in this country are more anxious about work and family and the high cost of living—and that is to say nothing of the millions who can't find work at all.

The White House knows all of this, and that is why they are planning to hold a summit on the topic next week. They want everyone to think they are on the case, that they have a plan, but what they don't seem to realize is nobody believes them anymore and that folks have moved on.

The sad truth is most of the folks I have talked to are convinced government is working against them, not for them. I don't blame them. Whether it is frustration over an absurdly complicated Tax Code that drains people of their time and energy or just a general sense that government programs are rigged to help the well-off and well-connected, an increasing number of our constituents don't even think government is capable—let alone interested—in making their lives any easier these days. It is a shame because while the Obama administration has been playing politics, Republicans have been quietly assembling a lot of good ideas to help Americans deal with the stresses of a modern economy.

All of these ideas are consistent with our party's longstanding commitment to the principles of upward mobility, shared responsibility for the weak, and a strong but limited central government. Every single one of them deserves a vote.

For my part, I have pressed for legislation that addresses a variety of concerns of the people in my State. The Family Friendly and Workplace Flexibility Act, which I introduced with Senator AYOTTE, would enable working mothers to enter into a voluntary agreement with their employers whereby they could bank overtime compensation in the form of time off with their families. It would give families the choice, not just the employer.

Another bill I will introduce today will fix a flaw in the Tax Code so men or women who work at home are not prevented from claiming a deduction for a home office if that office includes a baby crib so they can take care of their child while working. The Working Parents Home Office Act would not only help parents save on childcare costs, it would help increase their earning potential by incentivizing them to create new income streams from home.

For parents worried about failing schools for their children, Senator KIRK introduced the Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools Act—a bill that would provide more and better educational choices and some much needed compensation for teachers unions that too often put their own interests above those of our children.

Then there is the National Right to Work Act, a bill I cosponsored with Senator PAUL, which will eliminate a Federal rule that requires employees of certain companies to join a union or pay union dues whether they want to or not. Lifting this rule would vastly increase job opportunities in my State for women and men who want to work but can't find it, especially in the area of manufacturing.

The senior Senator from Maine has a proposal that would repeal a senseless provision in ObamaCare that is incentivizing employers all across the country to limit their employees to 30 hours a week.

The junior Senator from Nebraska has a bill—the Workplace Advancement Act—that would further equip women in the workplace with the knowledge and tools they need to fight employer discrimination.

The junior Senator from Florida has a bill—the RAISE Act—that would amend the National Labor Relations Act to allow employers to give merit-based pay increases to employees who are currently prohibited from receiving them because of outdated labor rules, and the junior Senator from Utah has a number of good proposals in a variety of areas.

These are just a few of the very good ideas that Members of my conference have put together to address the concerns and anxieties of working men and women whose wages have remained stubbornly flat during the Obama years, even as the cost of everything from college tuition to health care continues to soar. There are many others, including bills passed by the House that the Democratic majority in the Senate continues to block.

I am very proud of the work so many of my colleagues have done in putting all this legislation together. This morning some of us will present a number of these ideas at a press conference to draw attention to the urgent needs of our constituents and the shortsightedness of the majority leader in blocking our ideas to address them. Every one of these Republican ideas is meant to address some common concern of working families in our country, but none of them ever get a vote because it would not fit the story line Washington Democrats are peddling.

Apparently Senate Democrats would rather people didn't know Republicans have been working overtime behind the scenes to make their lives easier or paychecks bigger for working moms and recent college graduates. They would rather people didn't even know about these or dozens of other ideas we have that are aimed at making life a little easier for middle-class Americans, because if they did, they might realize there is an entirely different approach to the problems that have been plaguing this economy for years now and choose it over theirs.

What Republicans have been saying is that there are a number of things we can do right now to help folks deal with the pressures they face every day in this economy. We have been talking about these ideas for years, and we will be talking about them later today because 5½ years into the Obama economy Americans are eager for some fresh thinking. They are tired of the same old big government solutions that only make life harder and more complicated. They are tired of a Democratically controlled Senate that will not allow a debate or a vote on any of our better proposals.

Most of our constituents are thinking about long commutes, shrinking budgets, obscenely high tuition and health care bills. They think about how nice it would be to have some more flexibility at work. They are frustrated with a Tax Code that seems to punish their efforts to make a little bit more money for their family, and they are not getting anything from the White House but empty rhetoric and more of the same.

Today Republicans are reminding people there is another way. While Democrats have been plotting ways to hold on to their majority, we have been listening to the concerns and anxieties of our constituents and figuring out new, creative ways to address them.

It is long past time we had a real debate in this country, instead of the false choice Democrats constantly present to the public between their own failed ideas and some political villain that doesn't exist. It is time Americans saw the real choice before them, and once they do, I think the choice will be an easy one.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

MASTER SERGEANT AARON C. TORIAN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, this morning I wish to commemorate the life and service of a brave U.S. marine from Paducah, KY, MSgt Aaron C. Torian. This highly accomplished marine was tragically killed on February 15, 2014, from injuries sustained during combat training operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. He was 36 years old.

For his service in uniform, Master Sergeant Torian received many medals, awards, and decorations—including the Purple Heart, the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon with Gold Star, the Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with three stars, the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, and the Good Conduct Medal.

When he was 28, Master Sergeant Torian was named the Second Marine Division's Noncommissioned Officer of the Year. It is a high honor. This distinction recognizes marines who excel in physical fitness, leadership skills, and tactical and technical proficiency. Receiving it made Aaron a role model for hundreds of NCOs in the Second Marine Division.

At the time he won the award, he simply said:

> I had to step up. I just figured that this is what I'd joined the Marine Corps to do, and so I always did it 100 percent.

''His work ethic was remarkable,'' says Aaron's mother Esta Smith. She said:

> He was a warrior as a marine. . . . He ultimately gave everything for his country and he never put himself anything but last. He gave everything because he loved his country.

Born in 1977, Aaron was a native of Paducah and grew up in the region before his family moved to Maryland. Aaron graduated from Thomas Stone High School in Waldorf, MD, where he was a star athlete in baseball and football. He was awarded a football scholarship to the University of Tennessee at Martin, where he graduated in 2001. Aaron then went on to earn a master's degree in instructional leadership at Tennessee Tech in 2003.

Aaron's time at Tennessee Tech was notable for a few other reasons besides his degree. He worked as a graduate assistant football coach, and he also met the woman who would become his wife, Jurley Pomeroy. Together the couple had three children.

''He was a great dad and always everything his children needed him to be,'' says his wife Jurley. ''When he got off the plane, being the best dad and best husband was his number-one priority.''

Aaron joined the Marine Corps in 2003 and promoted to Master Sergeant in September of 2013. In addition to being a wonderful father and husband and an exemplary marine, he was a faithful member of College Acres Baptist Church in Wilmington, NC. He was a community volunteer for his local college baseball grounds crew and also at the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church annual Greek festival.

Aaron's mother said:

> Aaron held on to the thing he believed in: faith, love, and freedom. . . . The conversation was always about how blessed he felt and how he thanked God for his beautiful family. Humility was the definition of Aaron.

Aaron's final deployment was his sixth in total. He served two tours in Iraq and four in Afghanistan. At the time of his final deployment, he was assigned to the Second Marine Special Operations Battalion, Marine Special Operations Regiment, U.S. Marine

Corps Forces Special Operations Command based out of Camp Lejeune, NC.

In late February of this year, Master Sergeant Torian was laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Just last month at the Memorial Day ceremonies in Aaron's native McCracken County, KY, county officials unveiled a commemorative street sign for MSgt Aaron C. Torian. For 1 year it will be displayed in front of the county courthouse and then placed permanently at a location of his family members' choosing.

''Thank God for the blessing and honor of allowing me to be your mom,'' says Aaron's mother Esta. ''Semper Fi—always faithful. My son, you are a true American hero.''

We are thinking of Aaron's family today as I share his story with my Senate colleagues, including his wife Jurley, his children Elijah, Laura Bella, and Avery, his mother and stepfather Esta and Jim Smith, his father Joe Torian, and many other beloved family members and friends.

I want the family of MSgt Aaron C. Torian to know that just as his life of dedication and service is recognized at the McCracken County Courthouse and in the hallowed shrine of Arlington, so too it is recognized in the Senate.

I know all of my colleagues join me in solemn reverence and gratitude for this brave young man's willingness to pledge everything for our country. We honor his supreme sacrifice on behalf of all Americans.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 4660.

The clerk will report the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 428, H.R. 4660, a bill 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.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we bring to the floor our fiscal year 2015 spending bill, but before the Republican leader leaves, as the Senator from Maryland, I too would like to join with great respect in condolences for Master Sergeant Torian's family. For all of us who are Senators who have constituent families where people have died, we have to be in this together.

These are times when we are not the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. We are not red or blue. We have to be red, white, and blue. From this side of the aisle to that side of the aisle, Godspeed to his family, and I thank the Senator for bringing this wonderful young man to the attention of the Senate. Those remarks were quite poignant and moving.

We have to stand by those families—the widow, the children who will need an education, and let's do it shoulder to shoulder.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Maryland for her additional comments about this wonderful young man.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today we bring to the floor on a bipartisan basis the annual appropriation bills of the Commerce-Justice-Science bill, the Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and also the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration. I wish to thank all of the members of the Appropriations Committee for their tremendous work on these bills. First, I wish to say a special word about my vice chairman RICHARD SHELBY, who has done the hard work and the due diligence of helping move the entire process but also moving, in particular, our bill that funds the Commerce Department, Justice Department, and the science programs, such as our space program.

In terms of transportation, we have the able leadership of Senator MURRAY, with her vice chairman Senator COLLINS; and on agriculture, chairman MARK PRYOR and, again, his vice chairman ROY BLUNT.

This process is about moving America forward. This legislation we are putting before the Senate today puts America's middle-class families first, creating opportunity by creating jobs today.

With investments in physical infrastructure in the transportation and housing bill, we are building roads and bridges, repairing them, and updating transit lines and rail lines, so we literally and figuratively can keep America on the move. At the same time we are also meeting America's compelling human needs with our investment in home ownership as well as in housing and in urban and economic development.

We also create jobs tomorrow with investments in research and discovery. What we do in these important science agencies is drive innovation, leading to new products and new jobs. And guess what. Science saves lives.

When we look at Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations, we see that we fund the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—a lot of words with a lot of alphabet, synonyms and acronyms and so on.

At the end of the day, we fund the weather service. What does the weather service do? They predict weather. They predict immediate weather, such as is it going to rain this afternoon, and they predict weather emergencies, whether we are going to have a tornado.

Our hearts go out, again, on the other side of the aisle, to the people of Kansas, where they were hit by a double tornado—an unprecedented weather event. They are calling it the twin sisters, referring to what happened in Nebraska. They were the ugly sisters, but they were made less ugly because of the way the weather service could help alert the people in that community. That is what we fund.

We protect the American people by making sure we fight crime and terrorism by funding Federal law enforcement; by making sure our medicines and medical devices are safe by funding the Food and Drug Administration; and we meet compelling human needs, whether we are talking about affordable housing or affordable food.

While we do it, we are also reforming the agencies. Sure, people talk about appropriators as spenders, but we have a sense in this committee on both sides of the aisle—and I must say that Senator SHELBY has helped lead this—that we need to be a more frugal government. We need to get value for our dollar, demonstrating that we need to be able to save money or use money. We are going to spend very wisely.

It has been 3 years since we were able to bring an appropriations bill to the floor. I am not going to go into all the reasons why. ''Why'' doesn't get the job done. What we need to do is return to regular order. So what does that mean? Today we have these three bills pending. It means we want to enact all of our appropriations bills by October 1. We want to keep government operating not on autopilot, not on shutdown, nor on lavish spending. We have to reduce our Federal deficit, but we also have to reduce other deficits, particularly in the area of deficits related to innovation as well as the fact that our crime rates are on the rise in many cities and we need to reduce them. The American people today want to make sure we have a government they can count on. But they need to count on the fact that not only are we open and doing business but that when we are, we are smarter about it.

Vice Chairman SHELBY and I have been working on a bipartisan basis. We have been working on a bicameral basis. That means hands across the aisle, hands across the dome to restore regular order and civility in this process.

I look forward to moving this bill. I would say to my colleagues who are listening, many of my colleagues saw a few months ago the way Senator LAMAR ALEXANDER, Senator TOM HARKIN, Senator RICHARD BURR, and I moved a bipartisan bill on the child care and development block grant. That had not been reauthorized since 1996, but we showed we could do it. We cleared 18 amendments. We actually had votes on amendments. We had an open process where amendments could be offered, discussed, debated, and at the end of the day voted on because we had a process that worked. As Senators

who worked together, we were able to pass that bill.

Senator SHELBY and I are providing leadership today to be able to do that. So we ask our colleagues to support us in coming to an agreement on the motion to proceed so that we can move ahead on this bill. We are making progress. There are several bills we have already moved out of the committee, and we will be moving more. But right now, today, we want to move these three bills and do it in a way that we are proud of what we do, we are proud of our process, we are proud of our conduct, and we are proud that we did it in the right way, with debate, discussion, and the votes that are required.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, this morning I wish to join my longtime colleague and friend, the senior Senator from Maryland and chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI, in supporting the consideration of three bills before us today. All three bills received strong bipartisan support at the full Committee on Appropriations level.

I am pleased we have begun to reestablish regular order in the appropriations process. We started that last year, and we need to continue it, and we are.

After the uncertainty of sequestration and last year's disagreement over the Budget Control Act caps, this past December's Murray-Ryan budget deal provided the clarity needed to move us toward a regular budget and a regular appropriations process. The Murray-Ryan deal, which became the Bipartisan Budget Act, provided a compromise solution that ended the congressional deadlock over top-line discretionary spending.

While I appreciate that the chairwoman was operating in a tight fiscal environment, we did not ultimately agree everywhere on how to allocate funds within the new caps. All 14 Republican members of the Appropriations Committee wrote to the chair on May 21 of this year expressing our concerns over the use of budgetary mechanisms in subcommittee allocations. In that letter we also stated and we continue to express our opposition to increasing the level of total CHIMPs in the Federal discretionary budget beyond current levels.

While we continue to have concerns about how the majority reached total 302(b) allocations, the bills before us today for the most part reached their allocations by making tough choices; that is, shifting resources from lower to higher priority programs.

The allocations for the CJS, transportation and housing, and Agriculture bills conform to the intent of the Murray-Ryan deal. Both the Commerce-Justice-Science bill and the Agriculture bill actually decrease spending compared to the current enacted levels, while still being sufficient to meet the needs of the agencies. I am pleased to have worked with the chairwoman to ensure that the CJS bill successfully balanced the important and competing interests of law enforcement, scientific advancement, and U.S. competitiveness. The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill has a moderate increase of only 1.4 percent, after taking into account the scorekeeping difference between OMB and CBO on FHA loan receipts.

I believe passing these funding measures will give Congress a voice in government spending that it was constitutionally intended to have. Instead of ceding spending discretion to the executive branch or simply locking in place priorities that have become outdated—as a continuing resolution would do—this bill includes hundreds of limits on how taxpayer dollars can be spent. While I might not agree with every item in each bill, I think we have found solid middle ground upon which both sides of the aisle can comfortably stand.

Once again, I thank the chair, Senator MIKULSKI, for her willingness to work together, and I encourage my colleagues to come to the floor and offer their amendments so we can debate the merits of them.

Thank you. I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I thank the vice chairman for his remarks. I think he makes excellent points. We had a tough top line to meet. The CBO score—these budgets speak words that people are trying to follow. The Congressional Budget Office actually says how much things will cost, and when they took a look at what our FHA program and certain mortgage rates would cost, they found out we overestimated revenue by $4 billion. That is a lot of money even by Washington standards. So we had to adjust accordingly, and it has not been easy.

I will tell my colleagues that we are now coming down to talk about where we really are now—what are the agencies we want to fund, why we want to fund them at the amount we do, and what problems they actually solve for the American people. The American people have a right to ask at the end of the day not ''did you spend money'' but ''what did you spend it on and what did we get for it? Are we a stronger country? Do we have a better economy? Do our children have a brighter future? Are we meeting compelling human needs?'' I think in these three bills the answer is yes.

When we look at Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations, we want to tell our colleagues what we have done. It really funds several different agencies, and it comes to a total of $51.2 billion. It is consistent with the CJS allocation, and it is $398 million less—I want to say this clearly. What we are doing in the Commerce-Justice-Science bill, we are spending less money than we did last year, but we think we are getting more value for the dollar. We are $398 million below what we spent last year, but at the same time we have kept our communities safe, we have promoted jobs, and we have promoted innovation.

We used our spending to guide Federal decisions from Federal law enforcement to space exploration. The CJS bill provides $28 billion for the Justice Department. This is $260 million more than 2014. We did this because we believe the Justice Department is an agency that people in local communities feel they need to be able to count on. It keeps America safe from crime and terrorism. It protects communities at the local level. It protects families against domestic violence and sexual predators. And the job of the Justice Department is to administer justice fairly.

This bill funds key law enforcement and prosecution agencies. What do we mean by that? Federal law enforcement is made up of the FBI, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Marshals Service, and the U.S. attorneys who actually prosecute the bad guys or the bad gals for everything from mortgage fraud, to cyber terrorism, to drug dealing and drug cartels, so they can keep us safe from all of this, protecting us against gangs, drug dealers. Why is it important? Federal law enforcement goes after gang activity, fraudsters trying to be more predatory.

What is the result in this funding? We have done a lot. In my own home State of Maryland, over the last year our Federal law enforcement has arrested 280 violent fugitives. Federal law enforcement brought down child pornographers and traffickers, bank robbers, and took a big whack at the heroin trafficking rings. I am really proud of them. I am proud of what they do in Maryland, and I am proud of what they do around the world.

Look at how our FBI, working with our special operations, brought to heel and brought into our custody one of the men who killed our Embassy personnel in Benghazi. Let's do a big hurrah for the FBI and special ops, but let's do our hurrah not only with words but putting the money in the Federal checkbook so they get to be able to continue to do the job of keeping America safe.

There are many other aspects of this bill that are important. This is why we look out for our State and local departments.

We have also put in an important investment in the Violence Against Women Act. We are spending $430 million to give grants to prevent and prosecute domestic violence and also to be able to deal and help with rape victims.

This bill puts money in the Federal checkbook to put more police officers on the beat. But I like the fact that we are actually protecting them with more bulletproof vests and being able to do other work.

This bill also addresses the backlog of sexual assaults, making sure we test no matter where they are. We have seen time and time again that evidence is gathered and that somehow or another it is in some box in some lab or some police department. Rape victims cannot be dually assaulted—one by the predator who attacked them and then by a lackluster prosecutorial system. If you gather the evidence, test it and use it to make sure we have the right predator. Prosecute the predator. See if they are a serial predator. Let's not doubly assault the victim by not only what happened to them on the street but also what happens to them in the criminal justice system.

So we are doing a lot. I feel very strongly about this, but I also feel very strongly about the need to create jobs. This bill provides $8.6 billion for the Department of Commerce, which helps them protect our patents, promotes trade and economic development. It helps our coastal economies with sustainable fisheries and healthy oceans. It exports American goods and services and supports more than 11 million jobs.

This bill does a lot by putting our Commercial Service officers—those who actually work in embassies—to work, with business to be able to help them. And we make sure they are not only in Europe but they are in Asia and Africa, where the new opportunities are.

Our dynamic Secretary of Commerce has focused on bringing foreign investments to the United States, and we have seen what they have meant to Maryland and what they have meant in Alabama and what they have meant in America.

We also, through the Commerce Department, help with our weather bureau. I am going to say more about it, but what I want to talk about right now is the National Science Foundation—one of our other main agencies—because it does the basic research in science, technology, and engineering.

Then there is NASA. I am going to say more about NASA later. I know we have others waiting to speak. For NASA, actually, we have done more than what the President wanted to do because we wanted to have a balanced space program. We have particularly emphasized human space flight, a reliable transportation system, and space science.

We have here where we are creating jobs, we are protecting people in their communities, and we are laying the groundwork for jobs of the future. There are many other issues I will talk about as the bill unfolds.

Senator SHELBY and I have worked very closely with Senator COBURN. Everybody knows Senator COBURN prides himself on being a watchdog on Federal spending. And you know what. He has been. I love some of his ideas; some give me a little pause. But we actually met. We actually met to see what we could do to be able to reform our government so we could get more value for the dollar. I am going to have a separate speech just on that so the American people know, when they say ''Watch what you spend, Barb,'' I really am doing it. So is Senator SHELBY. So are the members of our committee.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Mr. President, again I rise today in support of, specifically, the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill, where I am the ranking member for the Republicans.

I appreciate the leadership, as I have said earlier, of the chair on this particular bill. We have worked together for many years. I chaired this subcommittee at one time, and I believe the bill being considered today reflects a strong bipartisan effort.

The competing interests of the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill always prove challenging, but I believe this bill strikes the appropriate balance.

The allocation for the CJS bill; that is, the Commerce-Justice-Science bill; is $51.2 billion, which is just below the fiscal year 2014 enacted level—yes, below. Working within this allocation, we sought to balance priorities, hold agencies accountable for their work, and demand efficiencies to stretch limited Federal dollars. Ultimately, these efforts ensure that Federal resources are spent efficiently and effectively.

The bill before us provides robust funding for the Department of Justice and law enforcement grant programs totaling $28 billion. It focuses attention and resources on some of the most difficult issues plaguing the Nation, including human trafficking, gang violence, child predation, a growing heroin crisis, threats to cyber security, and domestic terrorism.

Grant programs such as VALOR, Byrne, veterans courts, crime lab improvements, violence against women, and the COPS Program will receive funding to advance the important work being done at the State and local level in our Nation.

Moreover, the bill ensures that the Department maintains its focus on evidence-based programs and activities that have a proven record of effectiveness. This requirement emphasizes the committee's commitment to ensuring that Federal dollars are not just spent but are spent wisely.

The bill also includes $8.6 billion for the Department of Commerce, which is responsible for a range of issues, including weather forecasting, economic development, trade promotion, and fisheries conservation, among others.

The bill prioritizes resources to support NOAA's next generation of weather satellites that will enable the National Weather Service to continue to provide timely warnings for dangerous weather outbreaks that we all experience. To ensure that these weather satellites stay on budget and are delivered on time, the bill continues and expands stringent oversight requirements involving the inspector general. I believe our Nation cannot afford cost increases and schedule delays in these programs, and we expect that these oversight requirements will help avoid such a scenario. These satellites are essential to weather forecasters across the country. Without them, forecasters would be unable to provide important warnings about devastating storms, tornado outbreaks, and hurricanes, putting the safety of the American people at risk.

The bill also provides sufficient resources and direction to improve the management of the Nation's fisheries, including new approaches to manage red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico. These new approaches should provide a more equitable system for commercial fishermen and increase the number of fishing days for recreational anglers.

The bill also provides $18 billion for NASA, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. In order to preserve the planned launch schedule in 2017 for the heavy lift launch vehicle, or SLS, the bill includes $1.7 billion for SLS rocket development, which is very crucial. It also maintains focus on these efforts by requiring NASA to follow its own internal guidance regarding joint confidence levels in future funding requests.

The bill also preserves important funding for ongoing activities of the International Space Station and other vital science research missions.

In addition, the bill safeguards the advancement of efforts underway to develop a U.S. vehicle to transport our astronauts to the space station. I believe those efforts must continue in a transparent way to ensure that the government is not saddled with mounting bills and no recourse.

I commend the chair for working with me to include language that requires certified cost and pricing data for the crew vehicle development contract. The goal of the language is not to up-end a fixed-price contract; rather, the goal is to make certain that the price NASA has agreed to pay for vehicle development matches actual development expenditures. NASA and its contractors have a history of cost overruns and schedule delays, whether the contract has a fixed price or not. With no other U.S.-based options to get to the space station, I believe we cannot find ourselves at the eleventh hour with an overburdened program that requires a bailout to succeed.

Once again, these measures are included to ensure that the government is not just spending taxpayer money, but that it is doing so in a cost-effective manner.

I reiterate my belief that the bill reflects the Senate's priorities and the needs of our Nation. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HEITKAMP). The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I am pleased the Senate is now considering appropriations bills that fund important segments of our Federal Government. Those include the agencies responsible for scientific research, justice and nutrition programs, as well as the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development.

It has been some time since we have been able to fund the operations of the government through regular order, so it is encouraging that leaders on both sides of the aisle have been able to work together now to pursue that goal.

As we are here today considering these bills, I think it is helpful to remember where we were at this time last year. We were unable to start a budget conference. There was a government shutdown looming just a few months ahead, and businesses and families across the country had absolutely no certainty about whether their government could even keep the lights on.

Today we have more certainty thanks to the 2-year budget agreement, and building on the bipartisan work we all did to reach that agreement, the members of our committee, Senator COLLINS and I, have been able to put together a transportation and housing bill that makes responsible investments in infrastructure and community development and helps protect the most vulnerable among us.

Less than 2 weeks ago the Appropriations Committee approved the transportation and housing bill by a vote of 29 to 1—an extremely strong show of bipartisan support. This bill received such remarkable support because it helps families and communities, it gets workers back on the job, and it lays down a strong foundation for long-term and broad-based economic growth. It does this in a manner that is fiscally responsible, with growth of just a little more than 1 percent over the fiscal year 2014 level when looking at the program funding levels and factoring in FHA receipts, which do vary from year to year. After adjusting for inflation, the funding in this bill is actually 2.5 percent less than what it was in fiscal year 2008, as a result of the spending cuts we have now applied to discretionary appropriations.

This bill is timely. It makes critical, targeted investments to address concerns that have developed over the past year. In light of the dramatic growth in domestic energy production, it includes new resources to strengthen oversight of energy shipments by rail to keep our communities safe, including funding for additional rail safety and hazardous materials inspectors, training for first responders, more track inspections, research into the volatility of crude oil, and requirements for stronger tank car designs.

This bill includes $10 million to improve vehicle safety defects analysis and investigation, to help ensure we do not see a repeat of the Department of Transportation's failure to detect unsafe parts in General Motors and other manufacturers' vehicles.

This bill provides an additional 10,000 vouchers to move us closer to finally eliminating homelessness among our Nation's veterans. Due to these investments, we have been able to reduce the number of homeless vets on our Nation's streets by 24 percent since 2010. We are well on our way to eliminating it altogether.

Our bill includes direction to help communities implement the Violence Against Women Act in Federal housing programs as well as resources to improve coordination between housing programs and domestic violence survivors services. It makes it possible for HUD to support youth aging out of foster care, giving them more time to find stability and save money, thereby helping to reduce the elevated risk of homelessness facing those vulnerable young people.

This bill invests in our communities. It provides $3 billion for community development grants to State and local governments to help communities fund projects that meet their unique needs and support efforts to create jobs and $950 million for the HOME Program to help create affordable housing.

It ensures the FAA has sufficient funding to continue rebuilding its workforce after the disruptive effects of last year's sequestration. It fully funds the FAA's airport grants and research programs as well as the contract towers and Essential Air Service Program that so many of our rural communities depend on.

It includes sufficient funding for HUD's house and homeless assistance program, to preserve this vital piece of the Nation's safety net. More than half of the 5.4 million very low-income households that depend upon the housing assistance provided in this bill include someone elderly, disabled, or both. Without these programs, many of these individuals would be homeless.

The bill includes $90 million for Choice Neighborhoods. That is a program that helps tear down and rebuild distressed public housing as well as language making it possible for more local authorities to access private capital through the Rental Assistance Demonstration to renovate our aging housing stock. Notably, it includes reforms to make the programs in this bill more accountable and more effective. These include provisions to make it easier for public housing authorities to manage their capital and operations needs as well as resources for HUD to use the lessons it has learned since Hurricane Katrina to develop templates that communities can quickly implement to speed recovery effectively following a disaster.

The bill streamlines environmental reviews for Native American housing. It works to ensure accountability for property owners who do not maintain the quality of their HUD assisted housing. It increases accountability in the CDBG Program.

That is our bill. We do make tough choices. To fund increases for inflation and other uncontrollable costs, we made the very difficult choice of trimming funding for programs that Members care about, including the TIGER and HOME Program. In short, this bill is a good bill.

I note that most of the transportation funding, a total of just over $50 billion, comes from our highway trust fund. As we all know, right now, the highway trust fund is headed toward a crisis. The Department of Transportation expects the balances in this fund to reach critical levels later this summer. To deal with this uncertainty, States now are already bracing for the worst-case scenario. Some States such as Arkansas have already put their projects on hold. This crisis could also hurt workers in the construction industry who depend on jobs to repair our roads and bridges.

If Congress does not act, a shortfall in the highway trust fund will put at risk the funding we have included here in our THUD bill. We need immediate action to solve that crisis well before October when the new fiscal year starts. We need to work together to avoid that unnecessary and preventable crisis. In the meantime, I am glad we are turning to the transportation and housing bill and getting the work of the Appropriations Committee done.

Together with the Senator from Maine, SUSAN COLLINS, I encourage Members to bring their amendments to the floor and to work with us to make it even better. This bill enjoys broad bipartisan support, because it takes a practical approach to addressing the real needs we find in the transportation and housing sectors.

The investments it makes would improve safety, increase efficiency, and help our communities, and lay down a strong foundation for long-term and broad-based economic growth and help position our country and our economy to compete in winning the 21st century global economy. I urge our colleagues to support our bipartisan bill. I hope we can move rapidly to final passage.

Before I yield, I do want to thank Chairman MIKULSKI for her support and leadership. As the former chair of the VA HUD subcommittee, she appreciates the importance of the investments in our bill. This bill includes priorities of Members on both sides of the aisle, reflecting the Appropriations Committee's bipartisan tradition.

I thank our entire committee for their work. I especially want to take a moment to express my thanks to my ranking member Senator COLLINS and her staff for all of their hard work and cooperation throughout this process. I am proud that together we have written a bill that works for families and communities. Investing in families and communities and long-term economic growth should not be a partisan issue. I think the bipartisan work that went into this bill and the strong support it received in committee proves it does not have to be.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I am told the Senator from Washington State has a very brief statement she would like to make. I ask unanimous consent that she be allowed up to 3 minutes to make her statement before I reclaim the floor.

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

Ms. CANTWELL. Madam President, I thank the Senator from Maine. I will explain to her later how Maine continues to play a very interesting role in such an important issue.

(The further remarks of Ms. CANTWELL are printed in today's RECORD under ''Morning Business.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maine.

Ms. COLLINS. Madam President, I am pleased to join with Chairman MURRAY as we hope to begin floor consideration of the bipartisan fiscal year 2015 appropriations bill for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.

As usual, it has been a great pleasure to work with Chairman MURRAY. She is extremely fair-minded and bipartisan in the approach she has taken to this bill. I also thank her staff for working closely with my staff as we sought to craft a bill that I believe deserves the support of all of our colleagues.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank Chairwoman MIKULSKI and Vice Chairman SHELBY for their extraordinary leadership in advancing those three appropriations bills through what at times is turning out to be a daunting process. It is my hope and expectation that we can give Members of this body the opportunity to debate all three of these bills, to offer amendments, and ultimately to pass them, and that we have an open and transparent process.

I would encourage cooperation on both sides of the aisle. It is in the best interests of this country for us to do our work in the regular order, in the normal process, and to pass these bills, and then to hold conferences with the House to iron out any differences.

Last week the House did approve its own version of the THUD appropriations bill. This is an important step in the process which will eventually allow the two Chambers to meet in conference and produce a final bill to send to the President for his signature. I commend the leaders of the Appropriations Committee and also the floor leaders for making sure we have the time available to bring these bills to the floor.

There is no reason we cannot pass each one of the appropriations bills, have a conference with the House, and get them to the President before the start of the fiscal year so we can avoid gigantic omnibus bills that are a poor way to legislate or, even worse, continuing resolutions that lock into law increased costs and priorities that may no longer reflect today's needs.

The THUD bill before us today is essentially a jobs bill. It provides $54.4 billion in responsible investments in transportation and housing programs, and it includes input from Members on both sides of the aisle. Every Senator has unmet transportation and housing needs in his or her State, from crumbling roads and unsafe bridges to a growing population of vulnerable low-income families, seniors, and disabled individuals in need of housing assistance.

Chairman MURRAY and I worked very hard to accommodate the input from many Members. This bill we bring before you received overwhelming support in the full Appropriations Committee. In fact, as Chairman MURRAY mentioned, the vote was 29 to 1 to report this bill to the full Senate. It is essential to acknowledge that this year's THUD bill is directly affected by nearly a $3 billion reduction in Federal Housing Authority receipts for fiscal year 2015. As a result, we were faced with making very difficult decisions to ensure that the Federal investments in this bill were prioritized to meet the most critical needs.

One of the most pressing issues this bill addresses has not received a great deal of attention, so I want to spend a moment on it; that is, the safe transportation of crude oil and other hazardous materials by rail. I know the Presiding Officer is very familiar with this issue. I am pleased to say our transportation bill strengthens three components to help ensure the safe transportation of crude oil and other hazardous materials. It focuses on prevention, mitigation, and response. If you talk to any emergency responder, they will tell you those are the three critical components.

We do so without adopting the President's poorly conceived proposal, which would have created yet another level of bureaucracy in the Secretary's office. Instead, we chose what I believe to be a wiser course. We provided funding directly to the agencies to support additional rail inspectors, advance research efforts, and to establish cooperative training programs.

I know firsthand how horrific these disasters can be, because last year there was a terrible derailment in Lac-Megantic, Quebec, 30 miles from the border of Maine, that cost 47 lives and essentially destroyed this picturesque village. I was very proud that 30 Maine firefighters responded to the call for help from their Canadian counterparts.

Senator MURRAY and I held an oversight hearing to look at rail safety, and the fire chief from Rangeley, ME, Tim Pellerin, testified before our committee at our oversight hearing. He provided gripping testimony about this extraordinarily dangerous experience, as well as thoughtful recommendations about what should be done. I want to tell the chief that we listened to him, and a lot of our recommendations in the bill—particularly with regard to training—reflect the advice he gave us as a first responder on that very dangerous scene.

Turning to another issue, this bill provides $550 million for the TIGER Program, an effective initiative that helps advance transportation infrastructure projects. We have seen firsthand how TIGER projects create good jobs and support economic growth in our home States.

Turning now to air travel, the aviation investments included in our bill will continue to modernize our Nation's air traffic system. These investments are creating safer skies and a more efficient air space to move the flying public.

In addition to transportation programs, our bill provides sufficient but not generous funding to keep pace with the rising cost of housing vulnerable families. More than 4 million families will continue to receive critical rental assistance for their housing. Without it, many of these families would otherwise become homeless.

Chairman MURRAY and I continue to share a strong commitment—indeed, a passion—to reducing homelessness in this country. For that reason we have included more than $2 billion for homeless assistance grants. Since 2010 we have reduced overall chronic homelessness by 16 percent and veterans homelessness by 24 percent.

These programs are working, and we have the data to prove it. That is why our bill builds on these successes and provides an additional 10,000 HUD-VASH vouchers to serve our Nation's veterans.

We have an obligation to our Nation's veterans. That has been very much on our minds recently, and we can point with pride to the reduction by 24 percent in homelessness among veterans, but we want to complete the job. We don't want any veteran to be homeless, and we are making progress through this well-conceived program.

While our bill helps families in need and our Nation's veterans, it also invests in our communities. Boosting local economies is critical to job creation and helping families obtain financial security. Our legislation supports these local development efforts by providing more than $3 billion for Community Development Block Grants.

I am sure the Presiding Officer has had the experience, as most Members have, of talking to State and local officials about the Community Development Block Grant Program. It is an extremely popular program with States and communities because it allows them to tailor the Federal funds to support locally driven economic and job-creation projects. It isn't Washington telling them how this money should be spent but, rather, providing the flexibility so that they can meet local economic development needs and help to create new jobs.

The bill before us does not solve all of the problems in either the Department of Transportation or in the Department of Housing and Urban Development; we don't have the money to do that.

Most notably, the administration's budget does not come up with a realistic way to address the urgent need to prevent the highway trust fund from becoming insolvent in August.

There should be no doubt in the mind of any Member of this body, if the administration and Congress do not take action before the August recess, State departments of transportation will not be reimbursed for work that has already been completed and new projects will likely grind to a halt and jobs, good construction jobs, will be lost.

The administration must present an achievable plan to avoid this disruption, these lost jobs, these stalled transportation projects, and Congress must work in good faith to secure passage.

Transportation is the lifeline of our economy, supporting millions of jobs and moving people and products. When coupled with the housing and economic development projects, the fiscal year 2015 transportation and housing appropriations bill will create jobs now when they are needed most and will establish the foundation for future growth.

Just as important to our economic future, however, is reining in excessive Federal spending and getting our national debt under control, which must be a priority governmentwide.

We have met the budget allocations that have been provided to us. In setting priorities for fiscal year 2015, I believe our T-HUD bill strikes the right balance between thoughtful investment and the necessary fiscal restraint.

I appreciate the opportunity to present this legislation to the Members of this Chamber. As we continue the debate on these bills, I urge my colleagues to consider how important it is that we complete our work on time, and I hope they will support the efforts of the Appropriations Committee.

I thank the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I yield to the majority leader.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

NFL FOOTBALL

Mr. REID. I appreciate the chairman of the Appropriations Committee being so kind.

There are 27 tribes in the State of Nevada, Native Americans. The issue regarding the name Redskins is very important to every one of those tribes. Every time they hear this name, it is a sad reminder of a long tradition of racism and bigotry.

A month or so ago, Daniel Snyder, the owner of the team, had some people come to Nevada and agree to buy one of the Indian tribes a car if they would say nice things about the Redskins. They refused.

This is extremely important to Native Americans all over the country, that they no longer use this name. It is racist.

Daniel Snyder says it is about tradition. I ask: What tradition? The tradition of racism, that is all this name leaves in its wake.

The writing is on the wall. The writing is on the wall in giant blinking neon lights. This name will change and justice will be done for the tribes in Nevada and across the Nation who care so deeply about this issue.

The Patent and Trademark Office today took away all the trademarks. The Redskins no longer have trademarks. They are gone.

So as I understand the law, if the Presiding Officer wants to use the name Redskins and sell them shirts, she can do that. There is no trademark anymore for the Redskins.

Daniel Snyder may be the last person in the world to realize this, but it is only a matter of time before he is forced to do what is right and change the name.

The leader on this issue is the junior Senator from the State of Washington. Senator CANTWELL has been tireless in showing the American people how unfair it is for the Redskins' name to be used as it is. I think she is one of the leading causes that the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office said it is no longer—no longer—a trademark. They did that this morning.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I know Senator COLLINS and Senator MURRAY are leaving to go to the DOD to meet with Secretary Hagel, and we both look forward to their return this afternoon, but I want to acknowledge the great role they played in putting together the appropriations and transportation funding for the entire United States of America, as well as the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

We are going to talk more about transportation because it literally keeps America rolling, whether it is the kinds of problems we solved with the issues around safety, congestion—they are absolutely crucial. But also what they talked about in their bill is housing and urban development and how—it is also the famous HUD bill—it does not only do urban development.

I know the Presiding Officer is from the State of North Dakota, whose terrain and challenges are very different than my State, a coastal State. But the Presiding Officer would be interested to know—because she has been hit by some bad weather—that when Hurricane Sandy hit, my State was hit by two things: a hurricane—a hurricane on my Eastern Shore, in which a whole town was underwater and literally people had to be rescued by Zodiacs, by boats, and so on.

Then out in western Maryland, our mountain counties, people were hit by a blizzard. It was so bad that regular snowplows, local government, and the private sector weren't working. The Governor had to bring in the National Guard—and God bless our State troopers and first responders. They were bringing out senior citizens on snowmobiles and things strapped to their chests to get them to safety because the free zone was there.

I tell that poignant story because while we looked to FEMA to rescue, it was really the Community Development Block Grant money that helped local communities come back. FEMA was there for readiness, so we were ready to respond. It was ready to respond. But the big job of rehabilitation always comes through CDBG. I am going to talk about it because it is a lot of letters—one more agency with a lot of letters—but it is also a big impact. What we need to be able to focus on is this is Federal spending with local decisionmaking. It is money that comes to local communities to eliminate blight and to create jobs. Blight can come from a natural disaster or communities that are aging with that kind of impact.

We hope we have support for the bill, but, gee, they did a good job and they did it with diligence, civility, collegiality and common sense, as is characteristic.

I would point out we have tried to use common sense too. Working with Senator SHELBY, as I have said, I am going to emphasize the word ''frugality.'' How do we make sure we get value for the taxpayers' dollar.

It is something in which I strongly believe. My colleague has been a Federal watchdog. He, like I, believes in the funding of these agencies. These watchdog agencies are absolutely crucial.

The Appropriations Committee, under my chairmanship but with the strong concurrence of the vice chairman, believes in the inspectors general.

Congress can hold an investigation and we can pound our chests and put glasses on our noses and ask tough questions, but we need the kind of truly drilling down to know what agencies are doing and are they making sure we avoid boondoggles, waste, stupidity, and at the same time terrible cost overruns.

Thanks to working on a bipartisan basis, we have insisted that inspectors general be at every hearing. This has been a new innovation of the leadership of Senator SHELBY and me. We want the inspectors general to be part of our official record so we know the top 10 issues they brought to our attention to stand sentry, and we put money in the Federal checkbook to fund them.

We funded the Commerce Department IG at $30.6 million, $600 million above 2014 for Justice to make sure grant programs were well administered for NASA, to avoid techno-boondoggles, and for the NSF, so they too keep an eye on it.

We are going to talk more about the problems they identified and the problems we solved, but I note on the floor

Senator PRYOR from Arkansas, who has chaired the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, an important subcommittee that is part of our overall bill today.

I yield the floor for Senator PRYOR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I rise in support of the fiscal year 2015 Agriculture appropriations bill. I know Senator BLUNT, the ranking member, is on his way over. We were just in another subcommittee hearing and we were asking questions.

Before I say anything else, I thank Senator BLUNT because he has been a great partner to work with. He has been outstanding. He knows this stuff. He works hard. He knows how to work the system. He has been great. He is one of those guys we can trust, and he is very bipartisan. If we had more folks like Senator BLUNT around here, we would get a lot more done. He is doing great work for the country by doing what he is doing.

This is a commonsense and bipartisan bill. It did pass unanimously coming out of the full Appropriations Committee last month, and I am confident my colleagues will support it. When they have a chance to see it, they will like it. I heartily encourage everyone to take a good look at it and support it for final passage.

Agriculture, as we know very well, is something America does better than anybody else in the world. We are the envy of the world when it comes to agriculture. We do it right. We are the gold standard. We are what every other nation in the world wants to be. It is of course rural America's No. 1 industry. So when we talk about agriculture and rural America, it is doing something we can be extremely proud of in this body and in this country because they do it better than anybody else.

I learned a lesson 1 or 2 years ago when Senator STABENOW took over as chairwoman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. She told me everybody thinks of Michigan and they think of automobile manufacturing—heavy industry—as the No. 1 industry, and it is in Michigan, but agriculture is No. 2.

If we were to go around a map of the United States, that is what we would see pretty much in almost every State. Agriculture is either the No. 1 industry or No. 2. In a few cases it is the No. 3 industry. I could go around to all 50 States, but in Arkansas, as an example, agriculture equals a full 25 percent of our State's economy. So 25 percent of our economy is agriculture or agra related.

Again, if we look around the country, we will see numbers similar to that in many States. It contributes $17 billion in economic activity to Arkansas. It also supports thousands and thousands of jobs—in fact, about one in six jobs. We could put up a chart similar to this for any State in the Union. The numbers may change from State to State, but they will be generally the same.

The Agriculture appropriations bill we are talking about builds on the strengths of our agricultural industry. It invests in the Farm Service Agency. It prohibits the closure of FSA offices, which provide vital services to our farmers and ranchers, and it provides funding for farm ownership loans. It also invests in the Agricultural Research Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service so America can continue to innovate and make our agricultural products more efficiently.

This is another area America truly leads the world in, agricultural innovation. Agriculture is actually very science-based and very innovative. It doesn't always get credit for being high-tech, but it actually is. So much of that basic research and the things that make a difference out in the field happen in this legislation, but that is not all the bill does. It also makes smart investments to help improve job opportunities and quality of life for families in rural America.

One thing we don't want to see is the old ''Tale of Two Americas,'' where urban and suburban get all the money, get the latest and the greatest and the best and the cutting edge and rural America is left behind. That can happen and it does happen in Washington, unfortunately, quite a bit—but not in this bill. This bill's primary emphasis is on rural America. It is one of the few bills we talk about in any given Congress that does focus on rural America. It makes smart investments there.

It maintains funding for the Rural Development Water and Waste Disposal Program to help many of our very small communities obtain clean water and sanitary waste disposal systems. Here again, just because one lives in smalltown America doesn't mean they shouldn't have clean water. Everybody should have clean water. So this bill makes sure that happens.

It increases funding for the Food and Drug Administration to ensure that our food and our drug supply remains the safest and the most reliable in the world. There again FDA is in this bill. Everybody in the world wants to be like FDA. Everybody wants the integrity we have in our system for our food and our drugs. We fund FDA here.

It provides funding for the Food Safety and Inspection Service to keep our food supply safe, and it sustains the school meals equipment grants so our schools can continue to provide healthy meals for kids.

We also included in this legislation money for disaster relief. Some people have asked me: Why? Why should we do that? I have a photograph recently taken in Arkansas. This is just one example of the devastating effects of a tornado.

Here we look at what used to be someone's home. We have to remember these people worked all their lives to have this house, and in about 45 seconds this is what was left of it. It may be hard to see on the television, but right here is a motorcycle, a pickup truck, a power line lying in the yard, a few appliances, a few people hugging, but one thing we see is their pride in America, where they put up their flag. Even in the most adverse circumstances they came together and pulled together to make that happen.

So we put disaster money into this legislation because our country needs disaster money. We need to make sure disasters are fully funded and we have those resources when our neighbors need it the most.

In this storm lives were lost, homes were completely wiped out, and many communities were left in ruins. Arkansas is not unique. I wish I could say this didn't happen, but it does happen periodically around the country. This bill provides funding to help States respond when natural disaster strikes.

My view is that supporting this legislation is a no-brainer. It is bipartisan. It is a good, commonsense, solid piece of legislation. It sustains our agricultural producers, our communities and our families, and it strengthens our economy and secures the future of our Nation.

Before I turn it over to my colleague from Missouri—and I know we are all anxious to hear what he says—there has been a question, as I have talked to many of my colleagues both on the Democratic and the Republican side, about whether we will allow amendments. The answer is: Absolutely, yes; we would like to see amendments.

I cannot speak for everyone in the Chamber, but from the members of the Appropriations Committee who are involved in this legislation, including the chairwoman and the ranking member, yes, we want to talk to Senators about their amendments. It is a little bit like the Statue of Liberty: ''Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.'' We want to see those amendments. We want to talk about them.

We are hoping we will be able to put together managers' packages. We are hoping we will be able to find common ground and make this bill better as it goes through the process. Certainly we don't want a lot of funny business on that. We want real amendments, good amendments, amendments that are important to moving this forward.

I know many of my colleagues have been frustrated, but we would like to talk to as many Members as possible about their amendments. I will be on the floor on and off most of the day, either on the floor or near the floor all day. So if anyone's office wants to talk to me about amendments or any Member wants to talk about amendments, I will be glad to do that.

I yield the floor for my colleague from Missouri.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I am pleased to join the Senator from Arkansas in introducing this bill. He has been a great person to work with.

I also fully associate myself with his comments about our colleagues' ability to amend these bills. Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY have been real advocates for us getting back to the process the way it essentially worked in the country for a couple hundred years. We got out of the habit of bringing these bills to the floor, letting Members come to the floor and offer better ways to spend this money or if they want to propose not to spend it at all, that is one of the proposals they can make.

The Senator from Arkansas and I have worked to make the tough choices, but seldom is a bill so perfect that it can't be improved, and there is nothing wrong with defending the decisions we have made.

I believe one of the real losses for the country and the Senate of these bills not coming to the floor in recent years is that Members of the Senate haven't had to hear the debate. Members who bring a bill to the floor haven't had to defend the bill. Before we know it, if we don't have to defend what we are for, we have a hard time remembering why we are for what we are for.

This process makes sense if we do it the right way. Certainly, Senator PRYOR has wanted to approach this in that way, and maybe, more importantly, from both our points of view, Senator MIKULSKI and Senator SHELBY have been advocating that we bring these bills to the floor and we debate these priorities.

I am particularly pleased to join with Senator PRYOR in introducing this bill and bringing this bill to the floor, the fiscal year 2015 Agriculture appropriations bill, for agriculture, for rural development, for the Food and Drug Administration, and the things that relate to those agencies. The Senator made a good point already about how important this industry is. In Missouri as in Arkansas, agriculture is the No. 1 industry. In my State it is responsible for 16 percent of the State's workforce. Frankly, as world food needs develop, I believe the percentage of our workforce that will have jobs because of agriculture—growing, producing, and processing it, figuring out how to get it to markets around the world—will be an even higher percentage in the future. I think agriculture is the No. 1 industry in most States. If it is not the No. 1 industry, it is right there at the top.

For 150 years now the Federal Government, through what would become the Department of Agriculture after a bill President Lincoln signed in 1862, has been doing many of the things we want to continue to do in this bill. This is not a newfound obligation on the part of the Federal Government. This is not something for which the Federal Government just decided it needed to have some responsibility. This is something that 150 years ago the Federal Government said: You know, we don't need to have—as the land grant universities were founded, the Federal Government said: We need to help these universities manage the research they are doing so that what they are doing can be shared throughout our country, so it is not needlessly duplicated, so it is properly not only allocated but funded.

So the activities in this bill include one of my priorities, which is agricultural research. It includes conservation activities, housing and business loans for rural communities, domestic and international nutrition programs, and food and drug safety. Certainly all of those have a top priority on the list of different individual Members of the Senate. It would be hard to find a Senator who didn't have near the top of their priority list one of the things this bill does.

The Senator from Arkansas and I have made difficult decisions in drafting this bill. Aside from the disaster recovery efforts, the bill is $90 million below last year's bill. I think it represents a responsible approach to the funding of these priorities but at the same time tightening our belts as we work to live within our means.

We have prioritized programs that protect public health and maintain the strength of our Nation's agricultural economy. Agriculture is one of the few sectors in our economy that consistently enjoy a trade surplus. Last year was our strongest export year in ag products in the history of the country. Recent information from the Department of Agriculture indicates that 2014 is going to set a new record. We need to continue to work through the U.S. Department of Agriculture to open new markets, and we are doing that—particularly markets in Asia and Europe that need to be more open to our products. Expanding agricultural exports is vital. Every $1 billion in agricultural exports supports an estimated 8,000 American jobs.

If we need to have a domestic priority in the Congress today, it is more private sector jobs. One way to do that is to continue to do what we are doing in this bill and to do it even better.

Opening export markets is only one piece of the puzzle that maintains our agricultural economy. The American farmer is the best in the world at producing products that are desired worldwide in the global marketplace. Smart investment in ag research has helped us get to that point. We have products with a quality, with a market sensitivity, and with a health and nutrition value that people all over the world want.

This bill places significant emphasis on maintaining research at our land grant universities and our non-land grant university systems that have a commitment to agriculture and funding competitive research beyond that in things such as the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative.

These programs are critical to our increased production. Every dollar spent in agricultural research results in around a $20 return to the U.S. economy. By the way, that comes year after year. Once you create that notch and work to try to improve it, it continues to come.

This bill will also provide our rural communities with even more ability to compete both here and abroad.

In a bill where many items didn't get the funding that was requested, we fully funded the Food and Drug Administration request. It is important to the chairman, important to our committee, and important as we look at the health and safety of the products for which the Food and Drug Administration is responsible.

Again, I thank the Senator from Arkansas for his leadership. I thank our chairman and ranking member of the full committee for working so hard to see these bills debated on the floor. I look forward to working with our colleagues as they come up with ways to improve this bill. It is one of the three bills that are on the floor this week.

I hope we can return to a day very quickly where all the appropriations bills are on the floor in as small a group as possible and where they are all open to amendment. We have to get back into the practice of remembering why we are for what we are for and why we have decided to propose that the hard-earned dollars of American families should be spent for these things as opposed to not spending them all or spending them on something else. It is a process that will work if the Senate shares the commitment of the chairman and Senator SHELBY and I think everybody on the Appropriations Committee to try to get back into the business of doing this business publicly and openly and in the right way.

Madam President, I will yield for Senator PRYOR.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. PRYOR. I have a few more comments after listening to my colleague from Missouri. I did want to mention a few.

The first point is on exports. We all know we have a bad trade deficit. We all know that. But it would be horrendous if it were not for agriculture. Agriculture is really a huge net plus for us when it comes to exporters. You may ask yourself why that is. It is because we raise the safest, highest quality food in the world, and other people want it. There is no question that when that food shows up on shelves in foreign countries, if this says ''Made in the USA,'' sometimes they can charge a premium because they know the USDA seal of approval is of the highest quality you can find anywhere in the world. So exports are very important.

We heard the President—not just this President but the previous President as well—talk about exports and how many jobs exports create. We need to get back in the exportation business, and agriculture is a great way to do that.

Senator BLUNT alluded to research. There are some tremendous numbers in research. For every dollar of research, you get a $20 return to the U.S. economy. That is a no-brainer. That is

smart policy. That is the right thing to do. It is good for the economy.

But also we both had an experience a few weeks ago where Bill Gates, who founded Microsoft, came in and talked to us about American agricultural research and how important it is in feeding the world. One aspect that struck me is here is a man—Bill Gates—who has been an economic revolutionary. He has changed the world with Microsoft and the digital revolution and the high-tech and all the efforts in which he has been involved. He has been at the cutting edge of so much of that change we have seen in our economy and the world's economy in the last 20-, 30-plus years. It is phenomenal. But here he is in the autumn of his life, and what does he come back to? Agriculture—something that is so basic that we take for granted, but because he has seen the work in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, he has seen the work around the world, he has seen the abject poverty, and he has seen the starvation, he knows that when they get their hands on American products such as seed, fertilizer—all the things we take for granted—that would be a life-changer for those people around the world.

I think it was Senator BLUNT who said his experience is that when people have been eating bad food all their lives, once they get a chance to eat good food, they don't want to go back to bad food. That is what Bill Gates is talking about, and that is where ag research comes in. That is how this piece of the puzzle fits.

There is another point I want to make about rural America. Generally in this legislation we have provisions for rural water, rural housing, rural broadband, rural electricity. Again, we have to understand the economics of that. If you wanted to add broadband somewhere, if you wanted to do it, say, in suburban Washington, DC, obviously you have in many cases relatively high income levels and you have population density. You have what makes it economically feasible. But if you are out in rural America, you want those people to have access to broadband, but you get so many fewer customers per mile. That is why we help. This is sort of the premise of the old Universal Service Fund we have had for a long time in telephone to help expand that network to every single home in America. Now, of course, we have a lot of wireless technologies and whatnot. So we want to make that readily available to rural America.

The last bit of substance I wanted to add to what Senator BLUNT mentioned is the funding for the Food and Drug Administration. I am not sure there is an agency that is responsible for more innovation than the FDA. We need to keep the FDA stable. We need to keep them well funded. They need to be able to approve drugs and do the testing they need to do.

One of the new frontiers they are dealing with is nanotechnology. We are seeing nano products enter the marketplace all over this economy, and there has been very little testing on that for human safety. So the FDA is doing that. We need to continue to fund them so they can do the job. We don't want them to be an obstacle to innovation; we want them to be a partner in innovation. Let these companies that come in and have these great products, whatever they are—cosmetics, food, whatever—let them innovate and do that and again create American jobs and enhance the marketplace. But in order for the FDA to do that, we need to fund them.

Senator BLUNT is right. We have the best system of government in the world, bar none. And the U.S. Senate always has its moments where it gets a few rough edges. This is democracy at its finest. People don't always agree. They fuss and fight and things get balled up here and there. But our system works, and it works great if we let it work.

I think what the chairwoman and the ranking member of the full committee are saying is: We want the process to work. We want it to work. We want to talk about amendments. We want to have amendments. We want to have votes. We want to get back to regular order, whatever that means in the Senate. But most of us know what that means. It means getting back to where Senators can participate in the process, but it is also done in good will and good faith.

With that, Madam President, I would yield the floor, but I would encourage my colleagues to look closely at and support this legislation.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Madam President, I note that the distinguished Senator from Arizona is on the floor, and we want to be sure he has an opportunity to speak.

I do have a housekeeping matter to take care of and just a few words—about three sentences—about ag, but I want the Senator from Arizona to be heard.

Madam President, I wish to comment on the Agriculture bill, but I will keep that for later on in the day. I will be on the floor along with Senator SHELBY trying to move this bill in a way that we could complete the motion to proceed and that we could move to amendments.

Right now, I wish to compliment both the Senator from Arkansas and the Senator from Missouri, Senators PRYOR and BLUNT, for the excellent way they have moved the agriculture FDA bill. They have worked on a bipartisan basis. They have met compelling human needs—in other words, feed America first; see how we can feed others in need around the world; look out for everyone from the family farm to also food safety because now so much of our food is also imported. At the same time, they have supported the Food and Drug Administration. That is an agency located in Maryland that is responsible for oversight of the food supply but also our pharmaceuticals, biotech, and medical devices.

My colleagues have spoken eloquently about exports, particularly with food. I will speak later today about the exports of pharmaceuticals, biotech, and medical devices because there are countries around the world that want to look out for their own people, but they don't have an FDA. So when we have products—life science products—that save lives or improve lives and they have been stamped by the FDA as safe and effective, then countries know they can buy them with confidence. This means those areas of endeavor are not only good for jobs in this country, great for improving the lives of people in our country, but they are also a major source of the new American export economy.

I think they did a great job, and I will say more about it. But right now, unless Senator SHELBY has something to say, we can go to our Senate colleague from Arizona.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as if in morning business, and I wish to enter into a colloquy with the Senator from South Carolina when he arrives.

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

IRAQ

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I come to the floor this morning with my colleague, the Senator from South Carolina, to put to rest once and for all the claim we hear so often today: President Obama wanted to leave a residual force of U.S. troops in Iraq after 2011. He tried his hardest to do so, but Iraqi leaders prevented that from happening because they demanded that Iraq's parliament approve legislation to grant privileges and immunities for U.S. troops that would remain in the country.

This is a very important item and aspect of the debate that is now going on, and it is a claim that was made in growing desperation these days as it becomes increasingly clear for all to see that the President's mishandling of Iraq for the past 5 years and his consistent inaction on Syria has now brought us to the verge of disaster.

The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria—a more ambitious, more violent, and more radical offshoot of Al Qaeda—has now taken over a swath of territory in Iraq and Syria that is the size of the State of Indiana. It is the largest terrorist safe haven in history. The ISIS's offensive is now reigniting sectarian conflict in Iraq and threatening to erase the gains that nearly 4,500 brave young Americans gave their lives to secure and was largely secured when the President took office in January in 2009. In January 2009 the surge had succeeded. Iraq was not violent. The surge had succeeded. We had won the war. In

the words of General Keane: We won the war and lost the peace. And that is a fact.

The administration and its defenders are now scrambling to pin the blame for this catastrophic failure on anyone but themselves. They are trying to blame the Bush administration, and they are trying to blame people like myself and the Senator from South Carolina for voting to authorize the war while conveniently forgetting that Vice President BIDEN, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, his predecessor, Secretary Clinton, and many other Democrats still serving in this body voted for the war in Iraq as well.

They also seem to have forgotten that the Senator from South Carolina and I began criticizing the Bush administration as early as 2003 for their mishandling of the war and calling for a change in strategy. In fact, in 2006 I called for the firing of the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Rumsfeld, because of the mishandling of the war. Indeed, the very strategy that was finally adopted with enormous success was thanks to a great leader named General David Petraeus and a great ambassador by the name of Ryan Crocker.

Most of all, the administration and its defenders are trying to blame the failures of Iraq on Iraq's leaders. To be sure, the lion's share of the blame for Iraq's current problems lies squarely with Prime Minister Maliki and other Iraqi leaders. But the administration cannot escape its own responsibility for the current disaster. This is something that the Senator from South Carolina and I saw firsthand, and we stated that over and over. In order to set this debate to rest once and for all, we would like to review the record.

We predicted that when all the troops were withdrawn there would be the events that are taking place today—not as rapidly, but we predicted that Iraq would fall into chaos if we withdrew all the troops and did not leave a residual force behind as we have in South Korea, Germany, Japan, Bosnia, and other countries after the conflict had ended.

From its first day in office, the Obama administration signaled a hands-off approach to Iraq. It immediately pushed for a faster drawdown of U.S. forces than our commanders recommended. It appointed an ambassador to Iraq, Christopher Hill, who had no experience working on Iraq or serving anywhere in the Arab world. I think he is a fine man, but he had no experience. It adopted a hands-off approach of shaping Iraqi politics, which was demonstrated most vividly as it refused for months and months to take a hands-on approach with Iraqi leaders and help them broker the necessary compromises about the country's future in the aftermath of the 2010 elections in Iraq.

Nowhere was the Obama administration's failure more pronounced than during the debate over whether to maintain a limited number of U.S. troops in Iraq beyond the 2011 expiration of the 2008 Status of Forces Agreement or SOFA. The administration is quick to lay blame on others for the fact that they tried and failed to keep a limited presence of troops in Iraq. They blamed the Bush administration, of course, for mandating the withdrawal in the 2008 SOFA. This does not ring true, however, because as former Secretary of State Condolezza Rice has made clear, the plan all along was to renegotiate the agreement to allow for a continued presence of U.S. forces in Iraq. ''Everybody believed,'' she said in 2011, ''it would be better if there was some kind of residual force.''

Most of all, the Obama administration blames Iraqis for failing to grant the necessary privileges and immunities for a U.S. force presence beyond 2011. This too is totally misleading because as we saw firsthand—Senator GRAHAM and I traveled to Baghdad and Erbil. We met with Allawi and Maliki, and we met with Barzani. We met with all of the leaders of the main political blocs, and we heard a common message during all of these conversations: Iraqi leaders recognized that it was in their country's interest to maintain a limited number of U.S. troops to continue training and assisting Iraqi security forces beyond 2011. But when we asked Ambassador Jim Jeffrey and the commander of U.S. Forces in Iraq Lloyd Austin—in direct response to a question in a meeting with Maliki—what tasks U.S. troops remaining in Iraq would perform and what their missions were, the answer was they had still not made a decision.

In Erbil, Barzani said he would fly to Baghdad. Allawi, the actual winner of the election, said that he would agree, and then after that, Prime Minister Maliki announced that if his partners agreed, which they did, he would agree to a residual force in Iraq. Those are just facts.

Just days after the Senator from South Carolina and I left Baghdad, Prime Minister Maliki, as I said, signaled his willingness—and it is a matter of public record—to a residual presence of U.S. troops if 70 percent of Iraqis agreed. The Kurds agreed, the Sunnis agreed, and Maliki himself signaled his support. Had the United States and our Iraq partners used our influence then and there, we could have lined up the remaining Shia support to enable Maliki to make this difficult decision. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

Instead, months and months passed and the administration made no decision on what missions and troop levels it would be willing to maintain in Iraq. By August 2011 the leaders of Iraq's main political blocs joined together and stated that they were prepared to enter negotiations to keep some U.S. troops in Iraq.

Another entire month passed and still the White House made no decision. During this long internal deliberation, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey later testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the size of a potential U.S. force presence kept ''cascading'' down from upwards of 16,000 to an eventual low of less than 3,000. By that point, the force would be able to do little more than protect itself, and Prime Minister Maliki, and other Iraq leaders, realized that the political cost of accepting this proposal was not worth the benefit. To blame this failure entirely on the Iraqis is convenient, but it misses the real point. The reason to keep about 10,000 to 15,000 U.S. forces in Iraq was not for the sake of Iraq alone. It was first and foremost in our national security interest to continue training and advising Iraqi forces and to maintain greater U.S. influence in Iraq. That core principle should have driven a very different U.S. approach to the SOFA diplomacy. The Obama administration should have recognized that after years of brutal conflict, Iraqi leaders still lacked trust in one another, and a strong U.S. role was required to help Iraqis broker their most politically sensitive decisions. For this reason the administration should have determined what tasks and troop numbers were in the national interest to maintain in Iraq and done so with ample time to engage with Iraqis at the highest level of the U.S. Government to shape political conditions in Baghdad to achieve our goal. I focus on this failure not because U.S. troops would have been engaging in unilateral large-scale combat operations to this day. In fact, they had won the conflict, and there was literally no further combat that the United States was engaged in. By 2011 U.S. forces were no longer in Iraqi cities or engaged in security operations. However, a residual U.S. troop presence could have assisted Iraqi forces in their continued fight against Al Qaeda. They could have provided a platform for greater diplomatic engagement and intelligence cooperation with our Iraqi partners. It could have made Iranian leaders think twice about using Iraqi airspace to transit military assistance to Assad and his forces in Syria. And most importantly, it could have maintained the significant diplomatic influence that the United States still possessed in Iraq—influence that had been and still was essential in guaranteeing Iraq's nascent political system, reassuring Iraqi leaders that they could resolve their differences peacefully and politically despite their mistrust of one another and checking the authoritarian and sectarian tendencies of Prime Minister Maliki.

There is a need for immediate action. Every day that goes by, there is greater sectarian violence, and there is greater success by ISIS. I do not believe they can take Baghdad. But look at the places they have already taken. By the way, they are now threatening the major oil refinery in Iraq. I can assure you that will affect the world price of oil. There is a need because

there is more polarization of Iraq, there is a return of the Iraqi Shia militias, there is wholesale killing and slaughter going on, and it will get worse every single day.

Is there any good option now in Iraq? No, there is no good option. The worst option is to do nothing, and apparently, according to the Wall Street Journal this morning, that is basically the approach that has been taken.

We need to recognize that taking military action now is difficult because our intelligence has been so severely degraded since 2011 because ISIS is becoming so integrated with the Sunni tribes. We need to be careful about striking targets, even convoys in the open. There is a real risk of killing Sunni tribal elements and pushing the tribes closer to ISIS.

We also have to recognize that political change in Baghdad has to take place. But the question is: Do we wait for political change? Every day we wait there is more and more Iranian influence. The chief—one of the most evil people in the world—of the Iranian Quds Force has been in Baghdad planning with Maliki. So what does Maliki do when he doesn't see us giving him any real assistance? He turns to the Iranians. There are published reports of Iranian combat troops now coming into Iraq as more and more of the radical ISIS people are flowing from Syria into Iraq.

As I said, I admit that I was surprised at the rapidity of the success of the ISIS. But I also believe that the longer we wait to carry out some airstrikes—as difficult as it is—that we can identify with the few people we have on the ground—it sends a signal psychologically over these people who are traveling long distances in the desert—the ISIS—of an American aircraft flying overhead and perhaps taking some of them out if we have sufficient information. That is a psychological effect on any enemy. Air power alone does not win conflicts, but air power can have a significant effect on the morale of your people, on your capability, and of at least inflicting some damage and changing the enemy's plans.

Obviously, political reconciliation is the key, and we must do everything in our power to make sure that Maliki appoints a government of reconciliation. But it can't be the prerequisite for U.S. military action because the events and time are not on our side.

We also have to recognize this is not an Iraqi conflict. This is an Iraqi-Syrian conflict now. The most, the largest, and the richest center of terrorism in the history of the world is now in the Iraq-Syria area. They have hundreds of millions of dollars from the banks in Mosul, and, obviously, they acquired a whole lot of equipment during their incredible progress across Iraq.

I urge my colleagues to have a look at the maps of Iraq and Syria and look at the places that are now controlled by ISIS. As I say, I don't believe they can roll into Baghdad in their vehicles with their guns mounted on them, but they sure as heck can cause a lot of problems: bombings, assassinations, the radicalization of these Shiite militias. If one of these Shiite shrines is damaged by ISIS or by Sunni militants, we are going to see a very bigger explosion which will bring us back to the days of 2003, '4, '5, and '6, before the Anbar awakening. The same Sunnis who were part of the Anbar awakening that joined us in putting down Al Qaeda are now being polarized by Maliki. The Shiites, as well as the chickens, are coming home to roost as far as Maliki is concerned because of the continued marginalization and persecution of Sunnis all over Iraq, much less in Anbar Province.

So we have to act. We have to act. We must act. I know there are always people who will tell our leaders reasons why we can't, but I know of no military expert who believes that doing nothing is a recipe for anything but further chaos and eventually threats to the United States of America. Our Secretary of Homeland Security has stated it and our Director of National Intelligence has stated it: that people in this part of Iraq and Syria will be planning attacks on the United States of America. That is their view. It also is mine. But we can do some effective air strikes. We can. And it is more difficult because of our degraded intelligence. By the way, when we left Iraq, all of those intelligence capabilities were shut down.

To make them more effective and mitigate the risks that could push Sunnis deeper into the arms of ISIS, they have to be accompanied, as I mentioned, with a limited presence of special forces on the ground. These forces could gather intelligence to improve our targeting by ISIS control, air strikes from the ground, and provide advice to Sunni tribes.

I believe several other steps could be taken. No. 1, who are the most respected people in Iraq today? Probably David Petraeus and Ryan Crocker. Send them back. Send them back, those who worked so closely with the Sunnis such as General MacFarland—then Colonel MacFarland—the people who built up these long relationships with the Sunnis. Send them back. Maliki will listen to David Petraeus and Ryan Crocker. Send them back. Send back a planning team, a group of smart people who can work with what is left of the Iraqi military leadership and identify tactics and a strategy that can reverse this tide of the ISIS which is about to engulf them.

Send some air power. Send some air power with targets we can identify. I am fully aware of the risks associated with it. I wish to repeat over and over and over: There are no good options. Also, we need to make it very clear to Maliki that his time is up; that he must arrange for a transition.

The Shia won the election, a majority of the votes—not a majority of any of the parties but an overall majority of the vote. This new government could be headed by a Shia, but it has to be a Shia who can reach out to the Sunni and bring them together in a government of national reconciliation.

All of my colleagues have seen the pictures of the young Shia who are now joining up and are ready to die—the movement from Basra of the Shia militia organizations which had been put down before that are now rising from the ashes. We have seen the horrible pictures of the executions that are taking place and the incredible displacement—500,000 people from Mosul alone. The Kurds have now taken Kirkuk. That is an ambition they have had for the last 50 years. We will see now a drive for total Kurdish autonomy from the government in Baghdad, and they will be making their own deals as far as oil is concerned, and the Kurds will now be pursuing their centuries-old ambition for a Kurdish state, which will cause the Turks to be very concerned.

I also wish to point out that if ISIS continues to succeed and they move back and forth to Syria, they will now pose a direct threat, first of all, to Jordan, and then to other gulf states, and finally, eventually, Saudi Arabia, but those right next to Iraq will be most under threat.

So I urge the President and I urge my colleagues to understand the gravity and the seriousness of this situation; to understand that if ISIS succeeds, even without taking Baghdad, and they are able to establish what they call a caliphate in the Syria-Iraq area—larger than the State of Indiana—and are able to train, equip, and export terror not only throughout the region but throughout the world, it will pose a direct threat to the security of this Nation.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. I wish to thank the Senator from South Carolina for showing up.

Mr. GRAHAM. I am sorry I was late. Actually, I had an exchange with General Dempsey about this very topic.

Does the Senator from Arizona see any scenario where ISIS is militarily stopped and that the Iraqis can retake ground lost to ISIS without U.S. air power being involved?

Mr. MCCAIN. I know of no military expert who believes that without the use of U.S. air power they will be able to at anytime soon regain the lost territory, which is a sizable part of Iraq.

Mr. GRAHAM. Did my colleague hear President Obama say it is unacceptable for Iraq or Islamists to have safe havens in Iraq and Syria? Did my colleague hear him say that?

Mr. MCCAIN. No, I did not, but I did hear him say on December 14, 2011: ''We are leaving behind a sovereign, stable, and self-reliant Iraq with a representative government that was elected by its people,'' and other quotes throughout the campaign.

Mr. GRAHAM. My point is, does my colleague agree he is right? It is not acceptable for our national security interests for ISIS to have a safe haven in Syria and Iraq that could run from Aleppo to Baghdad; that that is not a good thing for us?

Mr. MCCAIN. I totally agree.

Mr. GRAHAM. Well, if it is not a good thing for us, how do we change it? Give me a scenario where we put these folks on the run in Syria and in Iraq without American air power. Give me a scenario of political reconciliation in Baghdad where that has a snowball's chance in hell of succeeding as long as they are losing on the battlefield. Give me a scenario where the battlefield turns our way without U.S. air power.

I can give my colleagues a scenario where it begins to turn on the battlefield: Iran comes in with great numbers. The most likely scenario to stop ISIS is Iranians getting involved with Shia militia. Does that bother the Senator from Arizona?

Mr. MCCAIN. I would also like to point out what the Senator from South Carolina knows and I know: The air power has a psychological effect. When an aircraft flies over the enemy, they are going to do things differently if they fear they are going to be hit from the air, as we all know. Air power does not determine the outcome of conflicts, but it sure is important in the battlefield equation.

Mr. GRAHAM. Is it fair to say the Air Force in Iraq is grounded for all practical purposes?

Mr. MCCAIN. Not only grounded but a lot of the air assets, I am to understand, such as Apache helicopters, are in the hands of ISIS.

Mr. GRAHAM. So, to the President: We agree with you that Iraq matters. We agree with you that it is not in our national security interests to have ISIS occupy territory from Aleppo to Baghdad. But here is what is a mystery to me: How do we turn this around unless we stop their advance inside of Iraq and we go after them in Syria?

As to political reconciliation, I completely agree that is the ultimate change that needs to occur, that air strikes alone will not get us to where we want to go, but it is a chicken-and-egg concept for me. Can my colleague from Arizona imagine a scenario where we can get all the parties together when ISIS is winning on the battlefield?

Mr. MCCAIN. That is why I was amused by various commentators who have been consistently wrong, including one in the New York Times today: All we need to do is have everybody sit down together—a total misreading of the situation.

Mr. GRAHAM. Here is the problem with that: To go to a meeting in Baghdad, you are likely to get killed trying to get there. Who is going to sit down in Baghdad when everybody is getting killed based on sectarian differences? So my advice would be to use American air power before it is too late as part of a coordinated, diplomatic effort. That American air power is part of diplomacy. That may sound counterintuitive, but it makes perfect sense to me. Diplomacy cannot succeed unless we change momentum on the battlefield. But when you drop a bomb, you need to have a game plan beyond the bomb falling, and that would be a regional conversation.

Can my colleague see how Maliki can put Humpty Dumpty back together again?

Mr. MCCAIN. I cannot. That is why he has to agree to a transition.

Mr. GRAHAM. I would not send $1 to Iraq. I would not send one soldier to Iraq, one airman to Iraq until we understand that over the arc of time Maliki has to go. I have been there more times than I can count. Maliki did some good things on his watch, but he has become a political leader who cannot bring the country together. But that, to me, is a concern that is addressed after we stop the momentum on the battlefield.

Does the Senator from Arizona believe it is still possible that the Kurds, the Sunnis, and the Shias, that we know fairly well, can regroup and reconcile with themselves if we act decisively?

Mr. MCCAIN. I am totally confident that they can. That is how the country was held together for long periods of time.

Could I ask my colleague—I began before the Senator from South Carolina arrived talking about this business of the allegations that somehow it is the Iraqis' fault that we didn't leave a residual force in Iraq. I went through our meetings with Maliki, with Barzani, with Allawi, how they were all committed to maintaining residual force.

Could the Senator from South Carolina for the RECORD recount the Senate Armed Services Committee hearing where he directly questioned General Dempsey about this entire issue, after we had withdrawn?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes, I will be glad to. And to put it in context, in 2008 we signed a strategic framework agreement. It was envisioned that we would negotiate a follow-on force with advisers and some special forces units to secure our Nation as well as to protect our gains. In the process of trying to get the Iraqis on board, Hillary Clinton called me to ask if my colleague, the Senator from Arizona, and I think Senator Lieberman—maybe he didn't go; I can't remember—would go over there and talk to Barzani, Allawi, and Maliki, and we said, Sure, we would be glad to.

Here is what I found. I found in the meeting with Prime Minister Maliki, who was very openminded about a follow-on force—Barzani said, I will take 250,000 Americans; that was never in doubt about where the Kurds were—Allawi understood, the Sunnis understood the need for a follow-on force. It really was about the Shia politics.

After we got back, Maliki said, If the other groups will do it, I will do it. But he says, What kind of force are you talking about, Senator GRAHAM?

Mr. MCCAIN. This was in a meeting in Baghdad?

Mr. GRAHAM. This was in a meeting in his office. He asked me, What kind of force are you talking about? I turned to General Austin and Ambassador Jeffries and I asked them, What is the number? Answer the Prime Minister's question. They said, We are still working on that. The Prime Minister looked at me and said something to the effect, Well, I don't know what I am supposed to be agreeing to.

We come back to Washington. We go to the Vice President's house. We talk to Mr. Donilin, saying they need a number—sometime—and they said they would get back to us about the number. I am still waiting on that phone call.

During my questioning of General Dempsey about the follow-on force, I asked him—General Austin recommended somewhere in the 18,000 to 20,000 range, the Pentagon got down to 10,000, and below that they felt very uncomfortable. I asked him directly, Did the number cascade down or did the number go down because the Iraqis said, That is too many Americans; we don't want that many Americans on our soil. He said, No, sir; the numbers kept cascading down because the White House kept changing the number.

So I want the record to reflect that in a meeting with the Prime Minister of Iraq, when he asked me how many troops we are talking about, we could not give him an answer. I want the record to reflect the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs said the numbers went down and down and down not because the Iraqis were saying no but because the White House kept lowering the number—to the point that it got to be absurd, and we will prove that over time.

Mr. MCCAIN. Finally, could I—I see our colleague from Florida is waiting. I think I would like to have the Senator from South Carolina summarize. The cost of inaction, of doing nothing, is the greatest cost we can incur. The situation on the battlefield is not only terrible, but the polarization of the different groups in Iraq is growing worse by the hour. We are seeing the resurgence of the old Shia militias that, thanks to David Petraeus, we had put down before. Iraq is largely under control, thanks to David Petraeus, Ryan Crocker, and the surge in 2011. If we had left—and it is a fact—if we had left that residual force behind, history would be very different.

I would add one other comment. We cannot ignore Syria in this situation. We have to understand Syria is now part of this huge area, the size of the State of Indiana, which is governed by ISIS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Madam President, I find there are a number of things I agree with the Senator from Arizona on. One of the things I agree with the senior Senator from Arizona on is that Maliki needs to go. Otherwise, I think Iraq is going to blow apart, and it is going to end up in three parts, just like the Vice President, when he was a Member of the Senate, as the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said was going to happen.

I will address this subject later on.

I came to thank Senator SHELBY, who is here, and Senator MIKULSKI, who I hope is within earshot of my remarks, for the bill they have come forth with and specifically with regard to the part that has to do with a little agency that I have some familiarity with and to which I have a great deal of emotional attachment; that is, NASA.

What they have done is continue to flush out in Appropriations the direction that was laid out—when there was no direction—4 years ago in the 2010 NASA authorization bill, for which I constantly give credit to our former colleague, Kay Bailey Hutchison from Texas. I had the opportunity to help draw up a balanced plan for the space program—balanced in all aspects: human, nonhuman space exploration, aeronautics, science, education, the whole works.

Earlier this month the National Academies came out with a report that was required by that act 4 years ago that reaffirmed the need for a robust U.S. space program aimed at the goal. The goal is way down the line. We are going on a human mission to Mars. The Academies' study was cochaired by a former Republican Governor, a former head of the Office of Management and Budget, Gov. Mitch Daniels. What they concluded was that human space exploration remains vital to the national interest but it is only going to succeed if it is properly funded.

So the increase in funding provided in this bill for human exploration is going to keep us on track in the coming year. We know that the Space Launch System and its spacecraft, a capsule called Orion—which is being built as we speak, assembled at the O&C building at the Kennedy Space Center—we know these are critical to human exploration. NASA has a very boring term for that. They call it ''foundational capabilities.'' That is the capability of putting humans into deep space and eventually on Mars. While other countries are talking about a heavy lift rocket, we are actually building it, and it is being built today with its spacecraft.

Now we are going to look to the first test of this spacecraft. It is going to come in just a few months. It is the Orion spacecraft on top of another rocket to do the deep space penetration and high-velocity reentry, pulling lots of Gs, to see how the instrumented spacecraft performs. It is on track and the space launch system is on track.

However, the funding increases are going to have to be maintained in future years. If we go back to this, shall I say—I have other adjectives for it, but shall I say not the best idea of taking a meat ax to the budget called the sequester—if we go back to the sequester levels, NASA is not going to be able to achieve its exploration goals.

So this funding bill that Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY have produced also reiterates the need to engage our international partners in science and exploration. It supports the international collaboration that is so important in our space program.

There is another new NASA partnership with the German space agency for astronomy research. This same bill also continues the investment in NASA's Commercial Crew Program. It would allow the largest NASA investment in the program to date.

The President requested $849 million to do a competition to make these rockets that are already proven to be safe for humans—put in all the redundancies and the escape systems. The President requested $849 million. That was NASA's request. This bill gets it close. It gets it to $805 million.

But we are going to need to work, to continue to work, with Senator SHELBY and Senator MIKULSKI, as the bill goes to the conference committee, to make sure we have the right mix of oversight and innovation in how NASA contracts for this competition with the competitors—the private industry—as we are letting commercial companies provide this service not only of cargo to and from the International Space Station, but now we are going to provide this service of crew going to and from the ISS.

I cannot overstate the importance of the commercial crew in the long-term viability of the space station because, look, we are going to extend the ISS; that is, the International Space Station, to 2024. It ought to be extended beyond that. Certainly there is all the research that is being produced. We spent $100 billion putting it up there. We ought to keep it to the end of the decade of the 2020s at least, and we need to make sure there is sufficient funding to support the research on this orbiting outpost.

It is a fantastic asset in low-Earth orbit. It is not only for research to improve life on Earth, but it is also a technology test bed and a steppingstone for exploration.

There is another reason. Because we have had the aggressiveness of Mr. Putin, and suddenly all the reverberations coming out of Ukraine, it is just another reminder that we want American rockets for Americans to fly on to get to our own space station. The commercial crew, if we can pour the juice into it, as to their target of 2017, they can actually move it back to 2016. So we have a geopolitical reason to keep this going.

It is interesting that as of this day, with this bill on the floor of the Senate, scientists and engineers have gathered in Chicago for the third annual International Space Station Research and Development Conference. Research investments will help ensure the maximum scientific return for this one-of-a-kind laboratory. By the way, because of Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, it is designated as a national laboratory—a part of the ISS.

I thank Senator SHELBY and Senator MIKULSKI for their hard work in supporting the Nation's space program. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with them. At the end of the day, what we want to do is to get this bill out of conference and to the President's desk for signature.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SHELBY. Madam President, first of all, I thank the Senator from Florida for his remarks, especially in the area of NASA, the funding of NASA, the importance of NASA, which he knows very well. We have worked together a long time and of course some of us—the Presiding Officer might not remember—but he was an astronaut himself in another part of his life. We go back a long time to our House days. We came to the House at the same time. But we have worked together on NASA because we believe in science, we believe in space, we believe that it is great for America in many ways.

I point out again that we have a bipartisan effort on the floor right now. We have three bills: the agriculture appropriations bill, which came out of the Appropriations Committee 30 to 0, with Republican and Democratic support; the Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill—where I serve as the ranking member of the subcommittee and Senator MIKULSKI serves as the chair of the subcommittee—which came out 30 to 0; and the transportation, housing bill, which came out 29 to 1.

We are talking about working together. We are working under the Murray-Ryan numbers. That is what we are trying to stay within. I would like to see us move these three bills. If we can do this, we are going to regular order, which we need. I think it shows—when we have this kind of bipartisan effort coming out of the Appropriations Committee to the floor—we are saying to our colleagues on both sides of the aisle: Look, we believe these are fair bills, we believe it is a bipartisan effort, and we want to fund these agencies because they are important to this country and also there is some certainty out there. We do not need to go back to uncertainty in this body or in this government.

I thank Senator NELSON for his remarks.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

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

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

Mr. BARRASSO. Thank you, Madam President.

This morning the Energy and Natural Resources Committee passed legislation approving the Keystone XL Pipeline. I believe that Congress should do all it can to push the Obama administration to approve this project. This will, of course, help create American jobs; they will come along with the Keystone XL Pipeline.

To me, this morning's committee vote was nothing more than a show vote. It is going to do nothing to advance the Keystone XL Pipeline. It will put no pressure on the White House. It will not put a single shovel in the ground building the pipeline because the Democratic majority leader has absolutely no intention of allowing this bill to get to a vote right here on the Senate floor. The majority leader knows that if Senators got the chance to vote on this bill, there is a very high likelihood it would pass. President Obama cannot afford that, and the majority leader will not do anything the President does not want. The majority leader will not do anything to anger the extremists who fund the Democratic Party and who oppose an ''all of the above'' energy strategy in a plan that includes oil.

I know the last thing Americans and the people in the gallery want to hear about is Senate process and Senate procedures, but here is why it matters: There are issues that are important to this country, issues such as jobs, energy, and controlling government spending. There are problems we need to solve in this country, and they are not being voted on here in the Senate because the majority leader continues to block votes. He has blocked votes, he has blocked amendments, and he has even blocked debate on one issue after another.

I believe the majority leader has abused every power at his disposal and even broken the rules of the Senate—rules that have been in place for over a century. He has done this to give himself new powers. Over the past 6½ years the majority leader has taken an unprecedented stand against action in the Senate. He has used tactics such as the so-called filling the amendment tree on bills. That means he stops anyone else from offering amendments other than himself. He has used what is called rule XIV of the Standing Rules to bypass committees, so we are only able to talk about what he wants to talk about, not what our constituents want to talk about, what we hear about from home, or what other committee members want to talk about. These kinds of tactics may make it easier for Senator REID to get what he wants, but they shut Senators—Republicans and Democrats—out of legislating and they shut out the American people whom all of us represent, Democrats as well as Republicans.

Senator REID has filled the amendment tree at least 85 times since he became majority leader. That is more than twice as many times as the previous six majority leaders combined.

Between July 2013 and May of this year, Republicans in the Senate filed 810 amendments, but we only got a total of 9 votes—810 different ideas brought forward by Republicans, and Senator REID has blocked vote after vote, to the point where we have gotten only 9 votes on 810 amendments, and this is almost in a full year.

If you want a comparison, take a look at the House of Representatives, where the Republicans are in the majority but the minority party, the Democrats, have an opportunity to offer amendments and have votes. Over that same time period in the House of Representatives, the Democrats have gotten 132 votes on their amendments. The Democratic minority on the House side has had 132 votes, while the Republican minority on the Senate side has gotten a total of 9.

In the Senate, it is not just the Republicans who are not getting their votes. The majority leader is blocking the Democrats as well. During that same time, from July of 2013 to May of 2014, Democrats introduced 676 amendments on legislation on the floor, and there were only 7 rollcall votes on 676 amendments. I guess it is not surprising that Republicans cannot get votes on their amendments, but it is very surprising that the Democrats cannot get votes because only the majority leader gets a vote.

It is the same story on appropriations bills, and that is why I am here at this time—because we are dealing with appropriations bills. They are some of the most important bills we are supposed to consider in Congress. These are the bills which determine how much Washington spends every year on all the discretionary programs. We started debating the first of these yesterday, and we may do so over the next few weeks.

It used to be that the Senate would take up these bills one by one, and Senators would get a chance to offer amendments and to represent the people who elected them to office. Not anymore. Under this Democratic majority leader, the amendment process on appropriations bills has been almost completely shut down. In the past 2 years Republicans have gotten just six amendments to appropriations bills. Senate Democrats only got one amendment during that same period. The Senate approved trillions—trillions—of dollars in Washington spending, but HARRY REID allowed action on just seven amendments total. In the 8 years before Senator REID became majority leader, the Senate processed an average of almost 300 amendments to appropriations bills every year—every year almost 300 amendments to appropriations bills.

Senators from both parties have been shut out of the process, and the people we represent have been shut out of the process as well—all by Senator REID. It is the same kind of power grab we saw last September when the majority leader used the so-called nuclear option to stop debate in the Senate. He radically changed the rules of the Senate to strip the rights of the minority party. Originally, it had to do with eliminating the filibuster on nominations, but it is the same effect. The majority leader grabbed more power for himself and took away the right of anyone else in the Senate to represent their constituents.

This is not how it is supposed to be. The Senate was designed to be a place where we debate these issues and where political minorities get fair representation. The father of our Constitution James Madison explained that the Senate's role was ''first to protect the people against the rulers.'' James Madison, the father of the Constitution, stated that the Senate's role is ''first to protect the people against the rulers.'' That was the point of this body. That is why over its history the Senate has adopted rules that provide strong protections for political minorities. Well, the way the Senate has been run by Majority Leader REID, it has been embarrassing, it has been unfair, and it has been insulting to the American people.

Again, I know this isn't the most exciting topic of discussion for people to hear, but the damage that is being done by the Senate's failure to act is very real. Congress has important legislation to debate, such as approving the Keystone XL Pipeline, but the majority leader won't even allow a vote on the bill. Our Nation has a total debt of $17.5 trillion, but the majority leader of the Senate blocks amendments that could improve the appropriations bills and maybe start to control Washington's wasteful spending. We should have an open amendment process on these appropriations bills this year, as we should have had in previous years, and we should be starting with the bill that is on the floor today.

It is time for Democrats to stop the show votes and allow real votes on issues important to American families.

Thank you, Madam President.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the role.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IRAQ

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I appreciate the opportunity to come to the Senate to speak about the situation in Iraq. A moment ago I was

joined by some very close friends from South Florida, including the former mayor of West Miami, and now the chair of the county commission in Miami-Dade County, Rebecca Sosa. She actually got me started in politics.

When she was mayor of West Miami, I told her I was interested in public service. We walked door to door in the small city called West Miami which has 5,000 residents. She taught me how to campaign one on one with real people and their real lives.

Now I return home every weekend—when we are done here and with my work throughout the State—to the same community that I still live in, and increasingly people there are asking me about the situation in Iraq. The question I get from many people is—and I want to be blunt about how they say it—I understand this is a problem, but why is it our business? Why do we care about what is happening in another country when it seems to be a fight among themselves?

That is a very legitimate question. I know Americans are watching the issues that are happening abroad, and they ask themselves: Why does America need to be the world's policeman?

I want to take a few moments to explain why this matters—why it matters to people not just in the Middle East but even people in the small city of West Miami where I still live. The situation in Iraq is, to some extent, a civil war between Sunni and Shia, as we see in other conflicts such as Syria and other places. That is a real aspect of it. I would say the current government of Iraq has contributed greatly to it—by the way, spurred on by Iranian influence—to further exacerbate that divide between Sunni and Shia.

While it is fair to say that much of what is happening in Iraq is a civil war between two sects, it is not fair to say that is all it is, because what is happening in Iraq has a direct bearing on the future security of every American, even those Americans who live in the small city of West Miami where I live. Here is why.

Imagine for a moment if we could go back in time to the year 1997 or 1996 or 1998 or 1999 and had known about Al Qaeda then what we knew by September of 2001. We would have realized this is a dangerous group that had the capacity and the deep willingness to attack and kill Americans in order to terrorize so that we would leave the Middle East and turn it over to people such as them. If we had known that and taken that seriously—and I would say some did know this—if we had done something about it, it is fair to say that eventually there would have been some sort of terrorist attack, but maybe there wouldn't have been one on September 11, 2001. If we had actually targeted this group and degraded their capabilities while they were still in their safe haven in Afghanistan—or even before that—we potentially could have saved the lives of thousands of Americans and, more importantly, avoided the rise of Al Qaeda in the region and in the world. But we did not. While this is not a time to point fingers or throw blame around, I certainly think it is a time to learn the lessons of that history and apply them to the challenges of our time.

What is happening today in Iraq and in portions of Syria is in many ways the exact same thing: A radical group—ISIL—which, by the way, rose through the ranks of Al Qaeda until they now have a split from Al Qaeda, believe it or not, because Al Qaeda thinks that ISIL is too brutal to their fellow Muslims. This group has been growing in strength ever since the United States left Iraq. This group has been fed and its strength has been given to them by foreign fighters who have spilled into the conflict in Syria where they have established a foothold and have used it as a staging and operational ground to take their brand of ruthlessness now into Iraq.

We saw over the weekend images and photographs and videos of the mass assassinations, executions of Shia members of the Iraqi military. They have grown in strength over this time and they have begun to grow in their influence in Iraq. Their goal is simple: They want to establish the premier Islamic caliphate in all the world—the premier Sunni Islamic caliphate in the region. Caliphate basically means Islamic kingdom. They don't care about existing borders. The kingdom they envision is a vast safe haven that encompasses portions of Syria they already have under their control and portions of Iraq they are now gaining control of.

What is their goal for this place they are trying to set up? Their first goal is to institute Sharia law, and they have a particularly brutal brand of Sharia they have forced upon people both in Syria and now increasingly in Iraq.

Their second goal is to establish an Islamic caliphate state—a safe haven from where they can plan and train and ultimately carry out terrorist attacks against the United States and other countries, including attacks here in our homeland.

We must learn the lessons of before 2001, and we must say to ourselves: Under no circumstances will we ever again allow a safe haven or for this kind of terrorist group to ever gain a safe haven anywhere in the world. We will never allow this to happen again.

That is why it is so critical for us to be engaged here. The reason why we should care about this issue is not because we want to force upon Iraq democracy or force upon Iraq the type of government we think they need. The reason why we care is because we cannot allow a safe haven to develop there, that can be used to carry out attacks that can kill Americans, including here in our homeland. This is why we should care. This is why it is so important that the Commander in Chief of the United States—the President—come as quickly as possible before the American people and before this Congress with a plan to address this risk.

I know the President likes to go around saying the war is over, but no one told ISIL that. No one told Al Qaeda that. No one has told these terrorists that. They don't think the war is over. In fact, in their minds, this war will go on for hundreds of years. The only person who can rally this country behind a plan to address this is not a U.S. Senator or a Member of Congress, not the majority leader or the Speaker of the House, not the countless people who write very well-informed opinion pieces in our newspapers. The only person in this country who can rally us around a plan to address this is the President himself.

So while I understand he doesn't want us engaged in another conflict, and neither do most Americans, he knows—he must know—that we are going to have to do something about this. That is not the issue before us. The issue before us is whether we do something about it now or we do something about this later when the problem will be much harder and more costly to address.

I hope the President does bring us together to solve this problem. This doesn't need to be—and it should not be—a partisan issue. The national security of the United States should never be a partisan issue, for if terrorists carry out an attack on our homeland they will not attack Democratic sites but Republican sites; they will not target conservatives but leave liberals alone; they will target Americans. Americans from every political persuasion died on 9/11. I fear that may happen at some point again. So we should all care about this.

The only person who can bring us together to do something about it is the President, and so far he has failed to do it. I don't know if it is because it runs counter to his political narrative that the war is over and he got us out of Iraq. I don't know why it is, but so far he has not done that, and he must.

Mr. President: On this issue, you must lead. You must put aside all of these domestic, political debates that are going on in your office about how this is going to poll or whether this runs contrary to what you said on the campaign trail. This is too important, it is too vital, it is too serious, and it is too dangerous.

I have my own ideas, as do others, about what that plan should look like, but we want there to be a plan. We are not asking the President to come forward with a plan to go looking for something to attack. We want him to come forward with a plan because only he can, and he must. In my opinion, that plan has to be we must do whatever we can and everything we can to prevent this group, ISIL, from gaining operational long-term control of these territories in Iraq. To me, that means going after their command-and-control structure, which involves their ability to transit fighters and weapons and fuel and food and ammunition from

their safe havens in Syria to their increasingly new spaces they have now carved out for themselves in Iraq.

I think all of us in this Chamber, when it comes to issues of national security, understand we should not be a part of the back-and-forth of partisan politics.

I guess my plea here today on the Senate floor is this: Mr. President, you must lead on this issue. You must come forward with a plan that we can rally this Congress and our people behind, because if we fail to do so, I fear our Nation will pay a terrible price down the road. Never again can we allow an Al Qaeda-style group to establish a safe haven where they can plot against us anywhere on this planet. The choice before you, Mr. President, is you either deal with it now or some future President and future Congresses and future Americans will deal with it later. I hope you will deal with it now. I hope we will remember the lessons of our recent history. The only one who can lead us in that direction is you, Mr. President. I hope you will, because the consequences of failing to do so would be dramatic and, in my opinion, will be condemned by history.

I hope over the next few hours, the next few days, we will have the opportunity to come to this floor and advocate on behalf of a concrete plan of action that most, if not all, of us can support, so we can ensure we can say that during our time here we did everything we needed to do to keep America safe.

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

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

IMMIGRATION REFORM

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I rise today to talk about the House's tragic and disconcerting failure to do anything to fix our broken immigration system, even though an entire year has passed since the Senate passed bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform with 68 votes—an impressive bipartisan vote total in this increasingly partisan climate.

The House Republicans' lack of action on immigration is almost completely inexplicable if you compare the most recent Republican Party platform to what the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office had to say about the Senate immigration reform bill.

When you take the time to look at both of these documents, you realize that no other bill that we could pass during this or any other Congress would accomplish as many of the Republican Party's stated legislative objectives as passing immigration reform.

Just so that everyone understands this, I want to take you through a step-by-step process where we look at the Republican Party platform and compare it to the CBO report.

The first substantive sentence of the Republican Party platform says:

> The best jobs program is economic growth. Republicans will pursue free market policies that are the surest way to boost employment and create job growth and economic prosperity for all.

Well, what does the CBO report have to say about what the immigration bill does for economic growth, job growth, and economic prosperity?

Page 3 of the CBO report says that ''the bill would increase real . . . GDP relative to the amount CBO projects under current law by 3.3 percent in 2023 and by 5.4 percent in 2033. . . .''

Think about what that means in a $16 trillion economy. If we pass this bill, we will be adding over $500 billion of annual economic growth to our economy than we otherwise would. This is a staggering number.

Well, what does the immigration bill do for job growth? Page 4 of the CBO report says that the bill will increase the number of jobs in the U.S. economy by about 6 million.

What about economic prosperity? On this front, page 3 of the CBO report says ''the rate of return on capital would be higher under the legislation than under current law. . . .'' That means Americans would have more savings and a more secure safety net.

This means that passing immigration reform would accomplish the Republican Party's top priority far better than any piece of legislation the Republicans currently have before Congress.

What about the second stated priority of the Republican platform? That priority says that ''small businesses are the leaders in the world's advances in technology and innovation, and we pledge to strengthen that role and foster small business entrepreneurship.''

Do you know what the best way to foster small business entrepreneurship is? Immigration reform.

According to a study from the Kauffman Foundation, immigrants were almost twice as likely to start small businesses in 2012 as native-born Americans. Madam President, 27.1 percent of new entrepreneurs in 2012 were immigrants. That is up from 13.7 percent in 1996.

More than 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants—90 companies—or by their children—an additional 114 companies—because a lot of these small businesses become big businesses. The immigration bill has an entrepreneurship visa where immigrants who have raised money from legitimate investors will be given a green card to come here, open companies, and hire Americans.

Why will this happen? Because immigrants have always provided the enthusiasm, hard work, and determination to reenergize America. They perform very important jobs at the lower end of the economic spectrum without complaint to make a better life for their families and they provide innovation and new ideas at the higher end of the economy to create the latest big inventions that fuel our growth.

But that is only scratching the surface of what this immigration bill does. The next priority on page 3 of the Republican platform is ''balancing the budget.'' What is the bill that Congress can pass this year that best balances the budget? Immigration reform.

According to CBO, passing immigration reform would ''reduce budget deficits by $197 billion over the 2014–2023 period and by about $700 billion over the 2024–2033 period.'' That is $1 trillion in savings that we can achieve by passing immigration reform.

Finally, with regard to immigration itself, the Republican Party platform says ''our highest priority is to secure the rule of law at both our borders and at ports of entry.''

Under the Senate immigration bill, anyone who wants to try and cross the border illegally will have to figure out a way to get over an 18-foot steel pedestrian fence, get past the border agents standing every 1,000 feet apart from Brownsville to San Diego 24 hours a day, and then evade the sensors, cameras, and drones that will track the crosser until they are caught by a border agent or local police.

That is an amendment proposed by our Republican colleagues but we put into the bill. If you try to overstay your visa, your name will be placed on a list given to immigration enforcement officials to find you, detain you, and deport you. If you try to work here illegally, you will never be able to get a job because you will not have a name, a Social Security number, and a matching picture that will pop up on our new E-Verify system when you apply for a job. Future waves of illegal immigration will be prevented if this bill is passed.

So for all of the railing from the hard right about stopping illegal immigration, no one—no one—can deny there have been huge improvements over current law.

Let's take an inventory of what this bill does: Stimulate the economy. Check. Create jobs. Check. Help small businesses. Check. Reduce the debt. Check. Secure the border. Check. End visa overstays. Check. End illegal employment. Check.

These are all of the things Republicans claim they want to do, all in one bill. So why is it that all of these positive benefits to passing reform and all of the costs we pay for doing nothing, why is it that with that the House of Representatives, and the House Republicans in particular, refuse to do anything to fix our broken immigration system? Why do House Republicans not pass our bill to fix our broken immigration system, not change it, not pass a good law? This question can be answered with one simple word: Fear. One simple word. Fear.

Fear is what often causes people to do what is counter to their self-interest. Fear makes people succumb to their basest instincts instead of rising to their noblest ambitions. Fear paralyzes us during times when we need to be taking action. House Republicans are afraid of immigration. They are not only afraid of voting on an immigration bill, they are even afraid of introducing legislation on immigration.

Let me give you some examples. June 2013, Congressman JOE HECK says he was going to introduce immigration reform that would address our broken system. In December of 2013, Republican Congressman HECK announced he would not be introducing any immigration bill of any kind.

April 2014. Congressman JOE BARTON said he was going to introduce major immigration legislation. The bill was never introduced. ERIC CANTOR, who just this week claimed that his position on immigration never wavered, said last year he was going to introduce legislation to ''deal with the kids who did not break any laws and themselves came into this country in many cases unbeknownst to them.'' This legislation was also never introduced.

Finally, House Republican leadership has repeatedly announced they ''think we finally have the policy right on immigration.'' But again, we have seen no bill even introduced, much less voted on. House Republicans are so afraid of immigration that they have handed the policy and leadership gavel to STEVE KING, who compares immigrants to dogs and livestock and who claims immigration is a slow-motion holocaust.

ERIC CANTOR is actually right that his position on immigration reform never wavered. His rhetoric was often proreform, but his legislative and voting record was always antireform. CANTOR never introduced or voted for a single immigration bill that would help a single immigrant. But he loved to vaguely reference the need for immigration reform when asked about it. That has been the real Republican Party position on immigration: pretending to be pro-immigration reform rhetorically, but never, never permit a Republican to actually introduce immigration reform legislation and definitely never allow immigration reform legislation to come to a vote. This is because House Republicans may claim to disagree with STEVE KING's words, but they certainly do not seem to disagree with STEVE KING's policy objectives. They do not want immigration reform that will rationalize our legal immigration system and create a path to legality for those who are already here. Instead, they support the failed and tragic policies of self-deportation for the people who are already here, and they want to reduce legal immigration to a trickle for the people who wish to come here and contribute to our society.

Two nights ago, when I watched our gritty U.S. soccer team win an amazing game against Ghana, I saw an amazing team effort coached by an energetic German immigrant whose tactics and decisions helped the United States prevail in the final stages of an incredible, compelling game.

Did Republicans watch the same game and ask: Why is an immigrant coaching our team? These last 2 weeks, I watched the San Antonio Spurs play some of the greatest team basketball anyone has ever seen with players from France, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Italy, Canada, and, of course, the United States. Did Republicans watch those same games and ask: Who cares about the quality of the basketball being played? Why are immigrants allowed in the NBA?

This is the problem the Republicans face. Republicans have a very important choice to make the next few days. If they continue on the same path they are on now, where they feign sympathy for immigration in their rhetoric but do not vote on or even introduce legislation to fix our broken system, it will be impossible for the average voters to distinguish between any Republican and STEVE KING. Republican words of sympathy will not matter to people whose families are suffering, whose businesses cannot find the workers they need or whose churches are seeing their members deported. They will know that Republicans are to blame for doing nothing on immigration reform. Even worse, Republicans will get the worst of both worlds in this scenario. Their most strident rightwing voters will actually punish them for their Machiavellian efforts to feign sympathy for immigration reform.

So what is the real answer for Republicans? Well, LINDSEY GRAHAM showed us the way by being a man of principle. This weekend he said it best. He said:

> I don't think Eric got beat because of his stand on immigration, I think he got beat because of his lack of defining himself on immigration. Republicans nationally will accept an earned pathway to citizenship if you secure the border. For our party to let the 35 percent tell us how to engage on immigration, we will lose a natural ally in the Hispanic community.

That is from Senator GRAHAM who just won his election with 59 percent of the vote, while defending back at home in a conservative Republican State, South Carolina, immigration reform.

In conclusion, to Speaker BOEHNER, Majority Whip MCCARTHY, and others in the new House leadership, the choice is yours. Join with us, the evangelical community, the Catholic Church, American farmers, American police chiefs, America's business community, and 65 percent of American voters in supporting tough, fair, practical immigration reform legislation or, alternatively, you can ignore the benefits of immigration reform and continue to fail to address our broken immigration system because of your fear, and you can eventually watch your party go into the dustbin of history. Those are your two choices, Republicans.

There is no doubt that at the moment STEVE KING is winning. Republicans are implementing his policy objective of inaction to perfection because they are so fearful. But hopefully, just like the U.S. team, House Republicans can overcome their fears, appeal to their more noble aspirations, and we can pull victory from the jaws of defeat at the very end here and pass the immigration reform legislation our country so desperately needs.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS.) The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, we have been on the motion to proceed to our three appropriations bills since 10 a.m. this morning. It has almost been 4 hours, and it is true, under the cloture, there is 30 hours of debate. We could let this go on until 11 p.m. tonight—we could. Actually, Members have had an interesting day speaking about issues related to Iraq and to immigration, but we would like to focus on the bills beforehand: agriculture, FDA—how do we feed people in our own country, save the family farm, and be able to export food.

We would like to bring up a bill that funds FDA, the Food and Drug Administration, that looks out for food safety, but also the safety and efficacy of life-science products such as medical devices, biotech products, and pharmaceuticals, which I know are important to the State of the Presiding Officer.

We want to be able to bring up Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development. The highway trust fund is going to run out.

In my own home State we need the transportation money. We need it for the formula funding that will be important to roads, but we also need the money in there that looks out for small airports, such as the Hagerstown airport, the Frederick airport, which the President's plane needs to get to Camp David.

Right up the road is the Hagerstown airport, for which there is a growing manufacturing hub, of which there is small manufacturing employing 300 to 400 people. Some make trucks, some make the heavy-duty equipment to be sold, that are also export products. One company actually puts in the avionics to the airplanes guarding our border.

If we put all that together, it is close to 900 to 1,200 jobs. Hello, this is what we are talking about—public investment that creates private sector jobs and does public safety.

So we are saying to those who are considering how we could move ahead, we encourage them now. I suggest we follow the model when we were on the floor 3 years ago. That was the last time we had these appropriations on the floor. We had an amendment process.

The managers of the bill, such as my vice chairman Senator SHELBY and I, worked with Members on a defined list, some we could actually take. There were some excellent ideas where Members wanted to improve on what we had done.

For those who have concern about spending, they can actually come and offer cuts or they can offer replacements. This is the place where if you want government to work your way, it is your day and you do it through the amendment process.

Most Americans don't understand that in order to debate a bill on the Senate floor, you have to first file a motion to proceed. That is asking permission to come to the floor to take up the bill. So we had to have a cloture vote on it. OK, it passed 95 to 3. I think it is the will of the Senate to get it going, and let's get these amendments—get it on with the amendments.

Are there anxieties on both sides about the nature of those amendments? Sure. But that is what amendments are. Some we can take, some we need to debate.

We are the greatest deliberative body in the world. We have to start deliberating.

I say to my friends who are pondering how to proceed, the best way to proceed is look at the agreement we had in 2011 that allowed for amendments, a regular order, a methodical process for considering those amendments, and then we would be able to get on them, be able to debate them. My suggestion would be that we would alternate sides, a Democratic amendment, a Republican amendment—hey, maybe even a bipartisan amendment.

I hope we do not spin our wheels and spin the clock for 8½ more hours, because the American people know that after all is said and done, more gets said than gets done.

I am suggesting—really—let's follow the regular order. The process I am recommending is not new. There are no surprises, there are no stunts. It is a process we have followed in the past. I am suggesting, along with Senator SHELBY, the exact model we used 3 years ago, the last time appropriations were on the floor.

There are those who say in this country we have a spending problem. If you think we have a spending problem, this is the time to come to the floor and debate. If you think we have a spending problem and we are spending too much on the Justice Department—if you think it is too much money on bulletproof vests for cops or shelters for battered women, come on. If you think there is too much money in the space program, you don't like this rocket ship or that satellite, this is the place to come. Offer amendments. We are ready to debate.

I speak for my two other subcommittee chairs, Senator MURRAY on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies, and Senator PRYOR on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies. We are already in consultation with the other side of the aisle. Senator COLLINS on transportation and Senator BLUNT on agriculture are also ready to debate.

I would hope we could move forward, have a method for moving forward that promotes regular order. If we do that, I think Members who haven't experienced too much—because of our gridlock and deadlock and the lock on amendments that we actually—I think they are going to like it because they like democracy. If you like the Constitution, if you like democracy, this is the place where we can put it into place today.

Before I yield the floor, I note that the leadership from the Republican side is in conference with Senator SHELBY. I hope that is good news.

Then for those on both sides of the aisle watching the process on the floor, if you have amendments, start to gear up and get ready to bring them over. Senator SHELBY and I are here. We are ready to receive them. We are ready to get ready to do them, we are ready to talk about them, and set the stage for hearing them.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. UDALL of New Mexico). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

IMMIGRATION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, with what is happening in Iraq, what is happening with the claim of lost IRS emails from Lois Lerner, what is happening in the developments of the Benghazi investigation, what is happening in Ukraine, and what could happen in Afghanistan, it is easy—perhaps too easy—to overlook a crisis occurring right here in America on our southern border. That crisis is easily described as a wave of humanity coming across our southern border from Central America.

Tragically, tens of thousands of the people coming across our borders seeking refuge in the United States are children—unaccompanied minors—from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. The question we should ask ourselves is, Why are we seeing this unprecedented increase in the number of unaccompanied minors coming across our southwestern border?

As we can see, in 2011 there were 6,560 detained. But that number has grown steadily, from 2012, 2013, and now 2014. So far 47,000 minors—unaccompanied children—have been detained coming across our border, primarily from Central America. It is estimated that this 60,000 number will likely double next year unless something is done.

These children—and their parents are enabling this—are crossing the border because of a widespread perception that they will be allowed to stay here. The reason for that perception is a series of events—a series of stated changes in policy—which have given the impression that President Obama does not have a commitment to enforce our immigration laws.

None of us denies that Central America's Northern Triangle is plagued by drug cartels, street gangs, rampant violence, and deeply entrenched poverty. There is no doubt about it. The fact is that the majority of people coming across the southwestern border these days are not from Mexico; they are from Central America. They are coming through a 500-mile strip of border between Guatemala and Mexico, making their way up the Mexican coast in areas largely controlled by the Zetas—a criminal organization, a drug cartel which has basically figured this is another way to make money. In other words, they not only traffic in drugs, they traffic in people, and now, quite honestly, they are trafficking in tens of thousands of children.

The massive spike in unaccompanied minors, of course, seemed to start to take off when President Obama announced in 2012 his so-called deferred action plan. To be clear and to be fair, this deferred action announcement where the President said he would not deport certain categories or classes of children would not apply to the children coming across the border today. So we might wonder, why in the world do they keep coming?

Well, that was not an isolated event in 2012. Just to remind my colleagues, this deferred action announcement came 2 years after John Morton, who was the Director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, circulated a memo declaring that the enforcement of U.S. immigration laws against most illegal aliens was now a lower priority. That memo went out in June of 2010.

A few months later several colleagues and I sent a letter to then-Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano expressing our concern that the administration's selective enforcement of our immigration statutes was jeopardizing public safety and breeding contempt for the rule of law. That letter read, in part:

> Numerous criminal aliens are being released into society and are having proceedings terminated simply because ICE has decided that such cases do not fit within the Department's chosen enforcement priorities. It appears that ICE is enforcing the law based on criteria it arbitrarily chose with complete disregard for the enforcement laws created by Congress.

Then, in the second Morton memo the following June, then-Director Morton sent around another memo which further advised U.S. immigration authorities to systemically reconsider hundreds of thousands of immigration cases and to make them low priorities to enforce immigration laws against millions of people illegally present in the United States. That second Morton

memo went even further than the first in looking at everyone—all the undocumented population here in the United States—and saying: We are going to reconsider our priorities in terms of repatriation of those individuals should they be detained by ICE. That June 2011 memo laid the groundwork for the deferred action program the President announced a year later, which was 2012, and these programs were extended earlier this month.

The average was about 6,500; then it doubled in 2012; and then it doubled again in 2013; and then it is scheduled to double again in 2014.

The administration has continued to treat the vast majority of illegal immigrants as low-priority offenders, thereby creating perverse incentives for people to cross the border. If people don't believe there is any consequence associated with entering the country in violation of our immigration laws, they are going to continue to do it. As the distinguished Presiding Officer knows, law enforcement has more than just what I would call a goal-line defense priority. In other words, deterrence is very important. Obviously, people are not being deterred.

Perversely, people are being encouraged by this series of events to show up at the border—and, of course, in huge numbers—overwhelming Border Patrol, which is now no longer looking uniformly at drug dealers and human smuggling operations. Now they are trying to take care of children and trying to get them to a safe place to live and to take care of them.

John Sandweg, who served as the ICE Director from 2013 to 2014, recently told the Los Angeles Times:

> If you are a run-of-the-mill immigrant here illegally, your odds of getting deported are close to zero.

It is just unlikely to happen. That message has obviously gotten through to folks in Central America, who, admittedly, are living in a very tough neighborhood, and it has encouraged many of them to risk their lives and their children's lives on an extremely dangerous journey through this region of Mexico covered by the drug cartels.

Actually, it is part of the business model of the drug cartels to encourage this flow of illegal migration from Central America through Mexico because they effectively get paid a tax by the coyotes and human smugglers who smuggle people through this dangerous region. One of the ways they come is on the top of one of these trains.

This is a shot of a train they call The Beast. It has been well documented and written about by a Salvadoran journalist, Oscar Martinez, in a book he wrote in 2013 which is chilling, but it describes the journey from Central America through Mexico on the top of one of these trains and the risk of accident, the likelihood of sexual assault—6 to 8 out of 10 migrant women are sexually assaulted—people who are kidnapped for ransom, and people who are killed who don't comply with the dictates of the drug cartels.

Don't take just my word for it.

Last week the Washington Post confirmed that the influx of unaccompanied minors:

> . . . is being driven in large part by the perception that they will be allowed to stay under the Obama administration's immigration policies.

The New York Times recently told the story of a 13-year-old Honduran boy who was detained in Mexico while trying to reach the United States. Like so many others across Central America, the Times reported this boy

> . . . said his mother believed that the Obama administration had quietly changed its policy regarding unaccompanied minors and that if he made it across he would have a better shot at staying.

The distinguished Senator from Maryland is here.

Not only is this affecting States such as Texas, but these children, 1,000 of them, are being effectively warehoused in Lackland Air Force base in San Antonio, TX, some are being shipped to Arizona and California, and some are being sent—or at least the plan is to send them—to Virginia and Maryland, because these 47,000 children who have been detained since October of last year are overwhelming the capacity of local communities and State and Federal authorities to deal with them. As I said, The Beast, which transports people 1,000 miles or so on a trip from southern Mexico up to the southern border of Texas, is a horrific way to transit that huge expanse.

Migrant women are preyed upon by drug cartels such as the Zetas. Officials from the mayor's office in Ciudad Hidalgo told Oscar Martinez, the author of the book ''The Beast,'' in Ciudad Hidalgo the Zetas control all trafficking, sending men to recruit women in Central America, and sometimes even kidnapping migrant women riding the buses. They sell the women to truck-drivers for a night, and then throw them away like unwanted scraps.

My point is, there is nothing humane about encouraging people to travel through cartel-dominated smuggling routes in the hopes of reaching the United States. Yet that has been the effect of the perception that the President and his administration are not committed to enforcing our immigration laws. I know that wasn't their intention but that has been the consequence. Even before the ongoing border crisis erupted, people were taking notice of the President's disregard for the rule of law.

Last December, for example, a Federal district court judge in Brownsville, TX, absolutely excoriated the Obama administration for making a mockery of enforcement, noting that the President's policies were incentivizing human traffickers and endangering the lives of children. Here is what Federal Judge Andrew Hanen said:

> By fostering an atmosphere whereby illegal aliens are encouraged to pay human smugglers for further services, the government is not only allowing them to fund the illegal and evil activities of these cartels, but is also inspiring them to do so.

That is a Federal district judge in Brownsville, TX.

One final point. Some of my friends across the aisle have argued that if only Congress would pass President Obama's preferred immigration reforms, the current border crisis would never have happened. That ignores the fact that none of these children qualify for any of the deferred action policies either ordered in 2012 or any of the others I mentioned. But there is the perception caused by the first Morton memo, the second Morton memo, then the deferred action announcement, and now the widely publicized news that the President has instructed Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security, to reconsider the entire repatriation and deportation policy, and it is clear this is related to the upcoming midterm election and the President's desire to try to make a point.

The problem is his point is backfiring. It is victimizing the very same people the President believes, I think, that he is trying to help. That is what happens when the rule of law is no longer your priority—unintended consequences. As I explained today, the President's actions have helped cause this humanitarian crisis.

I know the Finance Committee has in subcommittee appropriated I think roughly $2 billion to help the Federal authorities to deal with this humanitarian crisis. Unfortunately, unless we are able to process appropriations bills across the floor of the Senate, I don't know when that money is going to be available, and that is another problem.

But the most fundamental problem is the American people's confidence that the Federal Government will enforce the laws, until such time as those laws are changed, has been undermined. Passing new legislation will do nothing to fix that unless the President is willing to enforce laws that have already been passed by Congress. This isn't a problem of passing some more laws; this is a problem of the President and his administration effectively conveying the message that they are not going to enforce the laws they don't want to enforce. Unless we send a clear, unambiguous message that our border is secure and our immigration laws are being enforced, we can expect more and more Central American migrants to embark on the harrowing journey from Central America up through Mexico, which means more of them will be robbed, kidnapped, raped, and killed. We don't know how many start out on this journey. All we know is how many show up on the border. We ought to be concerned about that.

To be clear, I remain personally committed to fixing all aspects of our broken immigration system, but I cannot and will not support any policy that effectively empowers human traffickers and endangers the lives of these children.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, before the Senator from Texas leaves—and I know we have other matters to discuss—first I want to make a comment and then I have a question.

I want to thank the Senator from Texas for that very compelling presentation. I might not agree with every sentence, but I think the Senator painted a picture of what is happening at the border. We do have a humanitarian crisis.

As chair of the Appropriations Committee, I was made aware of this last year by Secretary Sebelius when they asked for more money to help. I said, yes, more money to help, but we needed to plan. What were we going to do with this? So now these numbers have surged, and what it has become is these children effectively function as refugees.

This portrait the Senator has portrayed—the horrific sense of The Beast, and human beings, women and children, and boys, as well, being sold as if they were commodities? Commodities. It gives you goosebumps. The Senator has painted a very compassionate and compelling picture.

My question, though, is we have to deal with the immediate crisis now. But as the Senator talks about the enforcement on the border, what would the Senator recommend we do?

In other words, the pictures I have seen—and I hope I will go down and see this for myself—is the children come up to the border control guy, some as young as 4 and 5 years old and some go up to the early teens. Some teens carry their younger siblings. Is the Senator saying we should turn them away? These are not provocative questions. We have to work across the aisle to deal with this issue constructively, humanely, and effectively.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, if I may respond to the distinguished Senator's question.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection.

Mr. CORNYN. I appreciate the Senator's leadership and big heart. This is not a political issue. The first and most important thing we need to do is to pursue the best interests of these children, but we cannot simply deal with our immigration problem, illegal immigration problem, at the border. It has to start back in Central America. That is one reason I am glad Vice President JOE BIDEN is traveling to Guatemala, as I know Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of Homeland Security has, to try to see what they can do.

We then need to try to persuade our friends in Mexico to commit more resources. Perhaps we can persuade them to deal with the 500-mile southern border that is basically controlled by the cartels. But the cartels are making money. So this is a governance issue in Central America and Mexico as well.

I might point out that perhaps with the same reservations the distinguished Senator from Maryland made about not agreeing with everything I said, but much of what I said, what I have said has I think pretty much been echoed by my friend Representative HENRY CUELLAR from Laredo, TX, who obviously by virtue of where he lives and was raised is very knowledgeable about the border around Laredo and Mexico and Central America.

I saw an interview with our former First Lady Hillary Clinton, that unless we send a very clear and loud message to people in Central America that you should not come, you should not risk your children making this long, harrowing journey because they will not be able to stay, then they are going to keep coming, because right now when these children come here, as the Senator knows, our capacity to deal with them is overwhelmed at the local level, at the State level, and at the Federal level, and they are essentially being treated like refugees and warehoused in places such as Lackland Air Force Base and other places around the country.

You can imagine the impact in the long run not only on the health care system, on education, and other services that would be required to take care of these children until they can be repatriated. But I would align myself with what former Senator Clinton, the former Secretary of State, said: The President and the administration need to send a very clear and loud message that anyone who comes to the United States will be returned to their country of origin once a safe family member can be identified to repatriate these children. But right now the system is so overwhelmed that we don't even know who these children are being placed with in America. They may be some claimed family member, but I am not sure whether there are background checks being done for criminal history or perhaps sex offense.

This is overwhelming the whole system. I am sure working together we can come up with an improvement over where we are now, and I would point out this is not a partisan issue, but it is a very harsh reality and my concern is it is being overwhelmed by the news out of the Middle East and other concerns here in Washington when it is very much front and center back home in Texas.

Ms. MIKULSKI. I thank the senior Senator from Texas, a former attorney general, as I recall. The Senator knows the law, he knows the border, and he knows what is going on.

This Senator looks at this too as not only the chair of the Appropriations Committee but as a social worker. The care of the children even in our own country gives me pause.

They were originally looking at a closed Social Security building to house these children, with no bathrooms except down the hall, putting them in little office cubicles. So we have a very serious problem.

I want the Senator from Texas to know I agree with the holding that we need to have the strong and clear message in Central America, first of all, that these rumors are false.

Today is not the day to do this. I thank the Senator for his compelling comments. I would like to work with the Senator from Texas and also continue to work with the administration to focus on this. But the message does have to go to Central America. I think we are fair game in Central America. From what I have heard, there are all these radio ads and so on that are truly exploiting this. There is violence, there is ghoulish, grim violence against children in Central America. Desperate mothers and grandmothers are trying to look for a way out. They are being exploited. I am going to work with the Senator in any way I can to stem the flow, deal with the humanitarian crisis, and get a long-range solution. I appreciate this conversation going forward.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator and look forward to that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana is recognized.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. President, I rise today not only as a Senator from Montana, but as a veteran of the long and difficult war in Iraq. Like most Americans, the increasing instability in Iraq and the disintegration of the country along sectarian boundaries has me deeply concerned. This past weekend when I was home in Montana and talking to Montanans, they were very concerned about what was going on in Iraq; they express their interest to me about Iraq on a regular basis.

The heinous advance of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, their systematic execution of Iraqi soldiers, and the murder of innocent civilians gives pause to people everywhere.

I stand here today as a veteran and as a father whose son has been deployed multiple times. I wish to recognize my son today, who is with me today. I ask that my son Michael stand and be recognized.

We fought in the war that Washington began based on false information—a war that ended and from which we must move on.

I led an infantry battalion—the 1st Battalion, 163rd Infantry—into combat, which was made up of more than 100 of Montana's finest. Our area of operation was from just north of Tikrit—from Baiji—to Kirkuk, which is the very same area being fought over today.

It was late 2004 and the country had fallen into a bitter sectarian conflict—a conflict that unfolded after the dismantling of the Baathist-led army and fueled by ancient divides between the Shias and Sunnis. Those same disputes are again boiling over in Iraq today.

From the end of 2004 to late 2005, my unit fought to hold ground, secure roads, and build infrastructure. We worked with local sheiks and key leaders to forge a path to peace. We helped return Iraq's government to its people. While there we oversaw two successful elections and watched with hope and

great satisfaction as the Iraqis ratified their constitution. It was during this time that I also dispatched a team from the battalion to focus solely on training and assisting members of the newly formed Iraqi army.

During our unit's entire deployment in Iraq while fighting the insurgency, we faced rocket attacks, snipers, and improvised explosive devices on a daily basis. Four of my men were killed in action, and there is not a day that goes by that I don't think of those men and their families: MSG Robbie D. McNary of Lewistown, MT, died on March 31, 2005; SSG Kevin Davis of Lebanon, OR, died on April 8, 2005; SGT Timothy Kiser of Tehama, CA, died on April 28, 2005; and SGT Travis Arndt, died on September 21, 2005. Travis was from Bozeman, MT. Scores of other soldiers were injured.

One of my soldiers died by suicide after returning home to Montana. He was a victim of the invisible wounds of war.

Nearly 4,500 Americans have been killed in Iraq, among them 28 Montana heroes. Some 32,000 Americans have been wounded. The war cost us more than $2 trillion—I say more than $2 trillion—most of which Congress put on a credit card so our grandchildren can pay the debt.

Because this Nation has failed to prepare for new veterans returning home, we now have a crisis of care within our VA health care system—a system that is overwhelmed after more than a decade of war.

Today we are seeing 22 veterans die by suicide each and every single day across this country. These are the true costs of war. Montanans understand this, and Americans understand this.

Because I work for Montanans, and I am listening to them, I call on President Obama to use extreme caution when considering options to deal with the sectarian violence that we are seeing take place in Iraq today. America cannot afford another Iraq financially or the human costs that are associated with war. We did our job there, and we did it with honor and integrity. Our men and women should be very proud of their success, and the citizens of this country should be proud of the accomplishments of the men and women who served in our armed forces.

Today some are suggesting we make an open-ended commitment to Iraq and keep American troops on the ground indefinitely. Sending thousands of America's young men and women back into Iraq to step into the middle of a civil war is not a solution.

To my fellow Members of Congress, I urge temperance as we navigate this difficult terrain because I know that foreign policy failures made in Washington fall disproportionately on the backs of young men and women from the small towns across Montana and the country.

I have seen war up close and, like too many American families, I have seen the cost of war up close on families and on communities all across this country.

I believe it is now time for the Iraqis to secure and defend their own nation. The embrace of their own self-determination is the only path to a true and everlasting peace in Iraq.

I wish to remind the American people of the costs that have been associated with the war in Iraq. We are dealing with a crisis within the VA health care system. At one time over a year ago, we had over 450,000 men and women on a backlog list trying to get in to see a health care provider.

Today that backlog has been significantly reduced, but we still have a problem within the VA health care system. We put over 2 million American veterans into that health care system without making sure that the system was ready for them when they came home. Can you imagine sending over 2 million American servicemembers into Iraq or Afghanistan—or anywhere else in the world—whom we didn't train, equip, or provide the resources for them to go into Iraq?

When people talk to me about the cost of war, I think this is a cost that we sometimes overlook because when our men and women return from Iraq, the war is not over. We will be dealing with this cost for many years.

As we talk about the men and women in Iraq and Afghanistan and contemplating our extension of deployment in Afghanistan, a figure has been thrown around as to the costs. Today it costs approximately $1.2 million for a soldier in Afghanistan. When we reduce the number of soldiers in Afghanistan from 32,000 to less than 10,000, that cost goes up to $2.3 million. Again, we are planning to put that cost on the credit card.

We have a responsibility, and that responsibility lies on the citizens of this Nation and on the citizens of Montana. We must continue to look out for these people.

I don't want to be an isolationist. I understand there are problems in Iraq and Afghanistan, but we have to take care of our problems here in Washington, DC.

As I travel back to Montana and talk to Montanans, they are concerned about our debt. They know we have a spending problem, and we have to take care of that spending problem. But sending our soldiers to Iraq or extending their stay in Afghanistan is not going to solve the problems we are dealing with there.

Again, America cannot afford another Iraq financially or the human costs that are associated with Iraq. We owe it to the citizens of this Nation.

The Members of the Senate need to ask themselves: If it were my son or daughter who was going to be sent into Iraq to fight in a sectarian conflict, would I be as willing to do that as I am today without having someone I care for sent over there?

We hear about suggestions on a daily basis about what we should be doing in Iraq and Afghanistan, and I know we are dealing with a difficult situation there, but we have to make the right decision. We have to look out for the United States of America and what is happening here in America.

I think that too many of my fellow Members of Congress are too abrupt and think too quickly about what we should do in Iraq. I believe they need to take a step back and think about the impacts—the second and third order of effects of continuing to send our men and women back over to Iraq.

As I said, I know that foreign policy failures made in Washington will fall disproportionately on the backs of smalltown America—towns like Culbertson, MT, Livingston, MT, and Boulder, MT. It is not the large cities that will bear the burden of sending men and women back into Iraq.

I have also mentioned I have seen war up close. I still recall the ramp ceremonies we held shortly after the deaths of the men and women in Iraq. We had to have those men and women out of there within a 12-hour period. Those were very difficult times to deal with not only for me but for the other 700-plus men and women who were deployed with me to Iraq.

Again, I cannot overemphasize how important I think it is that we really step back, take a look at what is happening in Iraq and determine if this is really the best thing for the United States of America. Is it the best thing for our military to have to deal with?

We have been at war for over 13 years in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our military will do whatever we ask of it, but we also have to think about the families of our service men and women, the impacts that the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan have had on them with the number of divorces, broken marriages, and broken families. Those are also the costs of war we are having to deal with.

There are no easy answers to what is happening in Iraq, and I know we will come together and come up with a solution, and I hope it is the right solution because these are very important times. Who knows what will happen next? Will it happen in the Middle East? Will it happen in Europe? I don't think that anyone knows, and we have to be prepared.

Again, I have said it once and I wish to emphasize this point again: I believe it is time for the Iraqis to secure and defend their own nation. We heard they have over 17 divisions. Think about the size of those divisions. A division of the United States is nearly 20,000 soldiers, and I am sure that an Iraqi division is somewhere in that same capacity. They have 17 divisions—4 of which we hear have dropped their weapons and fallen back, but that still leaves 13 divisions they would have to fight, and so they can make a stance to protect their country.

I am calling on the Members of this Senate to ask the Iraqi people to stand up and fight for their country.

I thank the Chair.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I come to the floor to make an objection, if necessary, to an effort to submarine the President's climate change initiative, which two-thirds of all Americans support and which a huge number of major name-brand American corporations supported and which is supported by those whom we trust to lead our national defense and our national security interests. But something about this building, something about this place makes it a place where the polluting interests have wildly disproportionate sway, so we keep seeing these attacks on environmental regulations. So it is actually kind of fortunate timing that I am here because it gives me a chance, for the 71st time, to try to wake this body up to the harm carbon pollution is causing to our oceans, to our economy, to our wildlife, and to our health.

I traveled recently to New Hampshire. I have been traveling around the country, going to States that are facing the carbon predicament and seeing how they are doing it.

I can tell my colleagues that Granite Staters are facing up to the daunting challenges of climate change. Rhode Islanders understand that New Hampshire's challenges are like our own. We see similar threats in our own State. At the Newport, RI, tide gauge, right at our naval station, sea level is up almost 10 inches since the 1930s. In the winter, we are three to four degrees warmer in Narragansett Bay. The recent ''National Climate Assessment'' report concludes that Rhode Island will see even more rising sea level, warmer temperatures, and extreme weather.

New Hampshire showed that there is plenty of Yankee good sense up there as well. The people of New Hampshire get it, and they are taking steps to tackle climate change. Let me first say that no one pretended it isn't real. The first line of defense on the other side of the aisle is that climate change isn't real. No one I spoke to in New Hampshire is pretending it isn't real.

University of New Hampshire expert Cameron Wake told me that New Hampshire is ''getting wetter and getting warmer,'' and they pointed out that it is happening fast. The ''National Climate Assessment'' shows that due to climate change, the Northeast already has seen 70 percent more extreme precipitation in recent years—dramatic downpours that increase the risk of flooding. This University of New Hampshire data shows an even more severe problem for New Hampshire. Dr. Wake told me that he and his University of New Hampshire colleagues have collected data from southern New Hampshire on what they call ''extreme precipitation events''—what we might call a rain burst, where over 4 inches of rain falls in just 48 hours. The data show these rain bursts have increased 4 to 10 times since 1960, and they will only grow more frequent through the rest of the century, Wake and his University of New Hampshire colleagues report.

That brings us to the warmer part of the wetter-and-warmer equation. The University of New Hampshire's recent studies show the State's temperature has increased by twice the global average, happening in large part due to what Dr. Wake calls ''snow dynamics'': Warmer temperatures during New Hampshire's winter mean less snow. Less snow exposes more dark ground underneath. The dark ground absorbs more heat, and it warms faster than if it were covered in reflective snow—what scientists call high albedo snow. So the ground then warms the air—and on goes the cycle.

At Plymouth State University, the Appalachian Mountain Club has data which show temperature increases in Pinkham Notch in New Hampshire's White Mountains. The average increase in temperature has climbed over 75 years. Then, if we look at the average over 50 years, we see that the line has steepened and it is accelerating, and if we look at the line for the last 25 years, it has steepened again and the increase is accelerating further. So New Hampshire's temperatures aren't just rising, they are rising faster.

What do these temperatures mean for Granite Staters? Well, big changes to their winter industries, such as skiing. Six years ago Ben Wilcox, who is the general manager of the ski resort Mount Cranmore in North Conway, NH, was using 40 to 50 snow guns to cover his ski mountain. Now he is using 150. In the last 5 years, Wilcox reports, ski mountains in his region have invested in over 1,700 new top-of-the-line snow guns, capable of making three to four times the amount of snow of previous models, so they can offset the snowpack loss from the shorter winters. That makes them lucky. But when people down the mountain don't see snow, they don't think about skiing, so they don't go.

Stefan Hausmann is the owner of Zimmermann's Ski and Snowboard Shop in Nashua, NH. He told me his business sees this in fewer new skiers and snowboarders buying their equipment at his store. He is still selling the higher end skis to established skiers at a pretty good clip, but he is selling less equipment to beginners. Those lower end customers just aren't coming in the door, says Hausmann.

Of course, New Hampshire's winter tourism industry goes far beyond skiing. The New Hampshire Department of Travel and Economic Development says 34 million visitors travel to the Granite State and spend roughly $4.6 billion. This makes tourism the State's second largest industry, and climate change hits a lot of it.

For instance, snowmobilers and Nordic skiers come to New Hampshire's backcountry for more than 7,000 miles of trails. If you are a ski mountain, you can crank snow out onto your busy ski slopes. It is not so easy when you are talking about snowmobile trails or Nordic skiing trails. So the ski business of trail skiing and the snowmobile business is taking a hit.

The Hubbard Brook Research Foundation, based in North Woodstock, NH, has found that snow cover has decreased by 22 days since I was born in 1955, and the frozen lakes included in those trail systems that snowmobilers and Nordic skiers use are covered in ice less of the year—33 less days on Mirror Lake just since 1967, for example. As one Granite Stater told me, this hit not just the trails but the hotels, restaurants, snowmobile shops, and outdoor outfitters who depend on that market.

Of course, it is not just sports. Jamey French of Portsmouth, the CEO and president of Northland Forest Products, told me how climate change is affecting two of New Hampshire's most valuable hardwoods—the sugar maple and the yellow birch.

Sugar maples, of course, support New Hampshire's maple sugar industry, but they also draw leaf peepers who travel to view the spectacular foliage that blankets the New Hampshire landscape in the autumn. As New Hampshire and neighboring States get warmer, the trees' geographic range moves north. Scientists predict that future warming will exacerbate this trend, meaning more production of maple syrup in Canada and less in the United States—bad news for New Hampshire's maple sugar houses.

As for the yellow Birch, Mr. French points out that in the 1940s and 1950s, most of the furniture in New England was made out of yellow birch, and yellow birch remains a valuable hardwood, drawing good prices for New Hampshire's timber business.

French fears the consequences for his industry if yellow birch and sugar maples are pushed northwards and out by warmer-weather trees. ''Will there be a wood product industry?'' he asks. ''Will there be a maple sugar industry in a climate-changed New England? There is going to be a lot less of one,'' he concludes.

New Hampshire biologist Eric Orrf is witnessing one of the most dramatic changes. He studies the moose—an animal that is bred to survive harsh northern winters. But what Orrf sees is a catastrophic decline in moose population mostly due to the success of moose ticks. This is going to get a little bit gross, so forgive me. Moose ticks breed more easily and they survive longer in milder winters. Orrf explains—these are his words:

What happens when we have an early spring, when winter ticks fall off on bare

ground, is they thrive. They lay their eggs. They are successful at reproducing. Then, in the fall, in November, when the baby moose ticks are hanging together, if there is no snow, then by the thousands, tens of thousands, they get on the calves. Now for these calves, they'd literally have to resupply their blood supply two times over to survive the winter. They suck them dry.

I think one tick is pretty revolting. The idea of tens of thousands of ticks on a moose calf, sucking the blood out of the calf so fast that it can't keep up, is a truly grisly thought. They literally ''suck them dry,'' according to Orrf.

Jim O'Brien of the New Hampshire Audubon Society told me how climate change is affecting the State's bird. New Hampshire's State bird is the purple finch. It is the official bird of New Hampshire. It is a cold-weather bird with a range up to Canada. He said this:

The purple finch is at the southern end of its range, and, in all likelihood, our state bird isn't going to be found in the State of New Hampshire anymore.

So while we dawdle and delay in Congress thanks to the influence of big polluters, there is work to be done out there. Thankfully, States across the country, knowing the risks of doing nothing and knowing the costs of doing nothing, are starting to act.

I have been to the Southeast coast. I have been to the Midwest. I have seen wind parks in Iowa with 500 wind turbines generating more than a quarter of the State's electricity. I went South. I saw Republican mayors and county officials in the Southeast putting climate and energy policy at the center of their government's plans.

I saw it again in New Hampshire, Granite Staters who understand the risks all too well. The University of New Hampshire recently released two—not one but two—comprehensive reports about climate change, one for northern New Hampshire and one for southern New Hampshire. I have them with me. New Hampshire Governor Maggie Hassan has played a pivotal role in making sure this work gets done and in developing and operating New England's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, which we call ''Reggi,'' which is already at work reducing our region's carbon pollution and providing a model for how other States can succeed under the powerplant regulations.

We are already seeing our States—our laboratories of democracy—taking sensible steps down the path to reducing carbon emissions. The EPA rule for carbon pollution from powerplants will encourage that State role. Just this morning the Wall Street Journal and NBC News released polling saying two-thirds of Americans support President Obama's new climate rule, and more than half say the United States should go for it and deal with global warming even if it means higher electricity bills for them. People in America get it. It is only this building that is isolated by polluter influence.

It is time for Congress to wake up, and we will if the American people will give us a good shake. It is time to wake up.

I yield the floor, and I 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. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

TRIBUTE TO BRIANNA VANCE

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise to recognize a remarkably brave, very young West Virginian, 10-year-old Brianna Vance, who helped save her father's life just last week—truly amazing. It was on Twitter, all over the pages.

On June 10, as a severe storm—and with all of the severe storms we have been having all over the country—tore through her neighborhood in Henlawson, WV, Brianna's father Gregory and two of his friends were sitting on the porch when lightning struck a nearby very large tree that crashed down on top of them and their home.

Brianna tried to use her phone to call for help, but the storm had knocked out all of the cell services. She had nothing. She could not do a thing. Remarkably, she was still able to access the Internet and quickly logged onto Facebook—just by a miracle.

In an extraordinary demonstration of courage and resourcefulness, Brianna posted a video, and I have seen this video. If you haven't, please go to Brianna's Facebook page, ''Brianna Vance,'' and look at it. She asked anyone who had cell phone service or access to a phone to please call 911 and send an ambulance to her yellow house to save her daddy.

She thought, had enough presence about her during this very trying and emotional time. When people see the video, I think it will explain and speak for itself.

Thankfully, someone saw her post and a rescue team was able to save the three victims, including her father, because of that Facebook post.

When all other options failed, Brianna did not give up. She still had the presence of thought and her desire to help her father and his friends.

Because of her sharp wit and resourcefulness, her father is alive and recovering today—just in time to celebrate Father's Day together, as we just finished up this past weekend.

I am so proud of Brianna, and I know her family and community are as well, as can be expected when we have situations not just in West Virginia but in the Presiding Officer's own State of Ohio and all over this great country, where we have family bonds such as this and we have family stories that have good outcomes that we do not hear enough of.

I thank Brianna for her heroism that helped save the lives of her father and his friends. She should be recognized for her bravery.

So I say, Brianna, on behalf of the grateful State of West Virginia, thank you for what you have done for your father and his friends and showing the courage you have as a young West Virginian.

I thank the Chair.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. COONS. 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. COONS. Mr. President, I come to the floor this afternoon because this week the Senate has a chance to take another crucial step away from the political cliffs and manufactured crises of previous years and to get back to the regular order—to get back to the considered, measured, orderly process on this floor that for so long was characteristic of this body, in the past considered the greatest deliberative body on Earth, but in recent years it has ground to a halt.

It is critical that we return to regular order and that we return to the steady consideration of appropriations bills in a way that will move not just the Senate and this Congress but this country forward.

I thank the chair and ranking member of the Appropriations Committee, Senators MIKULSKI and SHELBY, for their leadership and their steadfast determination to work in a bipartisan manner and bring us back to regular order.

We are considering today a collection—or what is called today a ''minibus'' instead of an omnibus—of three appropriations bills: Agriculture, Rural Development, and Food and Drug Administration; Commerce, Justice, and Science; and Transportation and Housing and Urban Development—an unbelievable scope across these three appropriations bills that could in combination make a real and significant difference for our communities, our States, and our country. This is an opportunity for this Congress to carry out its duties to provide oversight and direction and to help all the different agencies I just named move forward and address some of our most important priorities.

As a member myself of the Appropriations Committee, I have advocated for some of what are our Nation's top priorities embedded in these three important bills. So I wish to speak for a few minutes about how these bills will, first, help my home State of Delaware; second, help our country; and then, third, the important obligation we have as Senators to return to regular order and to use the appropriations process for oversight and for management of this whole Federal project.

For Delaware, these three bills invest in a number of areas. I could talk about literally dozens of matters critical to my home State, but let me focus on two—public safety and infrastructure.

When we think about it at the local level—where I served for a decade in county government—these are the foundation of what government does and does well: Keep our people, homes, communities, and families safe, and provide for the sewer water, drinking water, and the highways and tollways and bridges and ports that are critical to moving commerce and our country forward.

This bill extends children's advocacy centers. Let me talk for a few minutes about what children's advocacy centers are and why it is so vital to public safety.

Children's advocacy centers allow communities to bring child abusers to justice without retraumatizing their victims. Children's advocacy centers are unique because it is a model that brings together, under one roof in one place, law enforcement, prosecutors, counselors, and child service professionals—all focusing on how to best care for and move forward with a child who has been a victim of abuse.

In Delaware we have three centers—one in each of our three counties. And although I wish we didn't need them, the fact is they are indispensable. In my experience in a decade of local government, I was exposed over and over to the critical role they play in helping law enforcement secure critical evidence and move forward to conviction against the monsters who commit abuse against our children.

Since the creation of these centers, they have transformed our Nation's response to child abuse, giving families hope and guidance in their darkest moments and delivering justice to those who have endured the worst.

As we work together to continue to try our best to keep our children safe, this bill allows us to continue to fund child advocacy centers so we can have a more efficient, more effective, more federally sponsored and coordinated way to deliver at a very modest cost this vital resource for our children.

Second, as we work to keep our children safe, this bill also allows us to protect those who protect us. Every day more than 1 million law enforcement officers across this country accept risks to their personal safety. As they leave their families at dawn and head off to their jobs, they know that what they accept as part of their mission is the risk they may not come home that night. That is why it is so important this bill also funds the bulletproof vest partnership.

In Delaware we know its value all too well. Last February at the New Castle County Courthouse in my hometown of Wilmington, DE, a gunman unleashed a hail of bullets into a courthouse lobby, tragically killing two. On what was a difficult morning in Wilmington, two lives were also saved—those of Sergeant Michael Manley and Corporal Steve Rinehart—members of the Delaware Capitol Police—officers who were wearing bulletproof vests funded by the Federal Bulletproof Vest Partnership. This is a partnership launched by my predecessor, now-Vice President BIDEN. It has been sustained on a bipartisan basis for many years, but without this appropriation, this vital Federal-State-law enforcement partnership would grind to a halt.

Vests work. They save lives. They save officers' lives, and with this bill we will be able to ensure even more officers all across this country have life-saving bulletproof vests.

Those are two areas where in law enforcement and public safety this bill continues critical investments in partnership from the Federal Government to State and local governments.

In recent weeks in Delaware we have also been reminded of just how critical our infrastructure is—our bridges, our roads, and highways.

There is a bridge on I–495 that goes across the Christina River. This is a vital highway for Wilmington and for the whole mid-Atlantic region. It carries 90,000 drivers a day, but 2 weeks ago it was closed indefinitely when workers nearby noticed four of its pillars were off plumb, were slanted, and then upon further investigation discovered there were cracks in the very foundation holding this bridge 50 feet in the air. Its closure is hurting families, businesses, and commuters, and it is just one in a string of recent emergencies all across our country that demonstrate the need for investment in fixing America's roads and bridges.

The funding we are considering this week in this bill recognizes that and takes steps to address some of our most urgent needs across this country. It continues to invest in two innovative funding vehicles: One called TIGER grants and another called TIFIA loans. These are acronyms, but they are inventive ways to mobilize private capital in partnership with States and the Federal Government, to get us moving again in repairing and upgrading the roads and bridges of America. They help State and local governments pay for new highways and bridges, public transit projects, railways, and ports.

In Delaware, the Port of Wilmington—a critical economic engine for our State and region—secured a $10 million TIGER grant last year to renovate facilities built in 1922. On U.S. 301, a little south and west of Wilmington but still in Delaware, TIFIA grants are helping us to do critical work to relieve congestion.

In southernmost Delaware at Georgetown, at the Sussex County Airport, we have also seen the vital role and the value of Federal investment. Since 2012, the Sussex County Airport has received $4 million in airport improvement grants to expand its runway and improve safety and to help grow manufacturing jobs at that Georgetown Airport. With this week's bill, we will be able to continue making these kinds of critical improvements at airports in Delaware and across our country.

I relatively rarely get to fly, but I commute virtually every day back and forth from Wilmington, DE, to Washington, and I ride on Amtrak when I do so. Today, ridership levels are at a record high, and Delaware's region in the Northeast corridor brings in $300 million in profits alone. So it is good this bill maintains Amtrak's national operations and investments in its capital needs, but I believe we need to do more. We need to step up and do more federally to invest if we want to keep these results, not just in the Northeast but across the country.

We have a more than $6 billion backlog to reach a state of good repair for Amtrak. As our bridges, tunnels, and rail lines get older and older, fixing them will only become more expensive. That is why I intend to offer an amendment to this bill to further increase our investment in the capital needs of Amtrak. This is critical. It is something we need, and we need to start chipping away at this long overdue debt we have, this unaddressed infrastructure debt, if we are going to continue to serve our communities.

There are many other great provisions in these incredibly broad bills that are of national and international importance. Let me just briefly reference a few.

At home manufacturing continues to be critical to our economy and our future, and biomanufacturing plays an increasingly important role; the manufacturing of products and materials from renewable sources, from plant-based sources rather than petrochemicals. For the first time, through this bill, we will dedicate $15 million to the National Science Foundation's budget for new biomanufacturing initiatives that will allow us to deploy in the marketplace new inventions and innovations.

Our competitors aren't holding back on doing so. Countries from the United Kingdom to China are ramping up their investments in new biomanufacturing. In my view it is time for the United States to refocus our research, to reprioritize our investments, and to stay competitive in this vital field.

Finally, I am proud these appropriations bills also support in the housing area funding for Community Development Block Grant—CDBG—Programs. We used them when I was in county government in Delaware to help rehabilitate homes, to help provide for affordable homes, and to help strengthen and sustain jobs in our communities.

In 2013, so-called CDBG, or Community Development Block Grants, helped 225 families. Some in this body have tried to cut CDBG, but I am thrilled we have been able to successfully move forward and sustain its support in this bill.

While we invest at home, these appropriations bills also make important

investments abroad. One I would like to briefly highlight is in our international food aid program, where we feed millions but can do more. This bill provides for flexibility of our food aid that will allow it to be delivered more efficiently, more quickly, and to feed more who hunger around the world.

As businesses also look abroad from the United States, we are doing more to open new markets for them. One of the investments I most value that is in this bill in this regard is the expansion of the Foreign Commercial Service at the Department of Commerce—in particular, its expansion in Africa, where 7 out of 10 of the fastest growing economies in the world are currently growing but where the United States isn't doing enough to take advantage of these burgeoning export markets for our products.

As chair of the African Affairs Subcommittee, I have had a chance to see up close the great opportunities for growth and partnership that Africa offers. There will be four new Foreign Commercial Service offices in Angola, Tanzania, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, as well as expansion in Kenya, Ghana, Morocco, and Libya. Now we can make investments in them jointly so our growing partnerships in the Sub-Saharan countries I listed can thrive.

As I close, I also make one brief point about why this whole process is important—why we need to pass these appropriations bills rather than just continuing resolutions, which go on from year after year, that sustain funding but do not engage the minds and skills of the Members of this body in doing oversight of the Federal Government.

As the Federal Government changes, as our Nation's needs change, we need to be able to ensure that our spending and our focus adapts as well. A great example from this particular minibus bill that is on the floor today is the Crude By Rail Safety Initiative. Within the last year there have been a number of accidents on our rail networks that demand our action. America is moving more and more oil and hazardous products by rail every year, so we are putting in place an approach to do it safely.

The Department of Transportation and Transportation Secretary Foxx have done a great job responding with the resources and tools they have, but Congress needs to do more. That is why this bill adds 20 new rail and hazardous materials inspectors, adds $3 million to ensure that oil routes are safe and sound, creates a new short-line safety institute, improves classifications, and extends training for first responders.

Without this appropriations bill and regular order, new and timely investments such as these that are responsive to conditions of the world wouldn't happen. Thus, if I might say in closing, while our economy changes, we need to change, and we need regular order and regular appropriations bills to be able to do that.

I again thank the chair and vice chair of the Appropriations Committee, Senators Mikulski and Shelby, for their leadership and their efforts to shepherd a bipartisan process forward. It is critical to our country, our economy, and our future.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah is recognized.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be permitted to deliver my remarks in full.

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

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the distinguished Senator BROWN be permitted to speak immediately following my remarks for 10 minutes.

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

Mr. HATCH. Thank you, Mr. President.

GUANTANAMO RELEASES

I rise today out of serious concern about the release of the five senior Taliban commanders detained at Guantanamo and the way in which the Obama administration has accomplished it.

These individuals that the Taliban successfully demanded the release of in exchange for SGT Bowe Bergdahl were some of the most dangerous terrorists in our custody. Some had close operational ties to Al Qaeda. Others perpetrated horrifying war crimes. All were senior leaders in the Taliban—a group with whom we remain at war.

These former detainees, the Taliban five, are only subject to a 1-year international travel ban. It seems shockingly unrealistic to expect that they will not seek to undo everything our brave men and women in uniform have fought and died for in Afghanistan.

However foolish, the prospect that we might release the most dangerous Guantanamo detainees has been a matter of national debate for some time. President Obama and his subordinates have long espoused a singular devotion to closing the detention facility at Guantanamo. Many of us in Congress have remained decidedly less sanguine about this longtime leftwing fantasy. We are wary of the dangers, inappropriateness, and oftentimes the impossibility of prosecuting battle-hardened terrorists in civilian court as if they were common criminals. We are frustrated by the procedural roadblocks to pursuing justice through military commissions. Above all else we are alarmed by the more than one in four released detainees who have apparently rejoined the fight. And unlike the administration, we have long been disabused of the notion that our enemies and perennial critics would somehow fall in love with America if we simply close Guantanamo.

With these concerns in mind, we exercised our rightful legislative authority under the Constitution to prevent the transfer of any further detainees out of Guantanamo. Nevertheless, the Obama administration bitterly opposed any release restrictions. Facing incessant and intense pressure from the administration to repeal our ban, Congress acted on a bipartisan basis to reach a compromise—a compromise that was extraordinarily generous to the administration's position.

Under the new law in effect—section 1035 of last year's National Defense Authorization Act—Congress must be notified 30 days before any detainee transfer. The notification must contain a detailed statement of the basis of transfer, an explanation of why the transfer is in the national security interests of the United States, and a description of the actions taken to mitigate the risks of detainees returning to the fight. Our subsequent funding legislation also banned the Obama administration from using any of the appropriated money to transfer detainees except in accordance with these agreed-upon procedures.

Despite this good-faith effort on the part of Congress to find common ground with the President, he chose to simply disregard his statutory obligations to inform Congress of this highly controversial release of the Taliban five. While we should celebrate the return of any American from Taliban captivity, the President's actions carry very troubling consequences.

When a lawmaker animatedly denounces the President's violation of a technical provision so wonky and seemingly unimportant as a statutory notification requirement, many Americans might understandably dismiss such a concern as a petty turf war—if their eyes don't glaze over first. Although perhaps intuitive, such an impression couldn't be more wrong.

First, notification requirements such as this one have proven critically beneficial to national security decision-making, particularly in the national security context. The most prominent example is our oversight of the intelligence community. For more than 30 years, prior congressional consultation has been a key foundation of ensuring effective policymaking on intelligence-gathering activities and covert operations.

On these incredibly sensitive and weighty issues, the executive branch is required to brief certain members of the legislative branch on all such proposed activities before they happen. The discussion of such highly classified information necessitates a strict observance of secrecy, which Congress has a long tradition of respecting. Discussions behind these closed doors provide the benefits of deliberation outside of the fishbowl of the ordinary policy process. In this setting concern about national security and the wisdom of the contemplated action dominate. Politics takes a back seat. The administration can modify or cancel proposed actions without the costs that attach to public policy pronouncements. And by assuaging our concerns before execution, the administration

gets the congressional buy-in that is so necessary when these sorts of difficult decisions are taken.

Although the system certainly has its critics on all sides, I remain a passionate believer in its overall effectiveness. I should know: I served on the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence longer than any other Republican ever has. For years I was intimately involved in this process and witnessed up close just how well it works to produce good policy. In the context of national security—an area in which our Nation regularly faces so many critical and difficult decisions—we need a well-functioning congressional oversight process to ensure our safety and security, now more than ever.

But even beyond improving an administration's national security decisionmaking, we should genuinely concern ourselves as a nation that formal restraints on power be observed by the coordinate branches of our government. Whether the administration agrees with the restrictions on its power to release Guantanamo detainees, those restrictions remain enshrined in a duly-enacted Federal statute, and the President remains obligated to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

To ignore the law and the President's constitutional obligation to see that the law is enforced may seem enticing in an instance of apparent pressing need, but our Constitution provides no such authority.

Consider the wisdom of Justice Jackson in his seminal concurrence in the Steel Seizure case:

> The appeal . . . that we declare the existence of inherent powers [out of necessity] to meet an emergency asks us to do what many think would be wise, although it is something the forefathers omitted. They knew what emergencies were. . . . [T]hey made no express provision for exercise of extraordinary authority because of a crisis. I do not think we rightfully may so amend their work, and, if we could, I am not convinced it would be wise to do so. . . .

Indeed, the central organizing principle of the Federal Government is the division of powers and authorities between the different branches. As a 21st-century American, it is far too easy to treat the separation of powers as a cliche confined to the civics classroom rather than a meaningful cornerstone of our liberty. But we should recall Madison's warning in Federalist 47 that ''[t]he accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.''

To disregard these central precepts of constitutional government is to vitiate the barriers protecting us from arbitrary government action and to undermine the rule of law.

We in the Congress should make no apology for zealously guarding the legal prerogatives of the body in which we serve, for, as Madison also warned in Federalist 51, ''[T]he great security against a gradual concentration of the several powers in the same department consists in giving to those who administer each department the necessary constitutional means and personal motives to resist encroachments of the others.''

Nevertheless, out of respect for a coordinate branch of government, the Obama administration's arguments excusing its action in releasing these five dangerous Taliban detainees merits thoughtful consideration and analysis. I have never been shy about defending the powers of the President when exercised lawfully, no matter how unpopular. Nevertheless, such an examination of the Obama administration's explanations reveals not only the ridiculousness of its arguments but also demonstrates deeply concerning attitudes and priorities that guided the administration's action.

The Obama administration has advanced multiple distinct arguments about the legality of its move to release these senior Taliban leaders. Advancing multiple, sometimes contradictory arguments does not exactly instill confidence in the administration's commitment to its legal obligations. Some have been patently absurd, such as the suggestion from the White House Press Secretary that briefing Members of Congress more than 2 years ago about the potential for the detainee exchange constituted sufficient compliance with the detailed statutory notification requirements for an actual decision to transfer.

I want to examine the two more sophisticated rationales advanced by the administration because it is in the details of these arguments that my gravest concerns arise.

First, I want to consider the National Security Council spokeswoman's written statement to the press asserting that ''Congress did not intend that the Administration would be barred from taking the action it did in these circumstances.''

Trying to read Congress's mind when interpreting the law, as the administration purports to do, has always struck me as absolutely absurd. Article I of our Constitution creates a legislative process that today includes 536 different individuals. To assume the existence of a single intent among so many different minds—all with different interests, different purposes, different philosophies, and different methods—runs counter to basic logic, not to mention the theory of representative government at the foundation of our Constitution. This notion that we should be governed by easily manipulated arguments about what Congress supposedly would have wanted long justified the hijacking of the law to undermine the clear meaning of the text.

Fighting this abuse of the law and the Constitution has animated so much of my work over the past 38 years. We have made enormous progress in reestablishing the bedrock principle that we are governed not by vague claims about intent but, rather, by the words themselves—words that have a fixed and discernible meaning, with the power to bind us all—including the President. I will continue to fight for this principle as long as I have the honor to serve our people in this country.

In this light, a proper reading of the detainee transfer and release notification requirements includes no such exception that the Obama administration imagines exists. We should always be skeptical of arguments assuming unwritten exceptions to laws, and here the relevant factors counsel strongly against assuming such an exception into existence.

The statute uses strong universally applicable language: ''the Secretary of Defense shall notify''; ''each notification shall include, at a minimum''; ''the Secretary of Defense may transfer . . . only if'' and the like.

The text of the provision is particularly detailed. This detail, especially when read in conjunction with the numerous other incredibly detailed provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act and its many predecessors—many of which contained detailed exceptions—demonstrates that Congress is quite capable of creating exceptions to a provision like this one but instead actively chose not to include one here.

Finally, as had been clearly established, lawmakers were aware of the administration's desire to conduct exactly this sort of a transaction before the beginning of the legislative process. To assume such an exception, when the Congress was aware of the administration's desire and proffered need for such a provision but chose not to provide one, would completely undermine the notion that Congress has the power to choose its preferred policies by legislation.

Put another way, how could Congress have been clearer that no detainee transfers could be accomplished outside its established process? If Congress's bright-line rule can be wished away by the Obama administration in this case, when can the Congress act to establish a policy to which the administration cannot carve out exceptions—exceptions that destroy the very core of the law?

In advancing this rather ridiculous attempt to misconstrue the transfer and release notification requirements, the Obama administration is simply avoiding making their more controversial argument explicit. The administration's Pentagon General Counsel admitted as much last week.

This argument centers on the President's contention that ''in certain circumstances'' the transfer and release notification requirements ''would violate constitutional separation of powers principles.''

Other senior administration officials have made statements, albeit hesitantly, invoking the President's authority under the Constitution to disregard the statute. Although the administration attempts to cloak it in the complex obscurity of statutory construction, this is the real issue at hand.

As a threshold matter, the rule of law and the separation of powers both depend on the longstanding notion that an unconstitutional statute is no law at all. We should take the Obama administration's arguments about the constitutionality of the notification requirement as applied to the Taliban five trade very seriously.

When appropriate, I have defended the President's authority to act in contravention of certain statutes. And I absolutely stand by the positions I have taken before—no matter how unpopular they have sometimes been.

I feel it is incumbent upon me to lay out my case of why I am so disturbed by the administration's actions here not to deflect any charge of hypocrisy for personal benefit but because I feel so passionately about the Obama administration's overreach in this and so many other cases. To risk having these arguments dismissed without serious consideration of their merits would be unbearable. I feel compelled to lay out my case in some detail.

Here, the Obama administration's arguments fail on the administration's own terms and in so doing demonstrate some disturbing trends at work within this administration.

Now, the Obama administration has not advanced the notion that the transfer and release notification requirements are always unconstitutional. Instead, the administration has been very careful to suggest that the notification requirements unconstitutionally encumbered the executive branch because of the specific circumstances at issue in the Taliban five trade. The general terms of the Obama administration's rationale initially seemed potentially reasonable: that it feared Sergeant Bergdahl would be endangered unless the administration moved swiftly and secretly to make the trade, and compliance with the notification requirement would have prevented the President from exercising his lawful authority to order the detainee swap.

However, the logic of the administration's rationale falls apart under closer inspection of the two key factors that were cited as creating the specific circumstances in disregarding the statute: the need for swiftness and the need for secrecy.

First, the need for swift action. The Obama administration has—at various times—suggested that Sergeant Bergdahl's health was in rapid and accelerating decline to the point of necessitating immediate rescue, and that the Taliban would refuse to agree to Bergdahl's release unless the administration executed the trade quickly. After examining what evidence the administration provided us, a number of my colleagues from both parties, including the senior Senator from California, the chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, have expressed significant doubt about these claims.

But even if we accept the Obama administration's claims that there existed a need for swift action, that when faced with this realization, compliance with the 30-day notification requirement would have endangered the potential for recovering Sergeant Bergdahl, and that these are the sort of circumstances where the Constitution authorizes the executive branch to act in defiance of a notification requirement—even if we accept everything the administration suggests, their argument doesn't totally nullify the administration's obligations under the statutory notification requirement.

Under the administration's own logic that the notification requirement is not unconstitutional per se but, rather, only under certain circumstances, the executive branch still has a duty to take care that the laws be faithfully executed. Thus, even if it is authorized to order a transfer or release of detainees in less than the 30 days mandated by the statute, the President remains obligated to comply as substantially and faithfully as possible, mitigating any anticipated breach by keeping Congress abreast of negotiations and complying with the notification requirements as soon as any transfer decision is made or undertaken.

But that clearly is not the case here. Instead, we know from the statements of senior administration officials that the administration deliberately withheld notification from Congress until after the trade occurred—months after negotiations to make this trade resumed and intensified, weeks after the detainee transfer agreement with Qatar was signed, and days after the final decision itself was taken. Given that the administration accepts the constitutionality of the legality of the notification requirement generally, its actions represent a direct effort to undermine the obvious core purpose of the law: giving Congress the opportunity to raise its objections and lobby against an ill-advised release or transfer before it happens.

This is not maximally faithful compliance. This is outright flouting of the statute.

The administration, though, has also claimed a need for secrecy—specifically, that informing Congress would endanger the prospects for Sergeant Bergdahl's safe return. I take this concern for secrecy extraordinarily seriously, and I know that every one of my colleagues does as well. Preserving secrecy as not to endanger ongoing operations remains an absolutely vital cornerstone of congressional oversight of national security issues, and my long service on the intelligence committee engendered in me a particular appreciation for how necessary it is.

But administrations have for decades briefed Congress on extraordinarily sensitive matters. Take the Bin Laden raid. It is hard to think of an operation more sensitive than that. In both the Taliban five swap and the Bin Laden operation, the mission objectives as well as the safety of our troops would have both been completely unattainable if details leaked. Yet, even before the Bin Laden operation, the administration kept Congress regularly briefed as required by law, which is, to me, testament to the extraordinary resiliency of our oversight structure.

Even those of us who have long defended robust executive powers in the national security context have long asserted that:

> The constitutional basis for withholding notification can only be invoked credibly, by its own terms, in very rare circumstances. A generalized fear that Congress might leak would not by itself suffice, because the same fear could be invoked equally from all [secret operations].

In the case at hand, the Obama administration accepts the constitutionality of congressional notification requirements in most circumstances. Yet it has also failed to articulate any particular reason why notifying Congress would impose a particular problem when compared to other sensitive operations. But the implication that it did not notify Congress just because of a generalized fear of leaks not only disregards decades of successful congressional oversight of intelligence collection and covert operations but also makes an exceedingly radical argument that would give the President essentially arbitrary power to ignore what he acknowledges is a valid law.

In this case, though, the administration's actions wholly undermine the notion that there was an unusual secrecy concern at issue here. First, consider that the administration itself estimated that between 80 and 90 executive branch officials were told of the decision to release the Taliban five ahead of time—in an administration that leaks sensitive national security information like a sieve, but zero—zero—Members of Congress were informed.

The Secretary of Defense and his General Counsel even admitted that Justice Department lawyers were told of the upcoming trade for the very purpose of keeping even a few key Members of Congress in the dark. In light of the statutory requirement to notify just a key handful of Members of Congress, this situation appears flatly absurd and certainly inconsistent with maximally faithful compliance with the statute.

Furthermore, the administration had already discussed with Congress the potential for such a deal. They ran into bipartisan opposition, as expressed in the bipartisan letter of early 2012 signed by the top Democrat and top Republican on both the House and Senate intelligence committees. In response to that letter, media reports indicate that the then-Secretary of State

and former Senator from New York promised the administration would pursue further congressional consultations before making the exchange. And in 2013 the White House Press Secretary responded to a question about trading Sergeant Bergdahl for Taliban detainees in stark terms promising: ''We would not make any decisions about transfer of any detainees without consulting Congress.''

So why the more than 2 years of radio silence from the Obama administration? Why the disregard of the Federal statute when the administration's arguments for doing so in this case are so disturbingly unconvincing? Why wait until after the decision could not be challenged before telling Congress?

After reviewing these events, the answer seems obvious. President Obama and his subordinates illegitimately chose not to inform Congress until after the decision was irrevocable because they knew that Congress would object. Two administration officials told Bloomberg News as much: The failure to notify key Members of Congress in advance was a deliberate move to skirt opposition to releasing the five Taliban prisoners.

While the vigor of the Obama administration's defense of the deal has shocked many, it has not shocked me. To this President, this deal represents the apex of responsible winding down of the conflict in Afghanistan—not only in returning Sergeant Bergdahl but also in releasing the Taliban five, whom the administration has eagerly sought to release so often before.

Just take it from the majority leader who said he was ''glad to get rid of these five people.'' And for a President and an administration that have demonstrated endless reservoirs of faith in the goodwill of hostile forces abroad, there is also surely hope—no matter how ridiculous—that giving into the Taliban's demands will somehow inspire a renewed interest on the part of the Taliban in peace talks, as if that did anything but demonstrate how the Taliban's current tactics will get them concessions from the Obama administration.

President Obama has on many occasions annunciated very clear beliefs of our detention operations at Guantanamo, articulating a nearly religious conviction that detention of Taliban, Al Qaeda, and associated forces under the law of armed conflict is a beacon of this nation's evils to the world. And although the administration has faced immense political pressure to reconsider from many of us, I have absolutely no doubt President Obama intends on following through with his long-time, recently repeated promise to make every effort to close Guantanamo during his remaining time in office.

Many of my colleagues and I share a diametrically opposed view from the President's—one that is more focused on securing the stability of the Afghan Government that our men and women in uniform fought so hard to establish. But in our honest disagreements, President Obama only sees reflexive intransigence. On Guantanamo and on so many other matters, President Obama has proven himself unable to accept good-faith differences with those of us elected to a coordinate and coequal branch of government. This frustration has motivated the President to enact his agenda unilaterally. In doing so, he not only poisons the well of congressional oversight of sensitive national security matters, as troubling as that is, but also by arrogating power with casual disregard for the structural restraints of the Constitution, he stretches our longstanding laws and norms past the breaking point.

My allegiance to constitutional government and the rule of law compels me to stand up to this overreach by President Obama and the executive branch. I will continue to speak out against what I strongly believe are serious instances of overreach by this administration—as I have already done on immigration, sentencing, education, Benghazi, and, of course, ObamaCare. I urge all of my colleagues to join me, for what is at stake is not just our rightful authority to get done what our constituents sent us here to do but also the very precepts at the core of our Constitution.

That is why I have joined my colleague, the junior Senator from Ohio, to cosponsor a resolution declaring that the Obama administration violated the statute and calling for an investigation into the matter. With all that is at stake, registering our objection in this way could not be more important.

Additionally, in light of these troubling events—which also involve the Justice Department, which should hold the separation of powers in the highest regard—I should note I found myself now unable to support the nomination of Peter Kadzik to be Assistant Attorney General for Legislative Affairs. My deference to the administration's choice of appointees can only go so far, and I cannot support a nominee who has so persistently refused to share the Department's memos on the release of the Taliban five. Absent a real commitment from Mr. Kadzik and the Justice Department to respect Congress's role under the Constitution, I felt compelled to oppose his nomination.

On their own terms, the Obama administration violated the law by releasing the Taliban five—dangerous men who are sure to return to the fight. In doing so, he not only endangered the lives of our men and women in uniform but also jeopardized everything they fought and died for in Afghanistan. My commitment is to them and to the Constitution's division of powers and authorities amongst the coordinate and coequal branches of government which they fight to protect. These loyalties are what have compelled me to stand up to the Obama administration.

I urge all of my colleagues, regardless of party, to join me in this fight. Too much is at stake to let petty partisan concerns and blind political loyalty to the President take precedence over the weighty matters of national security and constitutional authority that are at stake, and especially when one considers how much this branch of government is being ignored on almost a daily basis by this out-of-control White House.

Democrats and Republicans have to put a stop to this, and they have to start standing up on these issues or we are in danger of losing the Constitution itself.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, yesterday I chaired, along with Congressman SMITH, a Republican from New Jersey, the Congressional-Executive Committee on China. At this hearing, Terry Sefranek, a Clevelander actually from Brooklyn Heights, OH, a suburb of my city, submitted written testimony. The hearing was to address the concerns that American consumers, pet owners, farmers, and parents have about the safety of pet food, pet treats, processed chicken, and animal feed from China. Ms. Sefranek joined me then today on a call with some national press to talk about this issue. I wish to share briefly the actual words of Ms. Sefranek's testimony. She said:

> In December of 2011, my little Sampson, a healthy, lively and hilarious fox terrier mutt was showing signs that he was not well. He seemed withdrawn, and his appetite was decreasing, and all he wanted was to drink water and urinate. His health rapidly decreased.
>
> We took him to the veterinarian 3 times in the next two weeks. Finally, blood tests revealed horrible results. Sampson was in acute renal failure.
>
> The Doc gave him intravenous fluids for six long, tormenting days. And then, the agonizing decision, the hardest, most heartbreaking decision. With my husband and children around us, I held my little buddy in my arms for the last time, as he was euthanized.

Ms. Sefranek continues:

> One day during this time, I saw a local family on the news, holding up a bag of Waggin' Train Chicken Jerky Treats. Their dog had eaten them and died of renal failure a few weeks earlier. Their new little puppy was fed leftovers from the same bag—and became ill right away. As soon as they stopped the treats, he recovered.
>
> I was floored. It was the exact same treat that Sampson had eaten; it has been his new favorite, and I was giving him them as a treat for about a month. I'm sure that was the only major change in his diet.

Sixty-two million households in this country have a pet. Americans raise 83 million dogs and 96 million cats whom, as is the case with my wife's and my dog Franklin, we treat, in many ways, as members of the family. That is why it is alarming that since 2007, the FDA has been aware of the deaths and illnesses of thousands of pets, but we still don't know what is causing it.

Last month the FDA said that reports of illnesses had increased to 5,600

pets, including 1,000 dog deaths, and now three human illnesses.

Pet owners shouldn't have to worry about the safety of the food they give their pets. When we go to a pet store, go to a grocery store and buy pet food, we shouldn't have to worry that pet food could actually endanger that dog's, that cat's health.

While no cause has been identified, the illnesses many think are linked to pet treats from China, which raises questions. If something says it is made in China, can we be assured that it is safe? If it says ''made in the USA,'' what exactly does that mean? Is everything being done to keep these pet treats safe?

Last year the USDA declared that China can export processed, cooked chicken into the United States. This paves the way for chicken sourced in the United States to be shipped to China for processing and then sold back to American consumers. While no such chicken has yet entered our shores, it is possible that very soon this processed chicken could end up on our dinner tables and in our school lunchrooms.

Researchers are exploring a possible link also between animal feed from China and the PEDv that has wiped out 10 percent of piglets—10 percent of our young pig population. It has been a year already and no definitive cause has been identified.

Americans want and require better answers. We want and require clearer labels and the peace of mind that the foods we import from the People's Republic of China are safe.

This is why I am introducing an amendment to the agriculture appropriations bill to ask the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture about the status of inspectors' visas to China and how many are currently inspecting there.

We heard in testimony yesterday an uncertainty from FDA and USDA about our ability to get the number of inspectors we need into China to inspect the processing of chickens in China. I urged the FDA to investigate and determine the cause of these pet illnesses and PEDv, and the companies to ensure the highest safety standards.

When we buy something that says ''made in the United States of America,'' whether it is food for human consumption or whether it is processed food for human consumption or whether it is processed food for our pets, we should be confident that food is actually made, processed, and put together in the United States of America. In our testimony yesterday, we couldn't quite be 100 percent sure that is the case.

A couple of things need to go on there. One, the packaging and the labeling needs to be believable and credible and it needs to be true. Second, those companies that import—it used to be that companies would produce in the United States with food safety rules we have in the United States—drug safety, food safety—customers, buyers, and supermarkets that buy this food with ''made in the USA'' labels knew that because we have a good FDA, because we have a good U.S. Department of Agriculture, because we have good food safety rules in our country—we knew that ''made in the USA'' was a label we could trust.

Then companies in this country began to do something in the last 20 years—especially since Congress passed Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China. Companies began to shut down production in places such as Rocky River and Maple Heights and Garfield Heights and Brooklyn Heights, OH, and move that production to Wahan or Shihan or Beijing, or Shanghai, China, and then sell those products back to the United States. If companies are going to do that, costing our communities jobs in far too many cases, hurting families and workers who lose those jobs—if companies are going to do that, they need to be responsible in the production in those countries. They need to be responsible when pharmaceuticals are made in China by U.S. companies and then shipped back to the United States. Those pharmaceuticals need to be safe.

We know in the case of a drug called Heparin which people in Toledo, OH, took, and a number of people died from it. All over the country they took this drug. It was a blood thinner made in China by a company that, frankly, didn't know—couldn't reach back and determine and find out where all the ingredients for these drugs were made.

So there are a couple of points. One is whether it is dog treats, whether it is food that humans consume in our country or whether it is pharmaceuticals, our regulatory structure needs to make sure these are safe. If they are made in the United States, we are much more confident they are safe, because government rules and regulations in the United States—despite what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle always like to say about government regulation—we know our food supply is pretty darn good. But if companies are going to outsource that production, move it to China and then sell it back to the United States, we need these rules in place. We need these companies to be reliable and liable ultimately in what they are doing. So if a company is going to bring a drug into the United States—an American company producing in China and bringing it back to the United States—they are responsible for the contents, and they are responsible for the safety of those drugs. Their executives, those companies, should be liable if they are producing that food. Whether it is for human consumption or whether it is for pets or whether it is pharmaceuticals, all of that matters.

Americans, again, should not be worried about the safety of the food they put on the dinner table nor the safety of the pet food they give to their dogs and cats.

Mr. President, I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BLUMENTHAL). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. 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. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

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

CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise to speak about children's health insurance, an issue we hear about periodically but not nearly enough and an issue that will fast become a critically important question before both bodies, the Senate especially, because of what could happen to the Children's Health Insurance Program, which we call at the State level the CHIP program, known more commonly in Washington as S–CHIP, one of the great advancements in health care in recent American history.

We can go back 25 or 50 years, and other than Medicare and Medicaid and maybe a few other examples, VA health care, children's health care has been a great success and I would say forthrightly a bipartisan success, but we need to keep it that way. I have a particular interest in this program because of the experience we have in Pennsylvania, as tens of thousands of families have benefited from the Children's Health Insurance Program that was signed into law and advocated strongly by my father when he served as the Governor of Pennsylvania. At the time Pennsylvania was a model for the country. This was the early 1990s I am talking about.

When he signed that bill into law, Pennsylvania became one of the largest States with a new Children's Health Insurance Program which then became a model for the Nation. Here is how that happened. In 1997, Congress passed the bipartisan Children's Health Insurance Program signed into law in August of 1997 by President Clinton. The original bill was cosponsored by the late Senator Ted Kennedy, from Massachusetts of course, and the Senator from Utah, still serving, Mr. HATCH.

They worked together, along with many others in a bipartisan fashion to produce important legislation for our children. Since that time this program has worked as a remarkable public-private partnership to deliver critical health care to children. So in addition to being bipartisan, it was public and private together.

Care such as well child visits, immunizations, physical and occupational therapy, home health care and medical equipment and more were all available for the first time for many families. So it helps children not only have health insurance and health coverage, but it helps them be well and to stay well

over a long period of time, providing them with care they need and giving their parents something government does not do enough; it provides a measure of peace of mind to parents and to families.

In 2009, the President signed into law a bipartisan reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program. The most recent year of data indicates that CHIP covered over 8.1 million children over the course of a year. Consider that. With this program more than 8.1 million children have health care that would not have it any other way in the absence of this program.

Even with the progress we have made in providing new health insurance options in the last couple of years as a result of the Affordable Care Act, the rate of uninsured Americans overall is still over 13 percent. That is the lowest rate since 2008 but still too high. The rate of uninsured children is 9 percent, a much lower rate obviously than the overall rate but still too high.

CHIP has played an important role in increasing access to insurance for children. The Web site for the Pennsylvania program, which is www.chipcoverspakids.com, discusses several stories from Pennsylvania parents about how this Children's Health Insurance Program in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has helped one particular family, in this case, and many others. As you read the stories—here is one story. I will sum it up briefly. The CHIP program has been great.

So said one family member:

> We know that this is quality insurance and we are finally able to sleep at night knowing that our kids can be seen by excellent pediatricians. I do not know what we would have done without CHIP. Now my children can play sports and go away to camp like other kids and if they get hurt, CHIP is there for them.

So said a parent. That is probably the best summation or the best recitation of all of the reasons it is so important to make sure we preserve the Children's Health Insurance Program and preserve the funding for it and preserve any strategy that will ensure that children have the health care they need.

So CHIP is always going to be there for those kids. That is what we need to make sure that we hold on to. I, similar to so many here and many in both parties, have consistently advocated for the Children's Health Insurance Program. I am pleased it has been authorized through fiscal year 2019. However—this is why I am standing here today. However, we were able only to secure funding through 2015. So the program is reauthorized to 2019 but funded only through fiscal year 2015.

That deadline is approaching. Now is the time to act, again in the right bipartisan way, to preserve the Children's Health Insurance Program. It is time to make sure we ensure that CHIP will continue to be funded through the authorization, at a minimum, through fiscal year 2019.

Senator ROCKEFELLER, one of the great champions of this program over many years now, decades literally, introduced legislation last week that I wholeheartedly support. That is an understatement. There is not a Senator in this Chamber who should not support his legislation, the CHIP Extension Act of 2014, S. 2461.

The legislation extends funding for CHIP through fiscal year 2019, bringing the funding in line with the authorization. I cannot stress enough the need to pass this legislation this year, pass this 2014 legislation that deals with this 2015 problem. State budget cycles are such that if we wait until next year, when the funding is about to expire, we will be jeopardizing health insurance for millions of American children.

States need time to plan their budgets and cannot operate under the uncertainty of a funding threat to such an important program. I thank Senator ROCKEFELLER for his tireless commitment to the Children's Health Insurance Program over many years—as I said, over several decades. I thank him for his work in introducing this legislation.

I urge all of my colleagues in both parties to support Senator ROCKEFELLER's legislation, the CHIP Extension Act of 2014, S. 2461, to make sure children's health insurance will always be there for the children who are covered by that program.

In conclusion, this is very simple. We have people in both parties who have spent a lot of their careers saying how much they care about children. They give speeches, they campaign, they talk about kids. We all talk about kids in very positive ways. That is wonderful. But the test is how we act and what actions we take. That usually means how we vote. So if someone votes for this bill, they can stand and say they have taken a substantial step in the direction of ensuring that children will have the health care they need. If they do not, and they vote against it, I do not think they can say that.

If someone votes against it, I think they have to have a substitute for it, some measure that will provide the same coverage for the same number of children by a different method. If they cannot come up with that, they cannot stand and say they are for kids. They cannot stand and say they care about our children and their future.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PAY OUR GUARD AND RESERVE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Chair lay before the Senate a message from the House of Representatives with respect to H.R. 3230.

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate a message from the House, as follows:

H.R. 3230

Resolved, That the House insist upon its amendment to the Senate amendment to the text of the bill (H.R. 3230) entitled ''An Act making continuing appropriations during a Government shutdown to provide pay and allowances to members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who perform inactive-duty training during such period.'', and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon.

Ordered, That Messrs. Miller of Florida, Lamborn, Roe of Tennessee, Flores, Benishek, Coffman, Wenstrup, Mrs. Walorski, Mr. Michaud, Ms. Brown of Florida, Mr. Takano, Mses. Brownley of California, Kirkpatrick, and Mr. Walz, be the managers of the conference on the part of the House.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate insist on its amendment, agree to the request for a conference with the House, and authorize the Chair to appoint conferees with a ratio of eight Democrats and six Republicans, with all of the above occurring with no intervening action or debate.

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

The Presiding Officer appointed Mr. SANDERS, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BEGICH, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. BURR, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. JOHANNS, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. COBURN, and Mr. RUBIO as conferees on the part of the Senate.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

WASHINGTON FOOTBALL TEAM PATENT

Ms. CANTWELL. Mr. President, I come to the floor because the patent office has just ruled that the name of the Washington football team is not patentable because it is a slur. We are so excited to know that finally people are recognizing this issue can no longer be a business case for the NFL to use this patent. They will not be able to

forcefully exclude other people for having derivatives of this logo or the name, thereby putting a big dent in the business case the NFL has.

So many people have helped in this effort. I want to applaud them, from Senator REID and his leadership, to Amanda Blackhorse and Suzan Harjo. Those are the people who have been fighting this case before the patent office. To all of the people who have watched the video on changethemascot.org, a Web site that basically depicts why Native Americans want to be viewed as human beings and not a mascot, we want to thank all of them.

This is not the end of this case. But this is a landmark decision by the patent office that says the NFL team here in Washington, DC, does not have a patentable name, and that this is an offensive term, not patentable by the patent office.

I hope all the business decisions over there at the team will understand this is no longer a business case, and will get off of this spurious name that we need to change.

I thank my colleague in Maine for yielding me this opportunity to speak on this breaking important issue. I thank my colleagues here on the floor.

TRIBUTE TO CHUCK LOVELESS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor and recognize the career of Chuck Loveless, director of Federal Government Affairs for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFSCME. For 21 years, Mr. Loveless has labored tirelessly to protect the rights of workers. I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Loveless as he represented AFSCME in the Nation's capital on a wide variety of issues affecting State and local government and health care employees.

Mr. Loveless has a long list of accomplishments over the span of his career. He received his J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center and an M.A. degree in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. He is a past chairman of the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans' Public Employees Committee and of its Government Liaison Committee. He is a member of the International Foundation's Government Liaison Committee and Health Care Expert Panel. Mr. Loveless is a former chair of Americans for Tax Fairness and of Americans United for Change, and he continues to serve on the latter's board. He is also a member of the board of Citizens for Tax Justice.

On behalf of the Senate, I commend Chuck Loveless on a lifetime of public service, and I wish him the best in all his future endeavors.

REMEMBERING NELDA BARTON-COLLINGS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it is with great grief and a heavy heart that I report to my fellow Senators the passing of Mrs. Nelda Barton-Collings. A native of my home State, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Nelda was an accomplished businesswoman, a dedicated public servant, and a joy to all of those who have had the pleasure of knowing her. She died in her home last Friday at the age of 85.

Nelda was born and raised in Providence, KY, and she graduated from college just a few counties over at Western Kentucky University. After graduation she began what was to be a successful career in business. Among her many achievements, she expanded her family's nursing home business by opening new homes across the State and founded several community banks that were eventually consolidated into the Lexington-based Forcht Bank.

Nelda's pursuits were not limited to business ventures, however. She exhibited a passion for public service and was heavily involved in the Republican Party throughout her life. She was the first woman to chair the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, and she served for 28 years as Kentucky's Republican National Committeewoman. She worked tirelessly to better the lives of her fellow Kentuckians—a quality that elevated her to the national stage. In 1980, she spoke at the Republican National Convention, and in 1996, she called to order that year's convention.

Word of Nelda's dedication to public service reached all the way to the Oval Office, and she was appointed to the Federal Council on Aging and the Council for International Affairs during President Ronald Reagan's administration, as well as President George H.W. Bush's Council on Rural America.

At this time, I ask that my U.S. Senate colleagues join me in paying tribute to the wonderful life of Nelda Barton-Collings. She will be deeply missed.

The Lexington Herald-Leader recently published an obituary for Mrs. Barton-Collings. I ask unanimous consent that the full article be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Lexington Herald-Leader, June 14, 2014]

NELDA BARTON-COLLINGS, LEADER IN BUSINESS AND REPUBLICAN POLITICS, DIES IN CORBIN AT 85

(By Jack Brammer)

Nelda Barton-Collings, who served 28 years as Republican National Committeewoman for Kentucky and was the first woman to be chair of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, died Friday at her home in Corbin. She was 85.

Her death elicited comments from several of Kentucky's top Republican officials.

U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell of Louisville said, ''As a pioneer in business and politics in Kentucky, Nelda was a fantastic force for good and gave the state she loved a lifetime of service. Her determination to improve our Commonwealth and nation was outmatched only by her charm and benevolent optimism.''

U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers of Somerset said Barton-Collings ''was a woman ahead of her time, pioneering new avenues in the business world and proclaiming her dedication to conservative principles.

''She captivated crowds with her dynamic personality and Southern charm, yet took the time to guide and mentor individuals of all ages and social status.''

State Senate President Robert Stivers of Manchester called Barton-Collings ''a true stateswoman who, until the end, battled for the betterment of Kentucky'' and said her legacy will be her ''passion for public service and her determination to improve the Commonwealth.''

State House Majority Leader Jeff Hoover of Jamestown said Barton-Collings' ''compassion and dedication to improving the lives of all Kentuckians through her public service is an example that more of us should strive to follow.''

A native of Providence in Webster County, Barton-Collings was a successful businesswoman in banking, nursing homes, newspapers and other small-business ventures in partnership with Terry Forcht.

Besides her involvement with the Republican National Committee, she was a delegate to several Republican national conventions.

Barton-Collings also was a member of President Reagan's Federal Council on Aging and Council for International Affairs and President George H.W. Bush's Council on Rural America.

Her portrait hangs in the Kentucky Capitol for a Kentucky Women Remembered Award by the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights.

Visitation will be from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday at the O'Neil Lawson Funeral Home in Corbin.

Services will be at Grace on the Hill United Methodist Church in Corbin at 11 a.m. Wednesday.

Donations may be made in her honor to Hospice of the Bluegrass.

TRIBUTE TO CHARLIE MCBRIDE

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, Senator VITTER and I wish to recognize and honor Charlie McBride, a native son of Louisiana who has given so much of his time and energy towards the goal of educating this Nation's youth in civic and community responsibility. Through his service and commitment to the Close Up Foundation, Charlie has led an organization that for the past 43 years has significantly impacted and provided citizenship education to nearly 800,000 high school and middle school students and educators from around the country and U.S. Territories. On behalf of the Senate and the State of Louisiana, we, as former Close Up participants applaud Charlie for his devotion to Close Up and the civic education of our youth.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, as you know, Close Up is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that promotes responsible participation in our democratic process. Its mission is to inform, educate, and inspire students to exercise the rights and accept the responsibilities of being a citizen in our democracy. Through experiential civic education programs based in Washington, DC, and other local communities, and publication of classroom resources to help educators teach students about public policy issues, Close

Up impacts the lives of students every day.

Both of us are testament to the profound impact these programs have on our youth, as we participated in the Close Up program in its early years, an experience that incited our first thoughts of a career in public service. We commend and congratulate Close Up on its important work.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Charlie McBride is no stranger to public policy. He worked for 12 years on personal and committee staffs in the Senate and the House of Representatives. Since then, as a government relations and business consultant, he has represented a myriad of clients in virtually every policy field, for which he is known and well-respected by our colleagues. His experiences have instilled in him a strong appreciation of the need for knowledgeable and thoughtful citizens, particularly in our legislative processes. For this reason, he has enthusiastically embraced Close Up's efforts to develop an informed, effective, and responsible citizenry among this Nation's youth.

Mr. VITTER. Charlie was first introduced to Close Up in 1974 when he was chief of staff for Senator Bennett Johnston and helped secure funding for the Allen J. Ellender Fellowships that served to provide support for economically disadvantaged students and teachers to participate in Close Up programs. After working closely with Close Up for many years, he joined its board of directors in 1988 and has served as the vice chairman for the past 10 years. During his service, Charlie has provided leadership and assisted Close Up in its relations with Members in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Ms. LANDRIEU. We are proud that Louisiana students and teachers have participated in Close Up programs since the organization's inception and that a good friend and fellow Louisianan has contributed so much time and effort to this great organization. Thanks to people like Charlie, students are provided the unique opportunity to learn about our government by meeting lawmakers, representatives of public interest groups, journalists, and people from all branches of government, and to understand how they can make a positive contribution through participation in our democracy. Charlie's presence at Close Up will be sorely missed. We are privileged to formally recognize Charlie's commitment and efforts to this great endeavor.

TRIBUTE TO JEFFREY HOWARD

Mr. CHAMBLISS. Mr. President, I wish to pay special tribute to Jeffrey R. Howard, a key member of my staff on the Select Committee on Intelligence for his distinguished service to the Senate. Jeffrey will leave us shortly to join the new office being opened by Ionic Security in Maryland, where he will serve as the chief technology officer's chief of staff. I am honored to have the opportunity to publicly thank Jeffrey and note my appreciation for his outstanding service to the Select Committee on Intelligence during the past 4 years.

Since becoming the vice chairman of the committee in 2011, I have often relied upon Jeffrey's impressive technical expertise and teamwork skills on a wide range of oversight issues. He has provided us with his expert advice in matters relating to science, technology, and engineering, including cybersecurity, oversight of the National Security Agency, and information technology programs.

Jeffrey is well known on the Hill and by the private sector as one of the leading congressional staff experts on cybersecurity legislative issues. He has worked tirelessly with my team to develop and negotiate legislative proposals consistent with my strong desire to get an effective cybersecurity information sharing bill enacted into law. During the 112th Congress, Jeffrey was a crucial participant in the negotiations that led the ranking members of eight Senate committees to co-sponsor S. 2151 and S. 3342, the Strengthening and Enhancing Cybersecurity by Using Research, Education, Information, and Technology Act of 2012, more commonly known as ''SECURE IT.'' During this Congress, Senator FEINSTEIN and I have been working very hard to develop a bipartisan cybersecurity information sharing bill that we believe will be well-received by the private sector and our colleagues in the Senate and the House of Representatives. We are finally quite close to being able to mark up our cybersecurity information sharing bill and Jeffrey played an integral role every step of the way.

Jeffrey even has a superpower—he has the ability to translate extremely complicated technical topics into clear and concise explanations that can be used to solve difficult, real-world problems. He is also the undisputed staff champion at documenting the extent of his oversight efforts. He has filed more memoranda for the record during his tenure than half of the professional staff members combined. I dare say that Jeffrey may know more about the National Security Agency than some of the senior executives who have served there. Jeffrey's inexhaustible work ethic and sound judgment have made him an indispensable member of the committee staff and an invaluable resource to other congressional committees. His sly wit and good humor make him a pleasure to work with. He is the consummate team player who improves the performance of everyone around him.

My colleagues and I trust Jeffrey's judgment implicitly. His dedicated public service and exceptional day-to-day performance on the job have earned our respect and admiration, and it inspired a generation of staff who had the privilege to work alongside him. There is no doubt that Jeffrey has a bright future at Ionic Security; however, should the right opportunity present itself, I would strongly encourage my Senate colleagues to entice him back into public service. We will miss Jeffrey deeply, but his legacy will remain a part of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence for years to come.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO NORMA LOVE

• Ms. AYOTTE. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Norma Love—a venerable Associated Press reporter who is retiring at the end of the month after a long career covering government and politics in the Granite State.

Norma's name is well-known to anyone in New Hampshire who has picked up a newspaper in the past three decades. She started in the AP's Concord bureau 31 years ago, and she has covered the statehouse for 29 of those years—spanning the administrations of seven Governors.

It was at the statehouse where I first had the privilege of meeting Norma. We crossed paths on more times than I can count during my years in the attorney general's office. Whenever Norma called, I always knew that I would be talking to a consummate professional who holds herself to the highest standards of journalism.

Norma understands that journalists have a responsibility to ask tough questions. She has always taken a firm—but fair—approach to her reporting, and that is why she is so deeply respected by public officials on both sides of the aisle.

Norma could have been a reporter anywhere in the country, but she chose New Hampshire. During her decades of diligent reporting, she has been a witness to history—chronicling the people and places of her adopted State. While much has changed in the Granite State, and in newsrooms, since Norma arrived at the AP, her commitment to excellence in journalism has never wavered.

The people of New Hampshire are so fortunate that Norma Love has been asking hard questions on their behalf for the past 31 years. Norma brings tremendous credit to the profession that she loves, and she will leave behind big shoes to fill in the statehouse press room.

I am pleased to join with Norma's colleagues and many friends in wishing her the very best as she makes this transition and looks to new horizons. As we thank her for her many years of dedicated reporting, we send her every good wish for a long, full, and happy retirement.•

BOONE 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 Boone 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 Boone County worth over $5.7 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $7.3 million to the local economy.

Of course, one of my favorite memories of working together is the community's tremendous success in obtaining more than $3.3 million from the Federal Aviation Administration for improvements to the airport. 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:

Investing in Iowa's economic development through targeted community projects: In Central Iowa, we have worked together to grow the economy by making targeted investments in important economic development projects including improved roads and bridges, modernized sewer and water systems, and better housing options for residents of Boone 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 Boone County, I have fought for funding for more than $5.9 million in Defense Department funds for Iowa Thin Film Technology, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

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, Boone County has received $339,299 in Harkin grants. Similarly, schools in Boone County have received funds that I designated for Iowa Star Schools for technology totaling $194,051.

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, Boone County has received more than $2.5 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, Boone County's fire departments have received over $699,392 for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Boone County has recognized this important issue by securing $236,000.

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 a quarter century since passage of the ADA, I see remarkable changes in communities everywhere I go in Iowa—not just in curb cuts or closed captioned television, but in the full participation of people with disabilities in our society and economy, folks who at long last have the opportunity to contribute their talents and to be fully included. These changes have increased economic opportunities for all citizens of Boone County, both those with and without disabilities.

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

BLACK HAWK 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 Black Hawk 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 Black Hawk County worth over $98 million and successfully acquired financial assistance from programs I have fought hard to support, which have provided more than $196 million to the local economy.

Of course, my favorite memories of working together range from supporting a wide array of programs at the University of Northern Iowa, funding construction of the Avenue of the Saints and US–63, improving Waterloo's sewer treatment system, and cleaning up and developing blighted brownfield areas to create a tech jobs corridor.

Among the highlights:

Investing in Iowa's economic development through targeted community projects: In Northeast 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 Black Hawk 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 Black Hawk County, I have fought for over $100 million to construct the Avenue of the Saints, $10 million to improve US–63, $35 million to improve Waterloo's sewer system, and more than $1.9 million for the cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields, helping to create jobs and expand economic opportunities.

Main Street Iowa: One of the greatest challenges we face—in Iowa and all across America—is preserving the character and vitality of our small towns and rural communities. This isn't just about economics. It is also about maintaining our identity as Iowans. Main Street Iowa helps preserve Iowa's heart and soul by providing funds to revitalize downtown business districts. This program has allowed towns like Waterloo and Cedar Falls to use that money to leverage other investments to jumpstart change and renewal. I am so pleased that Black Hawk County has earned $440,000 through this program. These grants build much more than buildings. They build up the spirit and morale of people in our small towns and local communities.

School grants: Every child in Iowa deserves to be educated in a classroom that is safe, accessible, and modern. That is why, for the past decade and a half, I have secured funding for the innovative Iowa Demonstration Construction Grant Program—better known among educators in Iowa as Harkin grants for public schools construction and renovation. Across 15 years, Harkin grants worth more than $132 million have helped school districts to fund a range of renovation and repair efforts—everything from updating fire safety systems to building new schools. In many cases, these Federal dollars have served as the needed incentive to leverage local public and private dollars, so it often has a tremendous multiplier effect within a school district. Over the years, Black Hawk County has received over $7 million in Harkin grants. In addition, since 2001, I have helped to provide more than $80 million in Federal funds to the University of Northern Iowa, including support for projects such as a transit hub, the National Ag-Based Lubricants Center, Project SOAR, and many others.

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. Black Hawk County has received over $22.9 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 the methamphetamine epidemic. Cities in Black Hawk County received over $2.3 million in Community Oriented Policing Services and Byrne Justice Assistance Grants. Since 2001, Black Hawk County's fire departments have received over $1.6 million for firefighter safety and operations equipment.

Wellness and health care: Improving the health and wellness of all Americans has been something I have been passionate about for decades. That is why I fought to dramatically increase funding for disease prevention, innovative medical research, and a whole range of initiatives to improve the health of individuals and families not only at the doctor's office but also in our communities, schools, and workplaces. I am so proud that Americans have better access to clinical preventive services, nutritious food, smoke-free environments, safe places to engage in physical activity, and information to make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. These efforts not only save lives, they will also save money for generations to come thanks to the prevention of costly chronic diseases, which account for a whopping 75 percent of annual health care costs. I am pleased that Black Hawk County has recognized this important issue by securing more than $4 million to support the People's Community Health Clinic.

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

TRIBUTE TO MARGARET LOUISE CARTER

● Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I would like to recognize someone who people in my State know very well; someone who for more than three decades has been an inspiring leader and a tireless advocate for children, the elderly and the disabled. She is also a close friend who has never been shy in using her formidable voice to let me know how we can do more to help those in need.

Margaret Louise Carter may be poised for retirement, but that does not mean she is going to stop adding to an impressive list of accomplishments and building on her legacy of hard work and determined advocacy.

Margaret Carter is a true force of nature. A single mother of nine, she graduated from Portland State University with a B.S. in education. She later earned her Master's in Educational psychology from Oregon State University, which led to a career as teacher and counselor at Portland Community College.

Out of concern for the most vulnerable in her northeast Portland neighborhood, she used her compassion, natural leadership ability and tenacity to win a seat in the Oregon House of Representatives in 1984, becoming the first African-American woman elected to the Oregon State Legislature.

She did not stop there. She went on to serve in the Oregon Senate, as chair of the Democratic Party of Oregon, became president and CEO of the Urban League of Portland and president of the National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women. She helped establish the Job Skills Center for Portland Community College's Cascade Campus, where the Technology Education Building was renamed in her

honor, making it the first building in PCC's 50 year history to be named after a woman.

Margaret accomplished many notable things while in office, including, but not limited to, helping create a permanent Head Start program in Oregon, co-sponsoring a bill to create parity for mental health services, establishing a State holiday to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and co-founding the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps.

While Margaret may be leaving the world of work, those of us who know her know that there is no way she is leaving the world of community involvement. Whether it is advocating for affordable home-ownership options for low to moderate-income families, organizing a kids choir to perform at community events, or entertaining friends with a singing voice that is just as strong as her personality, you can rest assured that Margaret will be there.

After a life of service to others, it is fitting that Margaret is retiring from her position at the Oregon Department of Human Services. It is with great pride, both personally and professionally, that I extend my congratulations to Margaret Louise Carter.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 12:32 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 bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 43. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14 Red River Avenue North in Cold Spring, Minnesota, as the ''Officer Tommy Decker Memorial Post Office''.

H.R. 1216. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Vet Center in Prescott, Arizona, as the ''Dr. Cameron McKinley Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Center''.

H.R. 1391. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 25 South Oak Street in London, Ohio, as the ''London Fallen Veterans Memorial Post Office''.

H.R. 1458. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1 Walter Hammond Place in Waldwick, New Jersey, as the ''Staff Sergeant Joseph D'Augustine Post Office Building''.

H.R. 1671. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6937 Village Parkway in Dublin, California, as the ''James 'Jim' Kohnen Post Office''.

H.R. 1707. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 302 East Green Street in Champaign, Illinois, as the ''James R. Burgess Jr. Post Office Building''.

H.R. 1865. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 35 Park Street in Danville, Vermont, as the ''Thaddeus Stevens Post Office''.

H.R. 2112. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 787 State Route 17M in Monroe, New York, as the ''National Clandestine Service of the Central Intelligence Agency NCS Officer Gregg Wenzel Memorial Post Office''.

H.R. 3375. An act to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs to be constructed at 3141 Centennial Boulevard, Colorado Springs, Colorado, as the ''PFC Floyd K. Lindstrom Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic''.

H.R. 3472. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 13127 Broadway Street in Alden, New York, as the ''Sergeant Brett E. Gornewicz Memorial Post Office''.

H.R. 3682. An act to designate the community based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 1961 Premier Drive in Mankato, Minnesota, as the ''Lyle C. Pearson Community Based Outpatient Clinic''.

H.R. 3765. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 198 Baker Street in Corning, New York, as the ''Specialist Ryan P. Jayne Post Office Building''.

H.R. 3786. An act to direct the Administrator of General Services, on behalf of the Archivist of the United States, to convey certain Federal property located in the State of Alaska to the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska.

H.R. 3998. An act to authorize the Administrator of General Services to convey a parcel of real property in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to the Amy Biehl High School Foundation.

H.R. 4199. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Waco, Texas, as the ''Doris Miller Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center''.

H.R. 4360. An act to designate the facility of the United States Forest Service for the Grandfather Ranger District located at 109 Lawing Drive in Nebo, North Carolina, as the ''Jason Crisp Forest Service Building''.

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

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

The message further announced that the Clerk of the House of Representatives request the Senate to return to the House the bill (H.R. 4412) to authorize the programs of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and for other purposes.

At 4:01 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the title of the bill (H.R. 3230) making continuing appropriations during a Government shutdown to provide pay and allowances to members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who perform inactive-duty training during such period, and be it further, that the House agree to the amendment of the Senate to the text of the aforementioned bill, with amendment, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate.

The message further announced that the House insist upon its amendment to the Senate amendment to the text of the bill (H.R. 3230) making continuing appropriations during a Government shutdown to provide pay and allowances to members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who perform inactive-duty training during such period, and ask a conference with the Senate on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses thereon and that Messrs. Miller of Florida, Lamborn, Roe of Tennessee, Flores, Benishek, Coffman, Wenstrup, Mrs. Walorski, Mr. Michaud, Ms. Brown of Florida, Mr. Takano, Mses. Brownley of California, Kirkpatrick, and Mr. Walz, be the managers of the conference on the part of the House.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 43. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14 Red River Avenue North in Cold Spring, Minnesota, as the ''Officer Tommy Decker Memorial Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1216. An act to designate the Department of Veterans Affairs Vet Center in Prescott, Arizona, as the ''Dr. Cameron McKinley Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans Center''; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 1391. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 25 South Oak Street in London, Ohio, as the ''London Fallen Veterans Memorial Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1458. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1 Walter Hammond Place in Waldwick, New Jersey, as the ''Staff Sergeant Joseph D'Augustine Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1671. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6937 Village Parkway in Dublin, California, as the ''James 'Jim' Kohnen Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1707. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 302 East Green Street in Champaign, Illinois, as the ''James R. Burgess Jr. Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 1865. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 35 Park Street in Danville, Vermont, as the ''Thaddeus Stevens Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 2112. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 787 State Route 17M in Monroe, New York, as the ''National Clandestine Service of the Central Intelligence Agency NCS Officer Gregg David Wenzel Memorial Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3375. An act to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs to be constructed at 3141 Centennial Boulevard, Colorado Springs, Colorado, as the ''PFC Floyd K. Lindstrom Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic''; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 3472. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 13127 Broadway Street in Alden, New York, as the ''Sergeant Brett E. Gornewicz Memorial Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3682. An act to designate the community based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs located at 1961 Premier Drive in Mankato, Minnesota, as the

''Lyle C. Pearson Community Based Outpatient Clinic''; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

H.R. 3765. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 198 Baker Street in Corning, New York, as the ''Specialist Ryan P. Jayne Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3786. An act to direct the Administrator of General Services, on behalf of the Archivist of the United States, to convey certain Federal property located in the State of Alaska to the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 3998. An act to authorize the Administrator of General Services to convey a parcel of real property in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to the Amy Biehl High School Foundation; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

H.R. 4199. An act to name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Waco, Texas, as the ''Doris Miller Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center''; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

MEASURES READ THE FIRST TIME

The following bill was read the first time:

S. 2491. A bill to protect the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to reconciliation involving changes to the Medicare program.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Ms. LANDRIEU for the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

*Suzette M. Kimball, of West Virginia, to be Director of the United States Geological Survey.

*Norman C. Bay, of New Mexico, to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2018.

*Estevan R. Lopez, of New Mexico, to be Commissioner of Reclamation.

*Monica C. Regalbuto, of Illinois, to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy (Environmental Management).

*Cheryl A. LaFleur, of Massachusetts, to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for the term expiring June 30, 2019.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

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. HARKIN (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CASEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2486. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to establish salary thresholds for and limitations on executive, administrative, and professional employees and address highly compensated employees, for purposes of the requirements for exemption from the Federal minimum wage and maximum hour provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself and Mr. SCOTT):

S. 2487. A bill to amend the Small Business Act to increase the maximum loan limits under the microloan program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 2488. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exception to the exclusive use requirement for home offices if the other use involves care of a qualifying child of the taxpayer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. WALSH:

S. 2489. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that sufficient funding is made available for the Highway Trust Fund, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. VITTER:

S. 2490. A bill to include a question to ascertain United States citizenship and immigration status in each questionnaire used for a decennial census of population, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. PRYOR:

S. 2491. A bill to protect the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to reconciliation involving changes to the Medicare program; read the first time.

By Mr. SCOTT:

S. 2492. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase access for the uninsured to high quality physician care; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. FRANKEN):

S. 2493. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14 Red River Avenue North in Cold Spring, Minnesota, as the ''Officer Tommy Decker Memorial Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Ms. LANDRIEU, and Mr. BEGICH):

S. 2494. A bill to expedite applications to export natural gas, to require the public disclosure of liquefied natural gas export destinations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. Res. 478. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to enhanced relations with the Republic of Moldova and support for the Republic of Moldova's territorial integrity; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 315

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. BOOKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 315, a bill to reauthorize and extend the Paul D. Wellstone Muscular Dystrophy Community Assistance, Research, and Education Amendments of 2008.

S. 1056

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1056, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a refundable adoption tax credit.

S. 1184

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mrs. HAGAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1184, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to include information on the coverage of intensive behavioral therapy for obesity in the Medicare and You Handbook and to provide for the coordination of programs to prevent and treat obesity, and for other purposes.

S. 1349

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) and the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) were added as cosponsors of S. 1349, a bill to enhance the ability of community financial institutions to foster economic growth and serve their communities, boost small businesses, increase individual savings, and for other purposes.

S. 1368

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) 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. 1622

At the request of Mr. JOHANNS, his name was added as a cosponsor of S. 1622, a bill to establish the Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children, and for other purposes.

S. 1799

At the request of Mr. COONS, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) and the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1799, a bill to reauthorize subtitle A of the Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990.

S. 1885

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1885, a bill to place conditions on assistance to the Government of Burma.

S. 1998

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. WALSH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1998, a bill to amend the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act to reserve funds for American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Tribal College or University adult education and literacy.

S. 2020

At the request of Mr. SCHATZ, his name was added as a cosponsor of S.

2020, a bill to set forth the process for Puerto Rico to be admitted as a State of the Union.

S. 2091

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Mr. BEGICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2091, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing by the Department of Veterans Affairs of claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 2187

At the request of Mr. BEGICH, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. GRASSLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2187, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a five-year extension of the rural community hospital demonstration program.

S. 2220

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2220, a bill to provide protections for certain sports medicine professionals who provide certain medical services in a secondary State.

S. 2291

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2291, a bill to require that Peace Corps volunteers be subject to the same limitations regarding coverage of abortion services as employees of the Peace Corps with respect to coverage of such services, and for other purposes.

S. 2307

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

S. 2325

At the request of Mr. MARKEY, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2325, a bill to amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 to provide for the expansion of emergency planning zones and the development of plans for dry cask storage of spent nuclear fuel, and for other purposes.

S. 2392

At the request of Mr. WALSH, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2392, a bill to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate certain segments of East Rosebud Creek in Carbon County, Montana, as components of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

S. 2440

At the request of Mr. UDALL of New Mexico, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) 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. 2476

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2476, a bill to direct the Federal Communications Commission to promulgate regulations that prohibit certain preferential treatment or prioritization of Internet traffic.

S. 2483

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2483, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to protect more victims of domestic violence by preventing their abusers from possessing or receiving firearms, and for other purposes.

S. RES. 462

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 462, a resolution recognizing the Khmer and Lao/Hmong Freedom Fighters of Cambodia and Laos for supporting and defending the United States Armed Forces during the conflict in Southeast Asia and for their continued support and defense of the United States.

S. RES. 469

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 3246

At the request of Ms. LANDRIEU, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 3246 intended to be proposed to H.R. 4660, a bill 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.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mrs. MURRAY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CASEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. MARKEY):

S. 2486. A bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to establish salary thresholds for and limitations on executive, administrative, and professional employees and address highly compensated employees, for purposes of the requirements for exemption from the Federal minimum wage and maximum hour provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. HARKIN. 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. 2486

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 ''Restoring Overtime Pay for Working Americans Act''.

SEC. 2. SALARY THRESHOLDS, HIGHLY COMPENSATED EMPLOYEES, AND PRIMARY DUTIES.

(a) SALARY THRESHOLDS FOR EXECUTIVE, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES.—Section 13 of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 213) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(1), by inserting before ''; or'' the following: '', subject to the requirement that any employee whom the Secretary determines is required to be paid on a salary (or equivalent fee basis) in order to be exempt under this subsection shall, in order to be so exempt, receive compensation at a rate of not less than the salary rate (or equivalent fee basis) determined under subsection (k)''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(k) SALARY RATE (OR EQUIVALENT FEE BASIS).—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The salary rate (or equivalent fee basis) determined under this subsection for purposes of subsection (a)(1) shall be—

''(A) beginning 1 year after the first day of the first month that begins after the date of enactment of the Restoring Overtime Pay for Working Americans Act, $665 per week;

''(B) beginning 2 years after such first day, $865 per week;

''(C) beginning 3 years after such first day, $1,090 per week; and

''(D) beginning on the date that is 4 years after such first day, and on such first day in each succeeding year, an adjusted amount that is—

''(i) not less than the amount in effect under this paragraph on the day before the date of such adjustment;

''(ii) increased from such amount by the annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers; and

''(iii) rounded to the nearest multiple of $1.00.

''(2) SPECIAL RULE.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), for any employee for whom the minimum wage would otherwise be determined pursuant to section 8103(b) of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note), the Secretary may determine, through regulations, the salary rate (or equivalent fee basis).

''(l) PRIMARY DUTY.—In any case where an employer classifies an employee as an employee employed in a bona fide executive, administrative, or professional capacity, for the purpose of subsection (a)(1), or in a position described in subsection (a)(17), for the purpose of such subsection, such employee shall not spend more than 50 percent of such employee's work hours in a workweek on duties that are not exempt under paragraph (1) or (17) of subsection (a), respectively.

''(m) DEFINITIONS.—For the purposes of this section:

''(1) ANNUAL PERCENTAGE INCREASE.—The term 'annual percentage increase', when used in reference to the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, means the annual percentage increase calculated by the Secretary by comparing such Consumer Price Index for the most recent month, quarter, or year available (as selected by the Secretary prior to the first year for which a minimum wage is in effect pursuant to this subsection) with such Consumer Price Index for the same month in the preceding year, the same quarter in the preceding year, or the preceding year, respectively.

''(2) CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR URBAN WAGE EARNERS AND CLERICAL WORKERS.—The term 'Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers' means the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (United States city average, all items, not seasonally adjusted), or its successor publication, as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.''.

(b) HIGHLY COMPENSATED EMPLOYEES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary of Labor, in the discretion of such Secretary, determines that an employee may be exempt for purposes of section 13(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 213(a)(1)), as a highly compensated employee (as such term is defined and delimited by the Secretary), then the level of total annual compensation necessary for such exemption shall be—

(A) beginning 1 year after the first day of the first month that begins after the date of enactment of this Act, $108,000;

(B) beginning 2 years after such first day, $116,000;

(C) beginning 3 years after such first day, $125,000; and

(D) beginning on the date that is 4 years after such first day, and for each succeeding calendar year, an adjusted amount that is—

(i) not less than the amount in effect under this paragraph on the day before the date of such adjustment;

(ii) increased from such amount by the annual percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers; and

(iii) rounded to the nearest multiple of $1.00.

(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this subsection or the regulations promulgated by the Secretary of Labor under this subsection shall override any provision of a collective bargaining agreement that provides for overtime employment compensation, or rights to such compensation, that exceed the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 201 et seq.).

(3) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this subsection, the terms ''annual percentage increase'' and ''Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers'' have the meanings given the terms in section 13(m) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 213(m)), as added by subsection (a).

(c) PUBLICATION OF NOTICE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days before the effective date of any adjustment in the salary rate (or equivalent fee basis) required under section 13(k)(1)(D) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 213(k)(1)(D)), as added by subsection (a), or any adjustment in the amount of compensation required for the highly compensated employee exemption required under subsection (b), the Secretary of Labor shall publish, in the Federal Register and on the website of the Department of Labor, a notice announcing the adjusted salary rate (or equivalent fee basis) or adjusted amount of compensation, respectively.

(2) NONAPPLICABILITY OF RULEMAKING REQUIREMENTS.—The provisions of section 553 of title 5, United States Code, shall not apply to any notice required under this subsection.

(d) PENALTIES.—Section 16(e)(2) of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (29 U.S.C. 216(e)(2)) is amended by inserting ''or section 11(c), relating to the records that each employer is required to make, keep, and preserve,'' after ''relating to wages,''.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act, and the amendments made by this Act, shall take effect on the date that is 1 year after the first day of the first month that begins after the date of enactment of this Act.

By Mr. MCCONNELL:

S. 2488. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an exception to the exclusive use requirement for home offices if the other use involves care of a qualifying child of the taxpayer, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. MCCONNELL. 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. 2488

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 ''Working Parents Home Office Act''.

SEC. 2. EXCEPTION TO THE EXCLUSIVE USE REQUIREMENT FOR HOME OFFICES FOR CARE OF CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 280A(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(7) EXCEPTION TO EXCLUSIVITY REQUIREMENT FOR BUSINESS USE OF A DWELLING UNIT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—A taxpayer shall not be treated as failing to meet the exclusive use requirement of paragraph (1) with respect to a portion of a dwelling unit if the only other use of that portion is to care for a qualifying child of the taxpayer while the taxpayer is conducting the trade or business described in paragraph (1).

''(B) QUALIFYING CHILD.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term 'qualifying child' has the meaning given to such term by section 152(c)(1), except that only individuals bearing a relationship to the taxpayer described in section 152(c)(2)(A) shall be taken into account under section 152(c)(1)(A).''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall apply to taxable years beginning after December 31, 2013.

By Mr. SCOTT:

S. 2492. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to increase access for the uninsured to high quality physician care; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. SCOTT. Mr. President, one of the greatest issues impacting the American health care system is the lack of access to high quality care for the uninsured. According to a 2012 CBO study, 26–27 million people will not have health insurance in 2016, with other studies suggesting that number may be closer to 30 million. Recent data from the Health Resource and Services Administration, HRSA, shows that close to 20 percent of Americans live in areas with an insufficient number of primary care physicians. According to the Association of American Medical Colleges, AAMC, it is expected that there will be a shortage of 45,000 primary care physicians in the US by 2020, further limiting access to care.

An immediate way to improve access to high quality health care for the uninsured is to engage the physician community to provide greater levels of charity care. Currently, there is little incentive for physicians to provide charity care outside of their normal scope of practice, and the percentage of physicians providing charity care has been in a state of steady decline. Due to reimbursement changes over the years, physicians are currently forced to maintain a certain amount of private, Medicare, and Medicaid insured patients in order to ensure their practices can remain profitable. This often leaves no opportunity to care for patients who lack insurance and who are often the most vulnerable and sick.

The Charity Care Expansion Act would create a much needed incentive for doctors to deliver uncompensated care, thereby improving and expanding access to care for the uninsured.

The bill amends the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and allows for physicians to have a tax deduction for the taxable year at an amount equal to the amount the physician would have otherwise been paid.

For example, if Medicare would have reimbursed at $100 for a service, the physician would be able to deduct for $100. None of the deduction amounts would be arbitrary.

To qualify for the tax deduction, the bill would require physicians to have a pre-existing relationship with a health care clinic or another organization providing health care which is targeted to serve low income individuals. Through this coordination, the patient would be placed into the healthcare system with follow ups and health care professionals to see, instead of getting lost in the system after treatment. This would also prevent the use of the tax deduction as a tool to write off bad debt.

The limitations on the deduction are 10 percent of gross income of the taxpayer for the taxable year derived from the taxpayer's provision of physicians' services. For retired physicians, no more than a $10,000 deduction would be allowed.

While I am still waiting for a cost estimate on the bill, I repeal the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, PHHSBG, which was included in the President's budget as a recommended cut, to provide an offset.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 478—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE WITH RESPECT TO ENHANCED RELATIONS WITH THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. MURPHY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 478

Whereas the United States has enjoyed good relations with the Republic of Moldova since the Republic of Moldova's independence in 1991;

Whereas, since the Republic of Moldova's independence, the United States has provided financial assistance to support the efforts of the people of the Republic of Moldova to build a prosperous European democracy;

Whereas the United States and the Republic of Moldova further strengthened their partnership through the launching of a Strategic Dialogue on March 3, 2014;

Whereas the Republic of Moldova is due to sign an Association Agreement containing comprehensive free trade provisions with the European Union on June 27, 2014;

Whereas the Government of the Republic of Moldova made extraordinary efforts to comply with the criteria for an Association Agreement with the European Union, including significant legislative reforms to improve the rule of law and curtail corruption;

Whereas the United States Government supports the democratic aspirations of the people of the Republic of Moldova and their expressed desire to deepen their association with the European Union;

Whereas the United States supports the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova and, on that basis, participates as an observer in the ''5+2'' negotiations to find a comprehensive settlement that will provide a special status for the separatist region of Transnistria within the Republic of Moldova;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation banned the import of Moldovan wine in 2013 and has threatened to ban Moldovan agricultural products, curtail the supply of energy resources to the Republic of Moldova, and impose stricter labor migration policies on the people of the Republic of Moldova;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation maintains a contingent of Russian troops and a stockpile of Russian military equipment and ammunition within the Moldovan region of Transnistria;

Whereas the Government of Russia has been actively issuing Russian passports to the residents of the Transnistria region in the Republic of Moldova;

Whereas the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Government of the Republic of Moldova have called upon the Government of the Russian Federation to remove its troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova;

Whereas authorities in the Republic of Moldova's Transnistria region have restricted the access of OSCE Mission to Moldova monitors to the Transnistria region, thereby preventing the Mission from providing impartial reporting on the security situation in the region;

Whereas the House of Representatives and the Senate both passed, by an overwhelming majority, and the President signed into law the Act relating to ''United States International Programming to Ukraine and Neighboring Regions'', approved April 3, 2014 (Public Law 113–96; 22 U.S.C. 6211 note), providing for a United States international broadcast programming surge to counter misinformation from Russian-supported news outlets and ensuring that Russian-speaking populations in Ukraine and Moldova have access to independent news and information; and

Whereas Moldova has been a valued and reliable partner in promoting global security by participating in United Nations peacekeeping missions in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Sudan, Georgia, and Kosovo: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) reaffirms that it is the policy of the United States Government to support the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova and the inviolability of its borders;

(2) supports the Strategic Dialogue as a means to strengthen relations between the Republic of Moldova and the United States and to enhance the democratic, economic, and security reforms already being implemented by the Republic of Moldova;

(3) encourages the President and the Secretary of State to enhance United States cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Moldova and civil society organizations and to focus assistance on rule of law, anti-corruption efforts, energy security, and promoting trade and investment opportunities;

(4) supports increased educational exchanges between the United States and the Republic of Moldova;

(5) encourages the President to expedite the implementation of the Act relating to ''United States International Programming to Ukraine and Neighboring Regions'', approved April 3, 2014 (Public Law 113–96; 22 U.S.C. 6211 note), especially because it relates to populations in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova;

(6) affirms the Republic of Moldova's sovereign right to determine its own partnerships free of external coercion and pressure, and affirms the Republic of Moldova's right to associate with the European Union and any other regional organization;

(7) urges the European Union to continue to work for greater political, economic, and social integration with the Republic of Moldova;

(8) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to fulfill its commitments made at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) 1999 summit in Istanbul to withdraw its military forces and munitions from within the internationally recognized territory of the Republic of Moldova;

(9) calls on the Government of the Russian Federation to refrain from economic coercion against the Republic of Moldova and to cease support for separatist movements on the territory of the Republic of Moldova;

(10) supports constructive engagement and confidence-building measures between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the authorities in the Transnistria region in order to secure a peaceful, comprehensive resolution to the conflict that respects the Republic of Moldova's sovereignty and territorial integrity;

(11) urges officials in the Transnistrian region to allow OSCE Mission to Moldova monitors unrestricted access to that region;

(12) urges all parties to refrain from unilateral actions that may undermine efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution, as well as the agreements already reached, and encourages leaders of the Transnistrian region to resume negotiations toward a political settlement; and

(13) affirms that lasting stability and security in Europe is a key priority for the United States Government which can only be achieved if the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all European countries is respected.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 3250. Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3251. Mr. HOEVEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3252. Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. SANDERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3253. Mr. CASEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3254. Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3255. Mr. COATS (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3256. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. WICKER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. VITTER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. BLUNT) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3257. Mr. ALEXANDER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3258. Mr. ALEXANDER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3259. Mr. ALEXANDER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3260. Mr. ALEXANDER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3261. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3262. Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. COATS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. FRANKEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3263. Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HELLER, and Mr. REID) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3264. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3265. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. JOHNSON of

Wisconsin) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3266. Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. CHAMBLISS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3267. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3268. Ms. BALDWIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3269. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3270. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3271. Mrs. FISCHER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3272. Mrs. FISCHER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3273. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3274. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3275. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3276. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3277. Mrs. MURRAY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3278. Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, and Mr. KING) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3279. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3280. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3281. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3282. Mr. VITTER (for himself and Mr. HELLER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3283. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3284. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3285. Mr. WALSH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3286. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3287. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill H.R. 4660, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 3288. Mr. REID (for Ms. MURKOWSKI) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1237, to improve the administration of programs in the insular areas, and for other purposes.

SA 3289. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 3250. Mrs. MURRAY (for herself and Ms. COLLINS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 146, line 23, strike ''$1,000,000'' and insert ''$3,000,000''.

On page 172, line 25, strike ''and'' and insert '', and shall be available for''.

SA 3251. Mr. HOEVEN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 387, between lines 7 and 8, insert the following:

(3) The Secretary shall provide a waiver to exempt any school from the whole grain requirements referred to paragraph (1) not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary receives from a school written notification that the school would encounter a hardship in complying with those whole grain requirements if the school identifies the hardship is due to increased costs or difficulty procuring the necessary items.

SA 3252. Mrs. GILLIBRAND (for herself, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. HARKIN, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BROWN, Mr. CASEY, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. KAINE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. LANDRIEU, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. WARREN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. COONS, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. SANDERS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 298, beginning on line 22, strike ''not to exceed'' and all that follows through the end of line 24 and insert ''not to exceed $1,000,000 shall be available for necessary expenses of a Healthy Food Financing Initiative to be carried out by the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service; not to exceed $25,120,000 shall be available for the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration, of which $24,311,000''.

SA 3253. Mr. CASEY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title II of division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act—

(1) the total amount made available under the heading ''JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAMS'' under the heading ''OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS'' under the heading ''DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE'' in this title shall be $294,500,000; and

(2) the amount made available for youth mentoring grants under paragraph (2) under the heading ''JUVENILE JUSTICE PROGRAMS'' under the heading ''OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS'' under the heading ''DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE'' in this title shall be $90,000,000.

(b) The amounts appropriated under this title (except for amounts appropriated for the purposes described in subsection (a)(2)) shall be reduced on a pro rata basis by the amount necessary to reduce the total amount of such spending by $37,000,000.

SA 3254. Mr. BOOKER (for himself, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. BOXER, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 148, line 4, strike ''(a)'' and all that follows through line 22.

SA 3255. Mr. COATS (for himself and Mr. CORNYN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 156, between lines 19 and 20, insert the following:

SEC. 143. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to administer the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's National Roadside Survey.

SA 3256. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. CHAMBLISS, Mr. WICKER, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. VITTER, Mr. KIRK, Mr. GRAHAM, and Mr. BLUNT) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 101, strike lines 7 through 16 and insert the following:

SEC. 528. (a) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act or any other Act may be used to transfer, release, or assist in the transfer or release to or within the United States, its territories, or possessions Khalid Sheik Mohammed or any other detainee who—

(1) is not a United States citizen or a members of the Armed Forces of the United States; and

(2) is or was held on or after June 24, 2009, at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, by the Department of Defense.

(b) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act or any other Act may be used to transfer, release, or assist in the transfer or release to the custody or control of any foreign country or entity of any detainee described in subsection (a) if—

(1) such detainee has been recommended for continued law-of-war detention by the Guantanamo Review Task Force;

(2) such country or entity is a country or entity to which any individual who was detained at United States Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, after September 11, 2001, was transferred and such transferee was subsequently confirmed to have engaged in any terrorist activity; or

(3) such country has not fully honored its commitments to the United States to monitor, detain, or control the travel of individuals formerly detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, by the Department of Defense.

SA 3257. Mr. ALEXANDER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. PROHIBITION OF FUNDS FOR COLLEGE RATING SYSTEM.

None of the funds made available under this Act or any other Act shall be used to carry out (including develop, refine, promulgate, publish, implement, administer, or enforce) a Postsecondary Institution Ratings System or any other performance system to rate institutions of higher education.

SA 3258. Mr. ALEXANDER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available under this Act shall be used by the National Labor Relations Board to promulgate, administer, enforce, or otherwise implement any rule or decision expanding or otherwise modifying an employer's legal obligation—

(1) to provide a labor organization with a list of names and home addresses of employees eligible to vote in a labor organization representation election under section 9 of the National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 159), in accordance with the National Labor Relations Board's decision in Excelsior Underwear, Inc. (156 N.L.R.B. 1236 (1966)); or

(2) to enable labor organizations to electronically communicate with employees, in accordance with the rights of such employees under section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (29 U.S.C. 157).

SA 3259. Mr. ALEXANDER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

PROTECTING STATE CONTROL OVER ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS, AND ASSESSMENTS

SEC. _____.

None of the funds made available under this Act or any other Act shall be used by the Department of Education or any other Federal agency—

(1) to mandate, direct, control, or exercise any direction or supervision over the academic content standards or academic achievement standards adopted or implemented by a State;

(2) to establish any criterion that specifies, defines, or prescribes the standards or measures that States or local educational agencies use to establish, implement, or improve State academic content standards, State academic achievement standards, or State assessments;

(3) to establish any direct or indirect requirements that States or local educational agencies adopt any particular academic standards or assessments, including any academic standards or assessments developed by a partnership of States; or

(4) to require or incentivize a State to enter into a partnership with another State or States to develop or implement academic content standards, academic achievement standards, or assessments, including—

(A) as a condition of approval of a State plan submitted under section 1111 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6331 et seq.);

(B) as a condition of an award of Federal funds under any grant, contract, or cooperative agreement;

(C) by awarding any additional points or providing any preference in competitive grant programs; or

(D) as a condition of approval of any request for waivers of requirements under any provision of Federal law.

SA 3260. Mr. ALEXANDER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. (a) Section 1311(c)(5) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18031(c)(5)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (B), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (B) the following:

''(C) in coordination with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor, submit to the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and the authorizing committees of jurisdiction of the Senate and the House of Representatives and make available to State governors, State insurance commissioners, and the public, reports concerning consumer interactions with the Internet website maintained by the Federal Government for health insurance coverage (healthcare.gov or any subsequent Internet site (or sites) that is established in whole or in part by the Federal Government to facilitate enrollment in qualified health plans, the receipt of advance premium tax credits or cost sharing reduction assistance, or comparisons of available qualified health plans) and any efforts undertaken to remedy problems that impact taxpayers and consumers, such reports—

''(i) to be submitted not later than—

''(I) the first Monday after the date of enactment of this subparagraph; and

''(II)(aa) except during the period between November 15, 2014, and February 15, 2015, the first Monday of each month thereafter through December 2015 (or the next business day when Monday occurs on a Federal holiday); and

''(bb) during the period between November 15, 2014, and February 15, 2015, each Monday (or the next business day when Monday occurs on a Federal holiday); and

''(ii) to include a State-by-State break down of—

''(I) the number of unique website visits;

''(II) the number of individuals who create an account;

''(III) the number of individuals who have selected a qualified health plan;

''(IV) the number of individuals who enrolled in Medicaid, and, of such number, the number who became eligible to enroll because of changes in eligibility effected under this Act and the number who otherwise were eligible to enroll;

''(V) the number of individuals who have effectuated enrollment in a qualified health plan through payment of the first monthly premium;

''(VI) the age of individuals who have effectuated enrollment in a qualified health plan through payment of the first monthly premium;

''(VII) the number of enrollees in each zip code; and

''(VIII) the level of coverage obtained.''.

(b) Section 1311(i) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18031(i)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(7) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF LIST OF NAVIGATORS.—Not later than 5 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary shall make available to Congress, State attorneys general, State insurance commissioners, and the public a list of all

navigators and certified application counselors that have been trained and certified by Exchanges, including contact information for all navigator entities and their partner organizations, including subcontractors. Such list shall be updated by the Secretary on a monthly basis through December 31, 2015.''.

(c) Section 1312(e) of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18032(e)) is amended by adding at the end the following flush sentence: ''Not later than 5 days after the date of the enactment of this sentence, the Secretary shall make available on the Internet website maintained by the Federal Government for health insurance coverage (healthcare.gov or any subsequent Internet site (or sites) that is established in whole or in part by the Federal Government to facilitate enrollment in qualified health plans, the receipt of tax credits or cost sharing reduction assistance, or comparisons of available qualified health plans) a list of all agents and brokers who have been trained and certified by the Federal Exchange, including their name, business address (if available), and phone number. Such list shall be updated on a monthly basis through December 31, 2015.''.

SA 3261. Mr. BLUMENTHAL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 275, between lines 22 and 23, insert the following:

SEC. 247. (a) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available under this title may be used by any recipient of such funds to discriminate against any person because that person is a member of the uniformed services.

(b) Any person or entity, acting in good faith, that has knowledge of any instance in which a recipient of funds under this title has discriminated or is discriminating against a member of the uniformed services may file a complaint against such recipient with the Office of Inspector General for the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

(c) For purposes of this section, the term ''member of the uniformed services'' means an individual who—

(1) is a member of—

(A) the uniformed services (as defined in section 101 of title 10, United States Code); or

(B) the National Guard in State status under title 32, United States Code; or

(2) was discharged or released from service in the uniformed services (as so defined) or the National Guard in such status under conditions other than dishonorable.

(d) Nothing in this section may be construed to prohibit the use or availability of any funds appropriated or otherwise made available under this title for programs, activities, or accounts that assist or provide housing to members of the uniformed services.

SA 3262. Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. COATS, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. MERKLEY, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. FRANKEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to approve a new foreign air carrier permit under sections 41301 through 41305 of title 49, United States Code, or an exemption application under section 40109 of that title of an air carrier already holding an air operators certificate issued by a country that is party to the U.S.–E.U.–Iceland–Norway Air Transport Agreement where such approval would contravene United States law or Article 17 bis of the U.S.–E.U.–Iceland–Norway Air Transport Agreement.

SA 3263. Mr. MCCAIN (for himself, Mr. FLAKE, Mr. HELLER, and Mr. REID) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 142, after line 21, add the following:

SEC. _____. It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) Interstate Route 11 would significantly enhance for the western United States—

(A) commerce;

(B) tourism;

(C) international trade;

(D) economic vitality; and

(E) competitiveness on the global stage;

(2) Interstate Route 11 would connect communities and economic systems in the States of Arizona and Nevada, including—

(A) the 2 largest cities in the United States without an Interstate connection;

(B) major trade hubs;

(C) existing and future domestic and international deep-water ports; and

(D) transcontinental roadways and railroad corridors;

(3) Interstate Route 11 would improve safety and travel time in north-south corridors of the western United States;

(4) the establishment of Interstate Route 11 from the southern border of the State of Arizona through the State of Nevada and, ultimately, to the Canadian border would enhance the economic vitality of the western United States; and

(5) the States of Arizona and Nevada, metropolitan planning organizations (as defined in section 134(b) of title 23, United States Code), and other local leaders and stakeholders should be encouraged to continue their efforts to advance the Interstate Route 11 project.

SA 3264. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 324, line 17, insert before the period at the end the following: '': *Provided further*, That of the amounts made available under this heading, $2,000,000 shall remain available until expended for the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service to reduce the backlog of undetermined wetlands in the Prairie Pothole Region, with funds divided proportionately among States based on the number of undetermined wetlands in each State as of the date of enactment of this Act, and made available in addition to any other funds for this purpose''.

SA 3265. Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. MANCHIN, and Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. No funds made available under this Act may be used to create or operate a checkpoint that exclusively targets motorcycle operators and motorcycle passengers.

SA 3266. Mr. GRAHAM (for himself, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. CHAMBLISS) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 7____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to pay the salaries and expenses of personnel of the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation or the Risk Management Agency to carry out a downward trending adjustment on the actual production history of a producer with respect to the yield of a perennial crop, including peaches, the yield of which is determined under the Federal Crop Insurance Act (7 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.) using a 5-year database.

SA 3267. Mr. THUNE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title VII of division _____, add the following:

SEC. _____. To expedite emergency feed assistance that is needed to address emergency drought conditions in any State, the Secretary of Agriculture shall complete all requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) and the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) that are necessary to make emergency haying and grazing decisions on acres enrolled under a contract for the conservation reserve program established under subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3831 et seq.) in a State, not later than 30 days after receiving such a request.

SA 3268. Ms. BALDWIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by

her to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this Act may be used to negotiate an agreement that includes a waiver of requirements under chapter 83 of title 41, United States Code (popularly known as the ''Buy American Act'').

SA 3269. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. NO BUDGET, NO PAY.

(a) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term ''Member of Congress''—

(1) has the meaning given under section 2106 of title 5, United States Code; and

(2) does not include the Vice President.

(b) TIMELY APPROVAL OF CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET AND THE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS.—If both Houses of Congress have not approved a concurrent resolution on the budget as described under section 301 of the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 (2 U.S.C. 632) for a fiscal year before October 1 of that fiscal year and have not passed all the regular appropriations bills for the next fiscal year before October 1 of that fiscal year, the pay of each Member of Congress may not be paid for each day following that October 1 until the date on which both Houses of Congress approve a concurrent resolution on the budget for that fiscal year and all the regular appropriations bills.

(c) NO PAY WITHOUT CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON THE BUDGET AND THE APPROPRIATIONS BILLS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no funds may be appropriated or otherwise be made available from the United States Treasury for the pay of any Member of Congress during any period determined by the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate or the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives under subsection (d).

(2) NO RETROACTIVE PAY.—A Member of Congress may not receive pay for any period determined by the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate or the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives under subsection (d), at any time after the end of that period.

(d) DETERMINATIONS.—

(1) SENATE.—

(A) REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATIONS.—On October 1 of each year, the Secretary of the Senate shall submit a request to the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate for certification of determinations made under subparagraph (B) (i) and (ii).

(B) DETERMINATIONS.—The Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate shall—

(i) on October 1 of each year, make a determination of whether Congress is in compliance with subsection (b) and whether Senators may not be paid under that subsection;

(ii) determine the period of days following each October 1 that Senators may not be paid under subsection (b); and

(iii) provide timely certification of the determinations under clauses (i) and (ii) upon the request of the Secretary of the Senate.

(2) HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

(A) REQUEST FOR CERTIFICATIONS.—On October 1 of each year, the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives shall submit a request to the Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives for certification of determinations made under subparagraph (B) (i) and (ii).

(B) DETERMINATIONS.—The Chairpersons of the Committee on the Budget and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives shall—

(i) on October 1 of each year, make a determination of whether Congress is in compliance with subsection (b) and whether Members of the House of Representatives may not be paid under that subsection;

(ii) determine the period of days following each October 1 that Members of the House of Representatives may not be paid under subsection (b); and

(iii) provide timely certification of the determinations under clauses (i) and (ii) upon the request of the Chief Administrative Officer of the House of Representatives.

(e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect on February 1, 2015.

SA 3270. Mr. HELLER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available under this Act may be used to promulgate or enforce any regulation that mandates the installation or use of an event data recorder in a light duty, noncommercial, passenger motor vehicle.

SA 3271. Mrs. FISCHER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Board of Directors of the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) shall submit a report to Congress that includes—

(1) the amount of money expended by FirstNet since its establishment under section 6204 of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–96);

(2) a description of FirstNet's cumulative accomplishments; and

(3) a timetable for deploying a functioning nationwide, interoperable, public safety broadband network.

SA 3272. Mrs. FISCHER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available under this Act may be used by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to regulate, adopt guidelines with respect to, or prescribe the design of mobile application software (apps), devices, or other mobile connected vehicle technologies, except for software whose primary purpose is integral to the operation of a motor vehicle.

SA 3273. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. __. Section 127 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(j) NATURAL GAS VEHICLES.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall issue regulations to allow a vehicle, if operated by an engine fueled primarily by natural gas, to exceed any vehicle weight limit under this section by an amount that is equal to the difference between—

''(1) the weight of the vehicle attributable to the natural gas tank and fueling system carried by that vehicle; and

''(2) the weight of a comparable diesel tank and fueling system.''.

SA 3274. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

In section 718 of division ____, strike ''SEC. 718. None of the funds'' and all that follows through the end of paragraph (1) and insert the following:

SEC. 718. (a) There is appropriated to the Secretary of Agriculture, out of funds of the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, $12,000,000 to carry out section 14 of the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act (16 U.S.C. 1012).

(b) None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available by this or any other Act shall be used to pay the salaries and expenses of personnel to carry out the following:

(1) The biorefinery, renewable chemical, and biobased product manufacturing assistance program established under section 9003 of the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (7 U.S.C. 8103) in excess of $38,000,000 of funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation for fiscal year 2015.

SA 3275. Mr. INHOFE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 153, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

SEC. 134. COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSE SKILLS TESTING REPORT.

(a) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study to determine—

(A) the Commercial Driver's License (referred to in this section as ''CDL'') skills testing procedures used by each State;

(B) whether States using the procedures described in paragraph (2)(A) have reduced testing wait times, on average, compared to the procedures described in subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph (2);

(C) for each of the 3 CDL skills testing procedures described in paragraph (2)—

(i) the average time between a CDL applicant's request for a CDL skills test and such test in States using such procedure;

(ii) the failure rate of CDL applicants in States using such procedure; and

(iii) the average time between a CDL applicant's request to retake a CDL skills test and such test; and

(D) the total economic impact of CDL skills testing delays.

(2) SKILLS TESTING PROCEDURES.—The procedures described in this paragraph are—

(A) third party testing, using nongovernmental contractors to proctor CDL skills tests on behalf of the State;

(B) modified third party testing, administering CDL skills tests at State testing facilities, community colleges, or a limited number of third parties; and

(C) State testing, administering CDL skills tests only at State-owned facilities.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit a report to Congress that contains the results of the study conducted pursuant to subsection (a).

SA 3276. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 157, line 24, strike ''$1,390,000,000'' and insert ''$1,620,000,000''.

SA 3277. Mrs. MURRAY submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 115, line 9, insert '': *Provided*, That the Secretary of Transportation shall use up to $1,500,000 of the amounts made available under this heading to increase the number of projects published in the Federal Infrastructure Projects Permitting Dashboard'' before the period at the end.

SA 3278. Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. CASEY, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. SCHUMER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, and Mr. KING) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to limit or prohibit the use of wood boards for cheese aging or ripening on an industry-wide basis before the Commissioner of Food and Drugs ensures that the public has an opportunity to review and comment on the policy of the Food and Drug Administration regarding good handling practices for cheese aging and the use of wood boards for cheese aging and ripening, including public comment on the relative economic impact of such use, and the Commissioner of Food and Drugs reports to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives on the agency's consideration of public review and comment.

SA 3279. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the amounts appropriated or otherwise made available under this Act may be used by the Bureau of the Census to conduct the 2020 decennial census of population unless the questionnaires used for such census include questions to ascertain United States citizenship and immigration stauts.

SA 3280. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, none of the funds made available under this Act may be used to carry out Operation Choke Point.

SA 3281. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, add the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available under this Act shall be used to enforce the amendments to section 801 of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (21 U.S.C. 381) made by section 708 of the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act (Public Law 112–144; 126 Stat. 1068) or to implement subsection (d) of such section 708 (21 U.S.C. 381 note).

SA 3282. Mr. VITTER (for himself and Mr. HELLER) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available under this Act shall be used to provide housing assistance benefits for an individual who is convicted of aggravated sexual abuse under section 2241 of title 18, United States Code, murder under section 1111 of title 18, United States Code, an offense under chapter 110 of title 18, United States Code, or any other Federal or State offense involving sexual assault, as defined in 40002(a) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 13925(a)).

SA 3283. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. No funds appropriated or otherwise made available under this Act may be used by the Federal Housing Administration to reduce the mortgage insurance premiums charged and collected under title II of the National Housing Act (12 U.S.C. 1707 et seq.) for the insurance of mortgages.

SA 3284. Mr. VITTER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. 529A. None of the funds appropriated or otherwise made available in this Act may be used to construct, modify, or operate facilities at Thomson Correctional Facility, Illinois, for purposes of any operations of the Department of Defense at such facilities.

SA 3285. Mr. WALSH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, none of the funds made available in this Act to the Department of Justice or the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives may be used, with respect to registered medicinal marijuana patients in the States of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin, to enforce the provisions of subsection (d)(3) or (g)(3) of section 922 of title 18, United States Code, against a registered medicinal marijuana patient based on either the status of the patient as a registered medicinal marijuana patient or the lawful use of medicinal marijuana under the laws of the State in which the patient resides.

SA 3286. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 3244 submitted by Ms. MIKULSKI and intended to be proposed to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 7, line 11, strike ''$252,200,000'' and insert ''$242,761,000''.

On page 7, line 17, strike ''$896,744,000'' and insert ''$863,183,000''.

On page 12, line 4, strike ''$685,000,000'' and insert ''$673,583,000''.

On page 12, line 14, strike ''$156,000,000'' and insert ''$153,400,000''.

On page 12, line 15, strike ''$141,000,000'' and insert ''$138,650,000''.

On page 12, line 17, strike ''$15,000,000'' and insert ''$14,750,000''.

On page 13, line 1, strike ''$59,000,000'' and insert ''$58,017,000''.

On page 23, line 16, strike ''$115,000,000'' and insert ''$110,000,000''.

On page 45, line 20, strike ''$1,149,500,000'' and insert ''$1,216,500,000''.

On page 45, line 22, strike'' $376,000,000'' and insert ''$443,000,000''.

On page 68, line 18, strike ''$5,200,000,000'' and insert ''$5,198,836,000''.

On page 69, line 19, strike ''$551,100,000'' and insert ''$550,977,000''.

On page 70, line 8, strike ''$580,200,000'' and insert ''$580,070,000''.

On page 70, line 22, strike ''$4,367,700,000'' and insert ''$4,366,722,000''.

On page 70, line 24, strike ''$1,200,000,000'' and insert ''$1,199,731,000''.

On page 71, line 1, strike ''$2,051,300,000'' and insert ''$2,050,841,000''.

On page 71, line 6, strike ''$1,700,000,000'' and insert ''$1,699,619,000''.

On page 71, line 7, strike ''$351,300,000'' and insert ''$351,221,000''.

On page 72, line 3, strike ''$805,000,000'' and insert ''$804,820,000''.

On page 72, line 4, strike ''$311,400,000'' and insert ''$311,330,000''.

On page 72, line 19, strike ''$3,830,800,000'' and insert ''$3,829,942,000''.

On page 73, line 6, strike ''$108,000,000'' and insert ''$107,976,000''.

On page 74, line 1, strike ''$2,778,600,000'' and insert ''$2,777,978,000''.

On page 74, line 11, strike ''$446,100,000'' and insert ''$446,000,000''.

SA 3287. Ms. AYOTTE (for herself and Mrs. SHAHEEN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 67, between lines 15 and 16, insert the following:

SEC. 221. (a) Subsection (a) of section 104 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking ''and'' at the end of paragraph (4), by striking the period at the end of paragraph (5) and inserting ''; and'', and by inserting after paragraph (5) the following new paragraph:

''(6) amounts received pursuant to—

''(A) section 1201 of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796); or

''(B) a program established under the laws of any State which provides monetary compensation for surviving dependents of a public safety officer who has died as the direct and proximate result of a personal injury sustained in the line of duty.''.

(b) The amendments made by this section shall apply to amounts received after December 31, 2011.

SA 3288. Mr. REID (for Ms. MURKOWSKI) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1237, to improve the administration of programs in the insular areas, and for other purposes; as follows:

Beginning on page 63, strike line 14 and all that follows through page 75, line 22.

On page 75, line 23, strike ''**8**'' and insert ''**7**''.

On page 76, line 6, strike ''**9**'' and insert ''**8**''.

Beginning on page 77, strike line 12 and all that follows through page 78, line 17.

On page 78, line 18, strike ''**11**'' and insert ''**9**''.

On page 79, line 3, strike ''**12**'' and insert ''**10**''.

On page 79, line 18, strike ''**13**'' and insert ''**11**''.

On page 80, line 8, strike ''**14**'' and insert ''**12**''.

SA 3289. Mr. PAUL submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the 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; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place in title II of division A, insert the following:

SEC. ____. None of the funds made available under this Act to the Department of Justice may be used, with respect to the States of Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Washington, and Wisconsin, to prevent such States from implementing their own State laws that authorize the use, distribution, possession, or cultivation of medical marijuana.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet on June 24, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Falling Through the Cracks: The Challenges of Prevention and Identification in Child Trafficking and Private Re-homing.''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Ashley Eden of the committee staff on (202) 224–9243.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will meet on June 24, 2014, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–106 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Moving Toward Greater Community Inclusion—Olmstead at 15.''

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Danielle Corley of the committee staff on (202) 224–2330.

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 18, 2014, at 2:30 p.m. in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Aggressive E-Cigarette Marketing and Potential Consequences for Youth''.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 18, 2014, at 10:30 a.m., in room SD–366 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Finance Committee be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 18, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 18, 2014, at 2:15 p.m., to hold a hearing entitled ''U.S. Policy in Afghanistan and the Regional Implications of the 2014 Transition.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Ms. MIKULSKI. 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 18, 2014, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Intelligence Community: Keeping Watch Over Its Contractor Workforce.''

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 18, 2014, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:30 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 18, 2014, at 3 p.m., in room 428A of the Russell Senate Office building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Growing Small Business Exports, Growing U.S. Jobs.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on June 18, 2014, at 2:30 p.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.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT OF THE CLEAN AIR AND NUCLEAR SAFETY

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Oversight of the Clean Air and Nuclear Safety of the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 18, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled, ''Climate Change: The Need to Act Now.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SECURITIES, INSURANCE, AND INVESTMENT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Subcommittee on Securities, Insurance, and Investment be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 18, 2014, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''High Frequency Trading's Impact on the Economy.''

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 18, 2014, at 2:15 p.m., in room SD–562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Reduction in Face-to-Face Services at the Social Security Administration.

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. PRYOR. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Bob Ross and Nicole Pollard, detailees from the Department of Agriculture to the Committee on Appropriations, be granted floor privileges during the consideration of H.R. 4660.

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

OMNIBUS TERRITORIES ACT OF 2013

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 352, S. 1237.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1237) to improve the administration of programs in the insular areas, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Omnibus Territories Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title.
Sec. 2. Table of contents.
Sec. 3. Amendments to the Consolidated Natural Resources Act.
Sec. 4. Study of electric rates in the insular areas.
Sec. 5. Reports on estimates of revenues.
Sec. 6. Low-income home energy assistance program.
Sec. 7. Guam War Claims Review Commission.
Sec. 8. Improvements in HUD assisted programs.
Sec. 9. Benefit to cost ratio study for projects in American Samoa.
Sec. 10. Waiver of local matching requirements.
Sec. 11. Fishery endorsements.
Sec. 12. Effects of Minimum Wage differentials in American Samoa.
Sec. 13. Office of National Drug Control Policy.
Sec. 14. Drivers' licenses and personal identification cards.

SEC. 3. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSOLIDATED NATURAL RESOURCES ACT.

Section 6 of the Joint Resolution entitled ''A Joint Resolution to approve the 'Covenant To Establish a Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America', and for other purposes'', approved March 24, 1976 (Public Law 94–241; 90 Stat. 263, 122 Stat. 854), is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking ''December 31, 2014, except as provided in subsections (b) and (d)'' and inserting ''December 31, 2019''; and

(B) by striking paragraph (6), and inserting the following:

''(6) CERTAIN EDUCATION FUNDING.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to fees charged pursuant to section 286(m) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1356 (m)) to recover the full costs of providing adjudication services, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall charge an annual supplemental fee of $150 per nonimmigrant worker to each prospective employer who is issued a permit under subsection (d) of this section during the transition program. Such supplemental fee shall be paid into the Treasury of the Commonwealth government for the purpose of funding ongoing vocational educational curricula and program development by Commonwealth educational entities.

''(B) PLAN FOR THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS.—At the beginning of each fiscal year, and prior to the payment of the supplemental fee into the Treasury of the Commonwealth government in that fiscal year, the Commonwealth government must provide to the Secretary of Labor, a plan for the expenditure of funds received under this paragraph, a projection of the effectiveness of these expenditures in the placement of United States workers into jobs, and a report on the changes in employment of United States workers attributable to prior year expenditures.

''(C) REPORT.—The Secretary of Labor shall report to the Congress every 2 years on the effectiveness of meeting the goals set out by the Commonwealth government in its annual plan for the expenditure of funds.''; and

(2) in subsection (d)—

(A) in the third sentence of paragraph (2), by striking ''not to extend beyond December 31, 2014, unless extended pursuant to paragraph 5 of this subsection'' and inserting ''ending on December 31, 2019'';

(B) by striking paragraph (5); and

(C) by redesignating paragraph (6) as paragraph (5).

SEC. 4. STUDY OF ELECTRIC RATES IN THE INSULAR AREAS.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY PLAN.—The term ''comprehensive energy plan'' means a comprehensive energy plan prepared and updated under subsections (c) and (e) of section 604 of the Act entitled ''An Act to authorize appropriations for certain insular areas of the United States, and for other purposes'', approved December 24, 1980 (48 U.S.C. 1492).

(2) ENERGY ACTION PLAN.—The term ''energy action plan'' means the plan required by subsection (d).

(3) FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES.—The term ''Freely Associated States'' means the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

(4) INSULAR AREAS.—The term ''insular areas'' means American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

(5) SECRETARY.—The term ''Secretary'' means the Secretary of the Interior.

(6) TEAM.—The term ''team'' means the team established by the Secretary under subsection (b).

(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall, within the Empowering Insular Communities activity, establish a team of technical, policy, and financial experts—

(1) to develop an energy action plan addressing the energy needs of each of the insular areas and Freely Associated States; and

(2) to assist each of the insular areas and Freely Associated States in implementing such plan.

(c) PARTICIPATION OF REGIONAL UTILITY ORGANIZATIONS.—In establishing the team, the Secretary shall consider including regional utility organizations.

(d) ENERGY ACTION PLAN.—In accordance with subsection (b), the energy action plan shall include—

(1) recommendations, based on the comprehensive energy plan where applicable, to—

(A) reduce reliance and expenditures on fuel shipped to the insular areas and Freely Associated States from ports outside the United States;

(B) develop and utilize domestic fuel energy sources; and

(C) improve performance of energy infrastructure and overall energy efficiency;

(2) a schedule for implementation of such recommendations and identification and prioritization of specific projects;

(3) a financial and engineering plan for implementing and sustaining projects; and

(4) benchmarks for measuring progress toward implementation.

(e) REPORTS TO SECRETARY.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the Secretary establishes the team and annually thereafter, the team shall submit to the Secretary a report detailing progress made in fulfilling its charge and in implementing the energy action plan.

(f) ANNUAL REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 days after the date on which the Secretary receives a report submitted by the team under subsection (e), the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a summary of the report of the team.

(g) APPROVAL OF SECRETARY REQUIRED.—The energy action plan shall not be implemented until the Secretary approves the energy action plan.

SEC. 5. REPORTS ON ESTIMATES OF REVENUES.

The Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report that—

(1) evaluates whether the annual estimates or forecasts of revenue and expenditure of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the Virgin Islands are reasonable; and

(2) as the Comptroller General of the United States determines to be necessary, makes recommendations for improving the process for developing estimates or forecasts.

SEC. 6. LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

With respect to fiscal years 2014 through 2017, the percentage described in section 2605(b)(2)(B)(i) of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 8624(b)(2)(B)(i)) shall be 300 percent when applied to households located in the Virgin Islands.

SEC. 7. IMPROVEMENTS IN HUD ASSISTED PROGRAMS.

Section 214(a)(7) of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1980 (42 U.S.C. 1436a(a)(7)) is amended by striking ''such alien'' and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting ''citizen or national of the United States shall be entitled to a preference or priority in receiving assistance before any such alien who is otherwise eligible for such assistance.''.

SEC. 8. BENEFIT TO COST RATIO STUDY FOR PROJECTS IN AMERICAN SAMOA.

(a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study regarding the use of benefit-to-cost ratio formulas by Federal departments and agencies for purposes of evaluating projects in American Samoa.

(b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study, the Comptroller General shall—

(1) assess whether the benefit-to-cost ratio formulas described in subsection (a) take into consideration—

(A) the remote locations in, and the cost of transportation to and from, American Samoa; and

(B) other significant factors that are not comparable to locations within the 48 contiguous States; and

(2) assess, in particular, the use of benefit-to-cost ratio formulas by—

(A) the Secretary of Transportation with respect to airport traffic control tower programs; and

(B) the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Corps of Engineers, with respect to a harbor project or other water resources development project.

(3) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to Congress a report on the results of the study.

SEC. 9. FISHERY ENDORSEMENTS.

Section 12113 of title 46, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(j) CERTAIN EXEMPTION.—Paragraph (3) of subsection (a) shall not apply to any vessel—

''(1) that offloads its catch in part or full in American Samoa; and

''(2) that was rebuilt outside of the United States before January 1, 2011.''.

SEC. 10. EFFECTS OF MINIMUM WAGE DIFFERENTIALS IN AMERICAN SAMOA.

Section 8104 of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c) EFFECTS OF MINIMUM WAGE DIFFERENTIALS IN AMERICAN SAMOA.—The reports required under this section shall include an analysis of the economic effects on employees and employers of the differentials in minimum wage rates among industries and classifications in American Samoa under section 697 of title 29, Code of Federal Regulations, including the potential effects of eliminating such differentials prior to the time when such rates are scheduled to be equal to the minimum wage set forth in section 6(a)(1) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 206(a)(1)).''.

SEC. 11. OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY.

(a) CARIBBEAN BORDER COUNTERNARCOTICS STRATEGY.—The Office of National Drug Control Policy shall develop a biennial Caribbean Border Counternarcotics Strategy, that is made available to the public, with emphasis on the borders of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States, on terms substantially equivalent to the existing Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy and the Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy.

(b) AMENDMENT.—Section 704(b)(13)(B) of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 (21 U.S.C. 1703(b)(13)(B)) is amended by inserting ''the borders of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States and'' after ''in particular''.

SEC. 12. DRIVERS' LICENSES AND PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION CARDS.

(a) DEFINITION OF STATE.—Section 201(5) of the REAL ID Act of 2005 (49 U.S.C. 30301 note; Public Law 109–13) is amended by striking ''the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands,''.

(b) EVIDENCE OF LAWFUL STATUS.—Section 202(c)(2)(B) of the REAL ID Act of 2005 (49 U.S.C. 30301 note; Public Law 109–13) is amended—

(1) in clause (viii), by striking ''or'' after the semicolon at the end;

(2) in clause (ix), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(x) is a citizen of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau who has been admitted to the United States as a nonimmigrant pursuant to a Compact of Free Association between the United States and the Republic or Federated States.''.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment be considered, the Murkowski amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to, the substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

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

The amendment (No. 3288) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To remove certain sections.)

Beginning on page 63, strike line 14 and all that follows through page 75, line 22.

On page 75, line 23, strike ''**8**'' and insert ''**7**''.

On page 76, line 6, strike ''**9**'' and insert ''**8**''.

Beginning on page 77, strike line 12 and all that follows through page 78, line 17.

On page 78, line 18, strike ''**11**'' and insert ''**9**''.

On page 79, line 3, strike ''**12**'' and insert ''**10**''.

On page 79, line 18, strike ''**13**'' and insert ''**11**''.

On page 80, line 8, strike ''**14**'' and insert ''**12**''.

The committee amendment in the nature of a substitute, as amended, was agreed to.

The bill (S. 1237), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed, as follows:

S. 1237

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 ''Omnibus Territories Act of 2013''.

SEC. 2. TABLE OF CONTENTS.

The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

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''(B) PLAN FOR THE EXPENDITURE OF FUNDS.—At the beginning of each fiscal year, and prior to the payment of the supplemental fee into the Treasury of the Commonwealth government in that fiscal year, the Commonwealth government must provide to the Secretary of Labor, a plan for the expenditure of funds received under this paragraph, a projection of the effectiveness of these expenditures in the placement of United States workers into jobs, and a report on the changes in employment of United States workers attributable to prior year expenditures.

''(C) REPORT.—The Secretary of Labor shall report to the Congress every 2 years on the effectiveness of meeting the goals set out by the Commonwealth government in its annual plan for the expenditure of funds.''; and

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(2) to assist each of the insular areas and Freely Associated States in implementing such plan.

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(b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study, the Comptroller General shall—

(1) assess whether the benefit-to-cost ratio formulas described in subsection (a) take into consideration—

(A) the remote locations in, and the cost of transportation to and from, American Samoa; and

(B) other significant factors that are not comparable to locations within the 48 contiguous States; and

(2) assess, in particular, the use of benefit-to-cost ratio formulas by—

(A) the Secretary of Transportation with respect to airport traffic control tower programs; and

(B) the Secretary of the Army, acting through the Corps of Engineers, with respect to a harbor project or other water resources development project.

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Section 8104 of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007 (29 U.S.C. 206 note) is amended by adding at the end the following:

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SEC. 11. OFFICE OF NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL POLICY.

(a) CARIBBEAN BORDER COUNTERNARCOTICS STRATEGY.—The Office of National Drug Control Policy shall develop a biennial Caribbean Border Counternarcotics Strategy, that is made available to the public, with emphasis on the borders of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States, on terms substantially equivalent to the existing Southwest Border Counternarcotics Strategy and the Northern Border Counternarcotics Strategy.

(b) AMENDMENT.—Section 704(b)(13)(B) of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Reauthorization Act of 1998 (21 U.S.C. 1703(b)(13)(B)) is amended by inserting ''the borders of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands of the United States and'' after ''in particular''.

SEC. 12. DRIVERS' LICENSES AND PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION CARDS.

(a) DEFINITION OF STATE.—Section 201(5) of the REAL ID Act of 2005 (49 U.S.C. 30301 note; Public Law 109–13) is amended by striking ''the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands,''.

(b) EVIDENCE OF LAWFUL STATUS.—Section 202(c)(2)(B) of the REAL ID Act of 2005 (49 U.S.C. 30301 note; Public Law 109–13) is amended—

(1) in clause (viii), by striking ''or'' after the semicolon at the end;

(2) in clause (ix), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; or''; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(x) is a citizen of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau who has been admitted to the United States as a nonimmigrant pursuant to a Compact of Free Association between the United States and the Republic or Federated States.''.

MEASURE READ THE FIRST TIME—S. 2491

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand that S. 2491 is at the desk, and I now ask, through the direction of the Chair, for its first reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bill by title for the first time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 2491) to protect the Medicare program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to reconciliation involving changes to the Medicare program.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask for its second reading but object to my own request.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bill will be read for the second time on the next legislative day.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this bill is long overdue. I appreciate very much the work done by the author of this legislation, the senior Senator from Arkansas, Mr. PRYOR.

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 19, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 19; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half; that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of the motion to proceed to H.R. 4660, the CJS, T–HUD, and Agriculture appropriations bill, and all but 2 hours of postcloture debate time be considered expired.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 7:09 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 19, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.