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Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Eternal God, every good and perfect gift comes from You alone. For with You, there is no variation or shadow of turning. Help us to place our hope in You and remember how You have sustained us in the past.

Give our Senators the wisdom to trust You in the small things, realizing that faithfulness with the least prepares them for fidelity with the much. May they trust You to do what is best for America. In good and bad times, keep them from underestimating the power of Your might.

Lord, we thank You for continuing to heal Senator HARRY REID.

We praise You in Your sacred Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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 President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.R. 240.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 5, H.R. 240, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year beginning September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 338 AND S. 339

Mr. MCCONNELL. I understand there are two bills at the desk due for a second reading.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will read the bills by title for the second time.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 338) to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

A bill (S. 339) to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 entirely.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in order to place the bills on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I object to further proceedings en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The bills will be placed on the calendar.

SCHEDULE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, at noon today the Senate will vote on passage of H.R. 203, the bipartisan veterans suicide prevention bill. Following the recess for the weekly party lunches, we will vote on cloture on the motion to proceed to H.R. 240, a bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

CLAY HUNT SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR AMERICAN VETERANS ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, following last week's bipartisan vote for American jobs, the new Republican Congress will vote to send the President another bipartisan bill today. It is legislation that already passed the House of Representatives unanimously, the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act.

This bill would offer critical support to the men and women who have already sacrificed so much for all of us. It would extend a helping hand to heroes when they need it. It is just the kind of commonsense bipartisan action the new Congress can deliver for the American people.

Let me recognize once more the great work of Senators ISAKSON and MCCAIN on this bill. I hope our colleagues across the aisle will help us pass this legislation today with strong bipartisan support.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. President, when the new Senate convened, I stated my view that democracy is not about what you can get away with, it is about what can be achieved together. Exercising raw power is easier, no question about that. Changing the rules of democracy when they do not suit you can be pretty tempting to politicians. But we are hoping our colleagues in the Democratic Party will agree that elected leaders can be bigger than that. We are hoping Democrats will agree that it is on Presidents to consider the long-term consequences of partisan power grabs and to rise above the kinds of partisan temptations that tend to emerge.

The choices Democrats make on the legislation before us will say a lot about whether there are still two serious political parties in our country, whether there are still two parties interested in governing within a constitutional framework.

At its core, the debate is about whether Democrats think Presidents of either party should have the power to simply do what they want. While this is about more than just President Obama, it is also true that President Obama has repeatedly reached beyond his authority.

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

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Some of the President's overreach has been so out of bounds that the Supreme Court struck it down unanimously. Whether on the left, right, or center, every last Justice—even those appointed by the President—rebuked him for his overreach on recess appointments last June. Then just a couple of months ago the President rebuked himself by taking actions he had previously said many times that he lacked the legal authority to take. When he tried to suggest otherwise, a fact-checker blasted the spin and clarified that the President had been asked specifically about just the sorts of actions he was contemplating.

Last year President Obama declared that executive action was ''not an option'' because it would mean ''ignoring the law.'' ''There is a path to get this done,'' the President said, ''and that is through Congress.'' That was his view then. What changed? What changed?

The truth is, the latest power grab is not really about immigration reform. It is about making an already broken system even more broken. It is about imposing even more unfairness on immigrants who have already worked so hard and played by the rules. It is hard to understand why the President would want to impose additional unfairness on immigrants like these who just want to live their own American dream.

The question is, Do Democrats agree with the President? Well, we will soon find out. We will also find out if Democrats agree with President Obama who ignores the law when it suits him or if they agree with President Obama who made this statement just a few years ago in Miami. Here is what he said in Miami just a couple of years ago.

The President:

> Democracy is hard, but it's right. [And] changing our laws means doing the hard work of changing minds and changing votes one by one.

That is the President a couple of years ago.

So I am calling on Democrats to vote with us now to fund the Department of Homeland Security. I am calling on Democrats to join us and stand up for core democratic principles such as the rule of law and separation of powers.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

LORETTA LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the record held by the Republicans dealing with Cabinet officers is not one they should be proud of. For example, during a time of the War on Terror, the Republicans held up the Defense Department's nominee for a historically long time. Never in the past had someone who was to be Defense Secretary been held up by being blocked from moving forward.

You would think that would be a lesson learned and that would be enough, but no, that is not enough. Loretta Lynch, for example, who was nominated by the President to be Attorney General, has been held up for longer than any nominee for Attorney General in the last 30 or 40 years. It is hard to comprehend that. For example, Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM said she was ''a solid choice.'' Senator ORRIN HATCH has indicated that he supports her nomination. Why, then, do we have to keep waiting and waiting? We are approaching 3 months that this good woman has been held up from a job for which she has been nominated.

I would hope the Republican leadership would move this out of the Senate as quickly as possible.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. President, I am not going to dwell very long on the matter that is before this body, and we will vote at 2:30. We have here with us the leading Democrat on the Appropriations Committee, and she will talk about homeland security. We have here on the floor today the assistant Democratic leader, who was one of the authors of a bill which we brought to the floor and which was debated for a long time and passed overwhelmingly before it was blocked by the Republicans.

We have before us a very interesting proposition. We have had terrorist attacks in Canada, in Australia, all over the European Union, including France and Belgium. Those countries, rather than talking about not funding homeland security, are talking about funding it with more money—but not the Senate led by the Republicans. They are doing everything within their power to make sure Homeland Security is held hostage to matters that do not really relate to homeland security.

If my Republican colleagues do not like something President Obama has done dealing with Presidential Executive orders—which, by the way, he has done less than any President in modern times—bring it up on the Senate floor and let's have a debate on that. Let's not do what happened previously and shut down the government. That is the direction we are headed. That is really too bad.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Finally, Mr. President, the President has outlined a good proposal for a budget. It is nothing that is new. It is simply building upon the budget that was so successfully negotiated by Senator MURRAY and Congressman RYAN. That is what this budget he proposed is all about. It would seem to me, rather than the Republicans running out, as soon as he said a word, saying no, no, no, let's look at areas where we can compromise. Don't we need something done with the infrastructure of this country? The answer is obviously yes. Why can't we work something out in that regard? So I would hope that rather than saying no to everything the President does, that we should understand that our role, including Republican Senators, is to legislate. Legislation is the art of compromise.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, equally divided, with Senators permitted to speak therein, with the Democrats controlling the first half and the Republicans controlling the final half.

The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I ask to speak in morning business as agreed upon.

WELCOMING BACK THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, before the Democratic leader leaves, in the warmest and most enthusiastic way, I want to welcome him back. He looks like he has been in a big fight. I am sure he won. It is wonderful to have him back in his leadership role, here right at his duty station. We look forward to following him and to working with him to try to forge these bipartisan relationships.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I come to the floor to call for a vote against the motion to proceed to H.R. 240, the House Homeland Security funding bill.

Now, this is a shock—for Senator BARBARA MIKULSKI to call for a vote against a motion to proceed on an appropriations bill. For the past 2 years, I have been on the floor speaking out, pounding the table, saying: Let's bring up bills; let's bring them up one at a time.

So now why am I on the floor asking for a vote against the motion to proceed on the Department of Homeland Security funding bill?

Well, I can tell us it is because the Homeland Security bill has two parts. One is an essential bill, the funding for the Department of Homeland Security—which I hope we get to and we get to as expeditiously as possible. But they have another component to it—poison pill riders—five riders from the House of Representatives designed to attack the President on immigration.

These riders, if passed, will guarantee the President will veto the bill, and we are going to be back to parliamentary ping-pong. We posture and pomp and vote. Send it to the President; he will veto it. We will get into more posturing, pomp, and partisan points. For what? We need to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

Yes, we do need to deal with immigration, but the Senate passed an immigration bill. Rather than attacking the President, let's attack the problems from immigration. Let's deal with the DREAMers. Let's deal with getting people into the sunshine.

This institution, both the House and the Senate under Republican control, criticized the President for not acting.

Where is leadership? Where is leadership? When the President acts, as he did on immigration, they want to punish him by adding poison pill riders to an essential—essential—national security bill.

Colleagues on the other side say: Why are you seeking to delay the funding bill?

I am not seeking to delay the funding bill. I am asking that we put in a clean bill and just vote on the money part.

All of my Democratic colleagues and I wrote a letter to Senator MCCONNELL asking him to schedule a vote on a clean Homeland Security bill. Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN, the ranking member on the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, and I put in a clean bill the other day.

We could do it now. We could pass that funding today and reserve the debate on immigration for another day, calling upon the House to do their job. But right now I want all of the wonderful men and women who work at the Department of Homeland Security to be paid for the work they do.

We need them. We need them in cyber security. We need them searching out the lone-wolf attacks. Weren't we proud of the brilliant job our Homeland Security leadership provided to protect all the people who so enjoyed the Super Bowl?

We have a lot of work to do. In my own home State we are dependent on the Coast Guard, but so is every other State with a coastal area, protecting us in terms of search and rescue, against drug dealers.

What about our Border Patrol, which is there every single day in dangerous circumstances; don't they deserve our respect, the resources they need, and the pay they have earned?

Let's get with the program. The program is to protect America, not to protect a political party and its partisan points on immigration. Our job is to protect the homeland security of the United States of America.

I am adamant about this. We are now 4 months into the fiscal year. We could be heading for—I hope not—another continuing resolution. We need to stand for America.

Americans are in danger at home and abroad. I know my other colleagues are waiting to speak. But we do face terrorist threats. We do face cyber criminals. The Secret Service is reforming itself. We have fence jumpers at the White House, we have drones over the White House, and yet we are going to dicker, dicker, dicker, and dicker against five poison pill amendments.

Let's clean this up and vote against the motion to proceed today. Let's come back with the clean bill that Senator SHAHEEN and I introduced.

The money has been agreed upon on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the dome in the closing hours of the fiscal year 2015 debate. Working hand-in-hand with Senator DAN COATS we fashioned a bill in the Senate, and we have it agreed to over in the House. So we could do our job so that Homeland Security can do their job.

Defeat this ill-conceived motion to proceed. Let's proceed to a clean bill. Let's protect America and then get on with other important debates.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to follow my leader on the Appropriations Committee, Senator MIKULSKI. She and I know what it was like on 9/11/2001 in this building. We were looking out the window down the Mall and saw black smoke billowing from the Pentagon. We didn't know what happened, but we were told immediately to evacuate this U.S. Capitol Building.

I had never heard those words before. We raced out of the building, standing on the lawn outside, unaware of exactly what happened.

We knew about the tragedy in New York. We didn't know what was next. We stood there in our bewilderment, thinking what could we do. Well, what we did was protect ourselves and our Nation and come together. I remember our choral director, when we came together, Senator MIKULSKI of Maryland, led us in singing ''God Bless America'' that evening on the steps of the Capitol.

There was a feeling of bipartisanship brought about by the tragedy of that moment and the belief that we had to rise above party to do something and keep America safe.

We did. I am proud of that, and I am proud of the role the Senator from Maryland played in that.

One of the aspects that went way beyond singing was to roll up our sleeves and decide how to make government work more effectively. We had two outstanding leaders in that effort: Senator Lieberman of Connecticut and Senator COLLINS of Maine. The ranking Republican and Democratic chair of that committee came together and crafted a bill literally to create a new department in our government, the Department of Homeland Security, that brought together, I believe, 22 different agencies under one roof so that we could effectively coordinate keeping America safe.

We agreed on a bipartisan basis and created that Department, and that Department has really served us well. The current Secretary, Jeh Johnson, is an outstanding individual. They have so many areas of responsibility. Other agencies play an important role—defense, intelligence, transportation—but the Department of Homeland Security is the coordinating department for America's safety against terrorism.

That is why it is incredible to me that we have refused to provide the funds the Department of Homeland Security needs to keep America safe.

The Republicans insisted in December, in the House of Representatives, they would not pass the appropriations bill for one department, the Department of Homeland Security, because they wanted to enter into a debate with the President over immigration policy. There is nothing wrong with a debate over immigration policy. In fact, the Republicans, now in the majority control of the House and Senate, could have started that debate weeks ago. They didn't.

Instead, they attached five riders to the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill, and they said: We will not allow that Department to be properly funded unless the President accepts these five immigration riders.

I wish to speak to one of those riders because it really tells the story of the feelings of many on the Republican side when it comes to immigration.

Fourteen years ago I introduced the DREAM Act. The DREAM Act is very basic. If you were brought to America as an infant, a toddler, a child by your parents, and you were undocumented in America, we believe you still deserve a chance.

As children, they didn't vote on the family decision to come to America, but their lives have been changed because of that decision. They have lived in America—many of these young people—undocumented, growing up, going to school, doing everything every child around them did, and then finally knowing they didn't have the necessary legal documentation to stay in this country.

Well, I introduced the DREAM Act and said for those kids—who should not be held responsible for any wrongdoing by their parents—give them a chance. Give them a chance if they have led a good life, if they have graduated from high school, if they aspire to serve in our military or go on to college. Give them a chance to be legal in America.

The DREAM Act we have never enacted into law despite 14 years of effort. But the President stepped in 2½ years ago and said by Executive order: We will not deport the DREAMers if there is no evidence of criminal wrongdoing, if they have completed high school, if they came here as infants, toddlers, and children. We will give them a chance to stay in America, to work in America, and to go to school in America.

We estimate 2 million young people would qualify, and 600,000 have gone through the process. They have paid the filing fee, gone through the process, have the protection of what we call DACA, and now don't have to fear deportation. Who are these young people? They, frankly, are some of the most inspiring stories I have met as a Member of the Senate.

The Republicans in the House of Representatives have said they want to deport the DREAMers. That is right. They will not allow the Department of Homeland Security to renew their protection from deportation, and they won't allow any others to apply for DACA protection.

That means 600,000 young people currently protected by DACA would be

facing deportation and another 1.5 million will be facing it as well.

Now, that is the answer of the Republican Party when it comes to immigration. Take these children—who came here as children to America, who have shown they want to be part of America's future—and deport them. Get rid of them.

From the Republican point of view in the House of Representatives, we have no use for these young people.

I wish to introduce one of these young people. This is Aaima Sayed. Aaima Sayed was brought to the United States from Pakistan. When she was 3 years old her parents brought her to this country. She grew up in Chicago like every other typical American kid. Aaima says:

> I have no memories but those of living in the United States; I am an American in every way, except on paper.

Aaima was an outstanding student. She graduated in the top 10 percent of her high school class, where she was secretary of the Spanish club, the math team, and a member of the National Society of High School Scholars. Her dream in life is to be a doctor. This is how she explains it:

> It completely breaks my heart to see thousands of children die of treatable diseases due to inadequate basic health care facilities, and I want to have the skills and ability to change that.

In January 2012, Aaima graduated from Rutgers University magna cum laude with a major in psychology. She was on the dean's list six times and had a grade point average of 3.75 out of 4.0. She was a research assistant at the Rutgers Department of Psychology and interned with a local cardiologist. Aaima took the Medical College Admission Test, the MCAT, after graduating magna cum laude from Rutgers.

She scored in the 90th percentile. Her score was better than 90 percent of those who took the test. Shortly after she graduated from Rutgers, she was told that President Obama had an Executive order that gave her a chance to stay in America. It was called DACA. She applied for it, and she was accepted.

For Aaima, it meant that now, for the first time, she could honestly think about going to go medical school. She has never received any government assistance, incidentally. As an undocumented person in America, she doesn't qualify. So when she goes to college, it is at considerable challenge and hardship beyond those who had help from the government. She never did.

Aaima sent a letter to me about DACA and its impact on her. She said:

> I went from feeling hopeless and full of uncertainty regarding my future to feeling confident and optimistic that I will one day get the opportunity to help my community and people in other poverty-stricken areas.

Then something amazing happened. Loyola University in Chicago, after the President's Executive order on DACA, decided they would create 10 spots in their medical school for DACA students around America such as Aaima. She applied.

I went to Loyola the day they started classes and met 10 of them. Aaima is an amazing young woman. This was an extraordinary academic achievement in her life, and she was surrounded by those just like her who were ''undocumented,'' protected by President Obama's Executive order.

The 10 were accepted to Loyola in this special program in their medical school on one condition; that is that when they finished and became doctors, they had to agree to serve in underserved areas where the poor people live in America and don't have doctors. They gladly agreed to do it.

They are not going to medical school to get rich. They are going to medical school for the enrichment of a profession where they can help so many deserving people. That is where Aaima is today, at Loyola's medical school. I thank Loyola University for giving her a chance and giving nine others a chance. I thank them as well for giving Aaima the opportunity to serve those in America—in cities and rural areas—who have no doctors.

The House Republicans want to deport this young woman. That is what they have said: We want to deport her. We don't believe she should stay in America. After all she has accomplished in her life, after all she promises to bring to our great country, the Republicans have said: No, we don't need you. We don't want you. Leave.

That is what the rider says on the Department of Homeland Security. I come to this floor virtually every day and tell another story, such as the story of Aaima, the story of what she has been through and the promise she holds for the future of this country. I cannot understand the mentality of some on the other side of the aisle who are so hateful when it comes to these young, idealistic, amazing young people. Some of the things they have said about these DREAMers are very sad. I have had a chance to meet them, and I am going to continue to work for them.

So let us do this. Let us pass a clean Department of Homeland Security bill. What does that mean? Take off the riders, take off the politically extraneous things. Let us pass the bill to fund the Department that keeps America safe and then turn to the majority party—the Republican majority party—and say: Now accept your responsibility. If you want to debate immigration, bring it to the floor of the Senate, bring it to the floor of the House. It is within your power to do it. Don't hold the Department of Homeland Security hostage. Please, when you consider the future of immigration in America, don't forget we are a nation of immigrants, and that immigrant stock has made this the greatest country on Earth, if I can say. Let us continue that tradition.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, later today, the Senate will vote on whether it should proceed to a bill that attempts to link two critical yet independent debates: the day-to-day operations of one of the Nation's key national security agencies, and addressing our broken immigration system. Now, in doing that, it appears that leadership wants to hold hostage the operations of the Department of Homeland Security, an office charged with protecting our national security. And frankly, that is simply irresponsible.

Sometimes the sense of history around here is whatever was the last sound bite heard on television, but let's take an honest look at the real history and how we got here: It has been well over a year and a half since a strong, bipartisan majority, Democrats and Republicans, came together in the Senate and approved a package of comprehensive immigration reforms. We did this after the Senate Judiciary Committee had held hundreds of hours of hearings and debate in markup. We passed it here overwhelmingly. The Republican House leadership refused to allow a vote on that measure even though most of it would have passed the House of Representatives. Now, because they wouldn't act at all, and left a void, the President acted. The President acted when he had waited for a couple of years to see if Congress would act—waited for the House of Representatives to take up the bill we passed. He had to act. This is almost like ''Alice in Wonderland.'' The Republican leadership refuses to act on the immigration bill and then they get mad because the President, who has to take responsibility for this country, acts. They now want to put at risk the very operations of the agency charged with enforcing the immigration laws in question and blame it on the President because they failed to act. This is ''Alice in Wonderland.''

I know Republicans object to the President's Executive action. We spent hours hearing their complaints last week as the Senate Judiciary Committee was supposed to be considering the qualifications of Loretta Lynch to be Attorney General. It had nothing to do with her but they wanted to vent for the cameras. It went on until the cameras were turned off. I would say that instead of complaining about what they failed to do and complaining about what the President does to protect this country, why don't they offer some meaningful solutions for fixing our broken immigration system. A good place to start would be the comprehensive immigration bill we passed last Congress by a vote of 68–32. There was plenty in that bill I did not like but it included meaningful reforms to all aspects of our immigration system that was negotiated and improved through the full committee process and that is what made it a real compromise.

Now, instead of voting on that bipartisan compromise or other alternative solutions, all we see are attempts to

undermine any efforts at comprehensive reform. By blocking all alternatives, the Republicans are keeping us locked in a status quo that hurts our economy, makes us less safe and pulls families apart.

The President's Executive action is a positive step to toward keeping our communities safe because it requires DHS to prioritize the deportation of dangerous criminals. And it encourages those immigrants with longstanding ties to our communities who do not pose a danger to register with the government and come out of the shadows.

Law enforcement officers and victims' advocates tell us the President's Executive action will make our communities and families safer because people will not hesitate to call the police for fear of being deported themselves.

Business leaders, economists and labor leaders tell us it will grow our economy and increase wages for all workers. It will level the playing field for American workers and raise revenues by more than $22.6 billion over 5 years.

Immigration and constitutional law experts have concluded that it is constitutional and the President acted within his authority.

Mayors from 33 major cities across the country who work every day to make our communities safe and our businesses flourish, have said the Executive action will fuel growth in local economies, increase public safety, and facilitate the integration of immigrants. These are not political partisans. They are frontline leaders who understand the daily problems posed by our broken immigration system. They are telling us that we must act. And until we do, they are supportive of the temporary steps the President has taken.

House Republicans have said their proposal will bolster border security in a way the President's Executive actions did not but those claims ignore reality. Border security has become a game of who can develop the most outlandish, unrealistic proposals. Round-the-clock drone surveillance. Doubling the border patrol. Waiving all environmental laws. Requiring DHS to prevent every last undocumented person from crossing the southern border. These proposals are not serious. They never worked in the past. They are not going to work now. We are not at war with Mexico and Canada. We cannot seal our borders. Nor should we.

We already have devoted an enormous amount of resources to border security. The overall budget for CBP and ICE has nearly doubled in the past 10 years. Hundreds of miles of border fencing has been constructed. We have more than 21,000 border patrol agents. And, the Department has deployed advanced technologies and airborne assets. The most effective border security measure would be approving the comprehensive immigration reforms passed by the Senate last Congress that reduce the number of people trying to come here in the first place.

The Senate has a choice. We can set aside politics and act like grownups or we can waste days debating the legislation sent to us by the House, which the President has made clear he will veto.

What I suggest is that we respond to the American people and act like grownups—consider legislation introduced last week by Senator SHAHEEN and Senator MIKULSKI. That bill, negotiated last year by Senate and House members, Democrats and Republicans alike, would ensure that the Department of Homeland Security has the critical resources it needs to protect our national interests. That bill will raise DHS funding by $400 million, and fund the largest operation force of border patrol agents and CBP officers in history. It will provide resources to respond quickly when natural disasters devastate our states and communities. It will provide funding for the essential services provided by the Coast Guard and Secret Service. It will invest in FEMA's State and Local Grants Program, which also helps all of our states—including rural, border ones like Vermont. And it will support our state and local law enforcement, fire departments and first responder emergency services. It replaces rhetoric with reality. I think the American people are tired of rhetoric. They'd like some reality.

We all know our current immigration system needs comprehensive reform. That's why I held hundreds of hours of hearings and markups in the Judiciary Committee and why this Senate, Republicans and Democrats, came together last Congress and passed a comprehensive immigration bill. And I'm so sorry that the House Republican leadership refused to bring it up even though there were the votes to pass it. So the President took the first step. Now, Congress must act. But this appropriations bill is not the place for that debate. Have a real debate on immigration. We cannot send the message that we are more willing to play politics than promote and protect national security. That posturing is beneath the Senate. We should pass a clean funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security, and renew our efforts to enact meaningful, comprehensive immigration reforms such as those passed by the Senate in 2013.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I stand to discuss what has been discussed by the previous two Senators, the urgent need for a clean bill to fund our Department of Homeland Security.

I wasn't part of this body during the 9/11 attacks. I was living in Newark, NJ, and watched, as many in my city did, with a view clearly to the World Trade Center and saw that attack. What moved me afterward was the incredible unity of our country. There was no partisan politics. People pulled together. First responders from New Jersey, all over New York, and all over the country came together.

What we did after that as a nation was we began to prepare to ensure we could prevent those attacks and have better systems in place should emergencies, crises, disasters or attacks happen again. What happened from that unity is evidenced by this body joining together not just to sing patriotic songs on the Capitol steps but to work in unison to create the Department of Homeland Security.

That agency is tasked with the urgent need to prepare our country to meet crises if they come. This is not a partisan issue and should not fall prey to political fights between congressional Republicans and the President of the United States over immigration. There is way too much at stake.

Let me cite a few examples. Something we have learned from past attacks is the urgency of coordinating between different layers of law enforcement and first responders. If we do not pass a clean DHS bill, resources for that coordination, getting everyone working together, will be put at risk.

Let me cite another example. It is critical in this day and age that we stay on the cutting edge of technology, one step ahead of those people who seek to do us harm. We see clearly if we do not get a clean bill passed, we will not be able to stay on that technological edge. We see that in many areas. One great example is at our ports. New Jersey has one of the third busiest ports in America, and we need that critical technological equipment for upgrades that can help us to detect nuclear devices or harmful materials coming into our country. Without a clean bill, we will not have those resources.

We also see the headlines from just the past few months about cyber attack after cyber attack. A critical agency that must be funded appropriately to protect our businesses and our infrastructure and our first-responding capabilities against cyber attack is coordinated and led from the DHS. Not to fund this agency adequately so they can prepare for those attacks is unacceptable.

We are Americans and this idea of unifying together is our strength. We stand united against attacks. If we do it right, as we have learned not just throughout our country's history but in every aspect of our society—my college—high school coach used to talk about the five Ps: Proper preparation prevents poor performance. This, unfortunately, will so undermine our ability to secure ourselves, it is almost an insult that it will not even give proper funding to meet the weaknesses to the Secret Service, as we have seen their weaknesses exposed. As we go into a Presidential election, we must provide adequate security and protection for the next potential President.

This also harms our businesses as well. Take for example the E-Verify

system. This makes sure people who are hired by our companies do not have things in their background that would undermine our security. Those systems are harmed as well.

This is an example where petty politics and recklessness is being placed above people, policy, and reason. We as a nation have stood in unity after the most horrifying of attacks. We live in a world where we have seen diseases such as Ebola, where we have experienced cyber attacks, and where we have had to recover from vicious weather events such as Sandy. We live in a world where people seek to do us harm, and we should do nothing to weaken our ability to respond, to prepare, to make ourselves more resilient for any such occurrences. The urgency is upon us. We cannot be a reactive nation unified after the fact. We must be a proactive nation, working together, above politics, to do what is right for the strength and the security of our country.

I call for a clean bill in the critical, most important part, of our government to provide for the common defense. This is a time that should bring us together, not have us fall prey to every bit of Washington that people have grown tired and sick of. Let us pass a clean bill, as a bipartisan group of former Secretaries of Homeland Security has called for. This is not a time for recklessness; it is a time for reason. It is not a time for petty politics; it is time to put people first.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, yesterday the President of the United States released his budget. Unfortunately, it looks like the same old failed, top-down policies of the past. It is a government-knows-best approach that clings to more taxes, more spending, and bigger government. And it is exactly what the American people don't need.

If the past 6 years have demonstrated anything, it is that big government doesn't work. Six years of big-government policies have left the American people struggling.

Even the Vice President of the United States admits it. Speaking at the House Democrats' retreat last week, Vice President BIDEN said:

> To state the obvious, the past six years have been really, really hard for this country.

That is the truth. The recession officially ended more than 5 years ago, but the recovery has been weak and sluggish. Economic growth has lagged far behind the pace of other recoveries.

By this point in the Reagan recovery, the economy had created a staggering 11.8 million more private sector jobs than we have created since the recession ended.

Wage growth has remained stagnant under the Obama administration, while prices have risen. The average family health insurance premium has increased by over $3,000 since the President's health care law was passed. Household income has declined by more than $2,000 over the past 6 years. And too many Americans are unemployed or trapped in part-time jobs because they can't find full-time employment.

Over the past 6 years, middle-class families have had to work harder and harder just to stay in place. Getting ahead has started to seem like an impossible dream.

Republicans are committed to changing that. Providing relief to the middle class is the priority of America's new Congress. We intend to do it by eliminating the top-down, big-government policies of the past few years and replacing them with a new path focused on growing the economy from the ground up.

If big government programs tend to assume one thing, it is that government knows best. The government decides what it thinks you need, and then it makes you pay for it.

Well, Republicans don't believe government knows best. We believe the American people know best. And our goal is to get government off the backs of American families. We want to eliminate burdensome government programs and regulations and allow Americans to keep more of their hard-earned dollars. We want to leave Americans free to make the best decisions for their families about health care, about housing, and about everything in between. We want to make sure Americans live in an economy that provides the resources and opportunities they need to support their families and achieve their dreams. That is what we mean by fighting for people, not government, and we have already gotten started.

Senate Republicans just passed legislation to approve the Keystone XL Pipeline. This project is a win-win for Americans. It would support 42,000 jobs during construction. It would invest billions in the economy. It would bring in millions in revenue to State and local governments.

In my home State of South Dakota alone, the pipeline would bring in $20 million in tax revenue. That is a lot of funding for local priorities such as schools and teachers, law enforcement, roads, and bridges.

Finally, the Keystone Pipeline would substantially reduce our reliance on oil from unstable countries such as Russia, Venezuela, and Iran. That would be good news for American families' energy bills.

In addition to legislation to approve Keystone, Republicans have a number of other job-creating bills on the agenda.

The House of Representatives has already taken up legislation to make it easier for employers to hire veterans by exempting new veteran hires from ObamaCare's burdensome employer mandate. House Republicans have also taken up legislation to fix ObamaCare's 30-hour workweek rule, which is currently cutting workers' hours and wages by making it more difficult for employers to create or maintain full-time positions.

Republicans will also be releasing our own budget in the next few weeks, and it will be very different from President Obama's. First of all, our budget is going to balance. The President's budget never balances—ever—and that is not a sustainable path for our country. Families have to balance their budgets. They don't have a choice. The Federal Government should be no different.

The President tends to act as if the Federal Government is different, as if the fact that his new government programs have good intentions means he can somehow ignore the fact that the country can't afford them. But the Federal Government is just like any family or business or organization. If its budget isn't balanced, bad things happen.

Right now, the Federal Government is in debt to the tune of $18.1 trillion. That number is so large that it is practically unfathomable.

To put it in perspective, 18.1 trillion people are more than 2,540 times the total population of the Earth; 18.1 trillion miles is the distance to the Moon and back—almost 38 million times.

Needless to say, a debt that big is not a good thing—and the President's budget would keep adding to it. In fact, it would add another $8.5 trillion to the debt. That is not good news for future generations who will have to pay down the bills our generation is racking up.

Republicans' budget will balance. It will take aim at out-of-control Federal spending and address our massive Federal debt. Our budget will also cut waste to make the government more efficient, effective, and accountable to the American people. There is no excuse for wasting Americans' money on ineffective and duplicative programs.

The President's budget is about the past. Republicans' budget will be about the future. The American people sent a clear message in November that they were tired of the status quo in Washington. They were tired of gridlock. They were tired of the same old top-down, government-knows-best approach to governing.

Well, Republicans heard them. And since we took control of Congress a month ago, we have focused on living up to the trust the American people placed in us. We have gotten Washington working again.

In just 1 month, we have held more amendment votes than Democrats held in an entire year. Committees are back up and running, and Republicans and Democrats are getting the chance to make their constituents' voices heard.

We have passed job-creating legislation, and we are going to keep passing more. We are going to put forward the kind of budget the American people are looking for: a budget that balances, a

budget that targets wasteful Washington spending, and a budget that starts to address the massive debt that has accumulated under the Obama administration.

President Obama has a choice: He can continue to put forward the failed policies his budget offers, or he can move away from these policies and work with Republicans to start cleaning up the debt and getting government off the backs of the American people. We hope he will choose to work with us.

But whatever he chooses, though, Republicans will continue this Congress as we have begun: by getting Washington working again for American families.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I wish to join in the comments from my able and learned colleague from South Dakota to talk about what happened when the President yesterday released his budget for the next fiscal year.

I agree with my colleague from South Dakota that the President's spending is absolutely astonishing. The President wants to spend $4 trillion in 2016. That is $1 billion 4,000 times. Nobody has ever seen a budget that big before.

The New York Times ran an article right after the budget came out yesterday with the headline ''Liberal aspirations, set out as a budget.'' The article said:

> President Obama presented a budget on Monday that is more utopian vision than pragmatic blueprint.

The American people don't want a utopian vision. They want responsible leadership—responsible leadership that understands their needs and the challenges people face every day.

So far this year, all we have seen from the President is a list of ways he wants to spend taxpayers' hard-earned dollars. These ideas are so unrealistic, there has been no sign that the President actually wants to get anything done for the rest of his term. If the President wanted to get something done, what he would do is write a budget that spends a reasonable amount of money in a responsible way. If he wanted to get something done, he would offer responsible tax simplification.

Instead, the President of the United States asked for more taxes on hard-working American families. That is what he did when he said last month that he wanted to raise taxes on college savings plans. Millions of people use those plans to give their children a better future. When even Democrats in Congress told the President it was a terrible idea, the President finally had to relent and drop his plan.

Then came the State of the Union Address, and the President had more ideas for even additional new taxes. The Tax Policy Center analyzed those ideas, and they found that millions of middle-class families would pay even higher taxes under the President's plans. When they looked at families squarely in the middle of the middle class, they found that only about one in four of them would even get a tax break and, instead, twice as many families in the middle of the middle class—twice as many families—would see their taxes go up, and they would pay almost $300 more on average under President Obama's plan. How is that a good deal for hard-working taxpayers all across the country, for middle-class families?

Another study looked at some of the President's other plans for tax increases. It found those ideas would lead to a smaller economy and smaller incomes. How is that a good idea for the middle class?

Now we have the President's budget. Next year, he wants to increase spending by 7 percent over what Washington will spend this year. Did most Americans get a raise of 7 percent last year? Of course not. Under President Obama's economy, wages have been stagnant. Part-time workers are having their hours cut, their paychecks cut. Why? Because of the President's health care law. People are paying higher premiums, higher deductibles, higher copays for health insurance that meets all of President Obama's mandates but doesn't necessarily meet the needs for them and their families. President Obama still has not learned that every dollar Washington takes out of the pockets of hard-working taxpayers all across the country is a dollar they can't use for themselves, to spend, to save, to invest.

In his budget the President sent over yesterday, he wants to add another $474 billion to Washington's debt next year alone—see what the debt is, and he wants to add it to the debt on top of that. He wants another $8.5 trillion over the next decade. Every one of those numbers is right there in his budget, and every one of them is bad news for hard-working American taxpayers.

Americans aren't asking the President to add trillions of dollars to Washington's out-of-control spending and debt. They know they are the ones who are going to have to pay for this new spending. The President may not realize it, but the American taxpayer knows it.

The White House says it can add all of this new spending because the budget deficit this year, as they say, will only be $468 billion. That is how out of touch this administration is. The President sees a deficit of $468 billion—and that is adding it on top of the debt—and is declaring victory. He wants to celebrate by piling on more debt to spend on his priorities, not on the priorities of hard-working American families. That is not a victory.

Over the next 10 years, under President Obama's budget, the debt in Washington is going to climb to more than $26 trillion. That is $75,000 that each man, woman, and child in America would owe to pay off the debt President Obama is suggesting in his budget.

We have all of that debt, and the President's budget does nothing to preserve and protect Social Security. There is nothing to preserve and protect Social Security so it will be there for the next generation. Is that really the legacy President Obama wants to leave for America's young people?

At least the President will send his budget to Congress by the deadline this year. This is President Obama's seventh budget, and five of those he turned over after the legal deadline. Maybe the President should have taken a little more time to double check his math because the President's figures don't add up for the American people.

President Obama's economic policies have led to far less growth than we would have had following the recession. According to the latest numbers released on Friday, our economy grew by just 2.4 percent last year. That is not really what it should be, not for our country. We have tried President Obama's ideas for the last 6 years, and they have failed. They have failed the American people. This budget is more of the same ideas—more middle-class taxes, more spending, more debt. And Democrats in Congress didn't even offer a budget the past few years.

Republicans are ready to do the work of passing a responsible budget. We are going to pass a budget with commonsense spending that fits America's priorities, not Washington and President Obama's priorities. We will pass a budget that actually helps middle-class families thrive and our economy grow. We will pass a budget that takes control of Washington spending and starts to bring down President Obama's massive debt. Republicans in Congress understand that governing responsibly begins with budgeting responsibly. Instead of more new spending that middle-class, hard-working American families can't afford, we will balance the budget. We will cut waste and support programs that deliver real results.

That is what the President should have done. What he should have done is shown real leadership, not just more utopian vision. The President missed his chance to lead. Republicans will produce a budget that focuses on jobs, economic growth, and opportunity for all Americans.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The Senator from Louisiana.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I rise in strong support of moving to the Homeland Security appropriations bill. I hope we do that with a vote today. This is very important in terms of governing and in terms of passing an appropriations bill for a vital part of government.

It is also important to address and debate and vote head-on on President

Obama's illegal Executive amnesty, which he announced last December, which would basically give amnesty to about 5 million illegal aliens with no basis whatsoever in statutory law. In fact, statutory law is opposed to that sort of Executive action.

I find it ironic that the very same Members from the very same party and ideology that is constantly beating the drum and saying ''For God's sake, we can't shut down the government; we can't have that sort of showdown'' are apparently preparing to vote against even moving to this spending bill which is necessary to fund a vital part of the government. That makes no sense.

We need to move to this spending bill, debate it, and act on it. Not moving to the spending bill is a vote for a government shutdown in that area of the government, and I think that is irresponsible. We need to move to the spending bill which originated in the House. This is the House-passed spending bill for Homeland Security. We need to move to it.

Furthermore, as is evident from the last couple of weeks, we are going to have an open amendment process. There will be amendments offered and available to be debated and voted on that will have anything and everything with regard to this spending bill.

The House put several policy provisions in the spending bill, including those that I agree with, such as defunding this unconstitutional Executive amnesty from December. I agree with that, I support that, and I will certainly vote to support it. But the point is that there will be plenty of opportunity to vote on that and potentially remove that because we are going to have an open debate and amendment process—as we should—here on the Senate floor.

Let's move to this vital spending bill. Let's not threaten to shut down the government. Let's have the debate here on the floor, and let's vote. That is what we were elected to do. We were elected to represent our constituents, debate major issues of the day—and that certainly includes the President's Executive amnesty—and to vote.

If there is an effort to not allow us to even move to the bill to do that, I can only come to one conclusion: that folks voting that way for the most part support President Obama's illegal Executive amnesty, but they just don't want to have to say so, and they certainly don't want to have to vote that way. Well, sorry. You ran for the job, you asked for the job, and you got it. Let's do our job, which means putting the country's business on the floor of the Senate and acting one way or the other, debating, voting, proposing amendments, and moving on with this essential spending bill for this part of the government.

I will strongly support moving to the bill. That is the responsible thing to do. I will strongly support the provisions in the bill that the House enacted, including blocking the President's illegal Executive amnesty.

With regard to that, this is an important matter for two reasons. First of all, I believe this Executive amnesty is really bad policy that is going to grow the problem and not solve it. A fundamental rule in life is that when you reward something, you get more of it, not less of it, right? That is true of our Tax Code, and that is true in parenting. Well, we are rewarding illegal crossings. We are rewarding that flow of illegal immigrants. We are rewarding that through the President's Executive amnesty, and it is only going to produce more of it. That is my first objection to the policy. It is a very bad idea, and it is going to grow the problem, not decrease it.

My second objection is even more fundamental. I believe this action is clearly way beyond the President's Executive authority and way beyond his true powers under the Constitution. The Supreme Court has said many times that there is nothing that Congress has more clear and straightforward powers on than immigration policy, and it certainly includes anything like a major amnesty.

What the President did in December was not filling in the blanks of statutory laws or executing statutory law. What he did was completely contrary to all sorts of statutory law. Statutory law is clear. It is on the books. It has been passed through a valid process. It is clear that folks who enter the country illegally, break the law and are here illegally, are subject to removal and cannot work in the country legally.

In contrast to that clear statutory law, President Obama is first giving them authorization to stay here for at least 3 years, and that can be renewed. Secondly, he is handing them a document that he is making up out of thin air called a work permit which gives them authority to work even though that is clearly contrary to statutory law given the means by which they entered the country.

We need to put that issue and topic directly on the Senate floor and debate and act on that as well. As I suggested, the only way we do any of that is to first take a responsible vote and put the House spending bill on the Senate floor. To vote otherwise is to block a necessary spending bill, to basically threaten shutting down part of the government, and to avoid our responsibility in terms of debating and voting on the major issues of the day—to deal directly with that.

I urge all of my colleagues, Republicans and Democrats, to put this necessary bill on the floor, and then we will have an open and full debate, we will have an open amendment process, we will have all of the votes that go to this topic, and then we will act. That is what we should do, and that is what we were elected to do.

I thank the Presiding Officer and yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, elections in our representative form of government are supposed to have consequences, and if they don't have consequences, there is not much point of having elections.

One of the issues in the most recent election for Congress was a promise of some people running for office to overcome the President's constitutional actions, particularly what he did on immigration but on a lot of other things as well. The bill we have before us is a demonstration on the part of people who were victorious in that last election to deliver on the promises of that election.

So obviously I am here at this time to speak on the Department of Homeland Security appropriations that the Senate is considering today and, as the Senator from Louisiana just said, to urge my colleagues to support the efforts to move ahead.

In doing so, I wish to discuss what we are doing. This bill is about stopping the unilateral actions the President has taken with respect to the country's immigration laws, doing it without congressional approval or scrutiny. It is our responsibility to check the President and ensure that he does not go beyond the limits of his powers as defined in that basic document, the Constitution. This is about restoring the rule of law. This is about restoring the Constitution by denying that funds be utilized to carry out the President's improper, unconstitutional actions.

Our government is based on the rule of law. No one is above the law, not even those who were chosen to be leaders among the people. This core principle has kept us free and preserved our rights and liberties for over 200 years.

However, the rule of law in our country has slowly eroded away. While the current administration is not the only culprit of that corrosion of the rule of law, this administration has expedited its erosion more than others. That is the basis for the President saying: If Congress won't, I have a pen and a phone, and I will.

Let me explain this erosion. Under article II of the Constitution, the President ''shall take care that the laws be faithfully executed.'' This is not a permissive clause, letting the President pick and choose which laws he will enforce. The article uses the mandatory ''shall,'' which requires him to enforce all laws. However, the President has not done that. He has taken the attitude that he is above the law and is not required to obey it.

Just in the last couple of years we have seen President Obama's complete disregard for laws passed by Congress. Rather than enforcing the Affordable Care Act, he rewrote the deadlines prescribed by law. He has not enforced the Controlled Substance Act in some States and, even worse, has allowed them to openly defy Federal law.

He released five Taliban prisoners from Guantanamo without first providing 30 days' notice to Congress as required under the National Defense Authorization Act.

He unlawfully made four appointments to executive positions without authority under the appointments clause of the Constitution. In that regard, he was even overruled by two members he appointed to the Supreme Court in that 9-to-0 decision that says when the Constitution says only Congress can decide when a House is in session, the President can't say on some basis that they aren't in session and proceed to make recess appointments. In other words, what the judges said is that what the Constitution says is what it says. So he took unconstitutional action in making those appointments.

Lastly, he took the drastic step of changing immigration laws on the books without the authority or approval from Congress.

When the President acts in contravention to the law, he erodes the rule of law. He sets an example for future Presidents who will expand on his precedent and actions on other laws and policies they don't agree with. By doing this the President sends the message that the laws as written by the legislative branch aren't important, thereby removing and reducing faith in the rule of law.

The Founders understood the serious dangers of investing all powers of our government in a single body. They understood that because the Revolution was all about colonists being sick and tired of one man—George III—making decisions. So under the doctrine of separation of powers, they wrote into the Constitution dividing the power among three branches of government so one person could not be George III. They gave all legislative powers to the Congress, all Executive powers to the President, and all judicial powers to the judicial branch. No body of government may exercise the powers of other bodies of the government.

Separation of power then is fundamental to the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the United States enshrines the spirit of the Declaration of Independence, that we are endowed by our Creator, not by government, with certain inalienable rights.

Just last week during the nomination hearings of Loretta Lynch as Attorney General, we had an outstanding professor from George Washington Law School testify by the name of Jonathan Turley, and he said this: ''The Separation of Powers is the very core of our constitutional system and was designed not as a protection of the powers of the branches but a protection of liberty.''

We are endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, among them life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Founding Fathers knew that if the same body had all the powers, that body, no matter how large or small, would be tyrannical, as was George III.

However, President Obama has overreached the limits of his constitutional authority. He has blurred the lines of separation of powers.

The executive branch action taken with respect to our immigration laws is only the most recent, if not the most pervasive, of legislative actions he has taken under the proposition that I have a phone and a pen and I can do almost anything Congress isn't doing that I want them to do. In effect, the President has thwarted the immigration laws Congress has written in order to implement the policy he wants. Contrary to the laws on the books, the President's action would give people who have crossed the border illegally the right to remain in the United States and many taxpayer benefits that are only available to lawfully documented immigrants, as well as the right to work.

The President's action expanded a program he created without congressional approval, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals—or DACA as it is called—and created a new program, the deferred action of parents of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents—or DAPA—as it is called.

But under the Constitution only Congress has the authority to create these types of programs that grant a lawful status to people who have come here undocumented. Let me repeat: Congress has the responsibility of writing laws, not the President. I remind my colleagues that Congress considered a law that resembled the DACA Program, but it never passed that law. So what has the President done? In effect, he has enacted a law Congress rejected.

The President justifies his actions by saying ''Congress has failed.'' However, that doesn't give him license to act on his own. I wish to again quote Professor Turley:

> Our government requires consent and compromise to function. It goes without saying that when we are politically divided as a nation, less tends to get done. However, such division is no license to ''go it alone'' as the President has suggested.

The genius of our government is that it allows for the collection of ideas and opinions. It allows these different ideas and opinions to work together to find common ground. Once common ground is reached, then laws are enacted. The President doesn't represent that many different views in the country, but obviously Congressmen from all over this geographical area represent those views. Congressmen are elected by the people directly, and if there is a disagreement in Congress on how immigration should be handled, that means there is disagreement in the country on how immigration should be handled. The President cannot imagine that everyone agrees his plan is the best plan. It is the job of Congress to find compromises and solutions that most people can agree with and particularly in the U.S. Senate where it takes 60 votes to pass legislation. This is where consensus is built when there are only 54 Republicans and 46 Democrats. If we are going to get anything done, there has to be a consensus.

The other justification the President is fond of using for his actions is the executive branch's ability to exercise prosecutorial discretion, but while the President does have the authority to decide when to prosecute or where to allocate resources, that authority is not unlimited.

The President's actions with respect to immigration go far beyond prosecutorial discretion. Lawful prosecutorial discretion is exercised on a case-by-case basis. Lawful prosecutorial discretion isn't excluding entire categories of individuals in a blanket fashion and telling them that going forward the law will be applied to them.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator has expired.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I ask unanimous consent to proceed for 4 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRASSLEY. In addition, lawful prosecutorial discretion doesn't reward illegal behavior by conferring substantive benefits to those who have violated the law. Yet under the President's unilateral action, individuals who have entered without inspection or overstayed their visas unlawfully now will get work permits, Social Security numbers, driver's licenses, employment and education opportunities, and many other benefits only afforded to those who abide by the law.

Further, the President argues that because the Department doesn't have sufficient resources, he has exercised his prosecutorial discretion by prioritizing the removal of the most dangerous aliens for better security of our country. Yet the reality of his statement is that in fiscal year 2013, 36,007 criminal aliens were released. What is more, a report just issued by the Department of Homeland Security reveals that 1,000 of those criminal aliens have gone on to commit further crimes.

So the President isn't even doing what he says he is doing. Instead of removing criminals from our country as required by law, he is just releasing them back into the community so they can continue to commit further crimes and jeopardize public safety.

No matter how the President paints the picture, his Executive action on immigration is an abuse of constitutional duty to faithfully execute the law and an overreach of his executive branch authority under the separation of powers doctrine.

Under the Constitution, the Congress has several tools it can use to check the President and rein him in when he operates outside of the Constitution. Among the tools Congress has is the power of the purse. Congress appropriates funds and has the authority to

dictate where and how those funds may or may not be used. If the President exceeds the limits of his Executive authority to create an illegal program such as DACA or DAPA, Congress has the power to defund such a program.

The Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill is a check on the executive branch. It is a result of the last election, and elections are supposed to have consequences. This bill is our way of showing to the American people we are carrying out a campaign promise to make sure the President doesn't act in an unconstitutional way and abuse his authority.

So I ask my colleagues to take this under serious consideration when deciding whether to vote in favor or against proceeding to this bill.

I yield the floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

CLAY HUNT SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR AMERICAN VETERANS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of H.R. 203, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 203) to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 12 noon will be equally divided in the usual form.

The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I thank Senator GRASSLEY for his remarks. As chairman of the Judiciary Committee and a longtime vigorous leader in the U.S. Senate, I know he was here and saw the problems of the 1986 amnesty. It had bad ramifications in a lot of ways. I believe if we listened to the experience of Senator GRASSLEY and his understanding of what is at stake, we would all be in a lot better shape than we are today.

The American people want a lawful system of immigration. They want one that is fair to applicants who want to come to America. They are not for eliminating immigration to America. They want a system that allows people to apply, wait their turn, and if they are qualified, be admitted; if they don't qualify, not be admitted. They want that enforced. They don't believe we should have open borders and open visa programs that allow people by the millions to come unlawfully into this country. The President obviously has a different view. As a result, we are in a situation in which the Constitution is at stake in a lot of ways.

We will vote after lunch on moving forward to the Department of Homeland Security bill. The Department of Homeland Security bill, passed by the House of Representatives, fully funds the Department of Homeland Security. The basic funding mechanisms and agreements and allocations of money in that legislation were approved on a bipartisan basis. The House of Representatives simply said: Mr. President, the money in the Department of Homeland Security funding mechanism will be spent for lawful purposes. That money will be spent to secure the homeland in an effective way. That money, however, will not be spent by anyone to take actions outside the lawful limitations and lawful powers of the Department of Homeland Security. But that is what the President wanted to do, and that is what he wants to do through his Executive action.

They are now leasing a new building across the river in Crystal City. They are hiring 1,000 new Federal employees. Those Federal employees will be processing the applications for up to 5 million people and they will be providing those people with photo IDs. These are people in the country unlawfully. They are not lawfully allowed to work in America. Businesses aren't allowed to hire people who are here unlawfully.

It is plain and simple. They are not eligible to qualify for Social Security or Medicare. So the President has declared he is going to set up this office. They will process these individuals, and they will provide up to 5 million photo IDs, 5 million Social Security numbers, and the right to work in America. They will be allowed to participate in Social Security and Medicare.

He says: I am entitled to do that. Well, he is not entitled to do that. As scholar after scholar and as common sense tells us, the President doesn't have that power. That is what this is about.

The House barred any spending on this unlawful activity—an activity the President asked Congress to allow him to do and which Congress rejected. This proposal was presented to Congress, and Congress refused to pass it. But he is doing it anyway. It is an arrogant overreach, a direct challenge to the historic role of Congress in our American system.

Our Democratic colleagues say they don't want controversial immigration riders on this bill—controversial immigration riders. In other words, they don't want the Congress to do what it is required to do—fund the programs it believes need to be funded and not fund programs it doesn't believe should be funded.

As a matter of policy, Congress has not adopted and does not support what the President wants to do. In fact, it has prohibited it. It has no duty whatsoever to allow the President to spend moneys of the United States of America to advocate a program they don't approve of, or certainly one that is unlawful. That is what this is all about. Our colleagues are voting to block the bill that would fund Homeland Security at the level the President has asked for. So there is no policy change here. Every lawful activity of Homeland Security is funded.

There was a headline in the New York Times today. I am going to push back a little on my colleagues because they have been spinning this idea that somehow the Republican House, in sending this legislation over that funded Homeland Security, is disrupting the fair flow and causing controversies within our funding mechanisms of Congress. The headline from an experienced reporter's article in today's New York Times is: ''Democrats Look to Protect Obama's Immigration Directives.''

That is exactly what this is about, colleagues. At least seven of our Democratic colleagues have explicitly said they don't agree with the policy of the President with regard to Executive amnesty and providing work permits and Social Security to people unlawfully here. But they are now united. We are told all of them are going to stand together to protect President Obama's immigration directives.

When they were running for office during the campaign last fall, people were saying they didn't agree with him. Now, when the issue hits the floor and we have an opportunity to do the normal and rational thing and not fund an unlawful policy, they are all sticking together like a palace guard around the White House to protect Obama's immigration directives. This is a sad thing and a disappointing thing to me. The article goes on to say:

Democrats are hoping they can force the new Republican majority to drop the immigration provisions and send the $40 billion spending bill to the President.

Congress is spending $40 billion on homeland security. All of that money is directed to legitimate lawful policies of Homeland Security and not allowing any of it to be spent on unlawful, unapproved policies in Homeland Security—an absolute power that Congress has, a duty that it has. Congress is violating its fundamental duty if it allows the President to carry out power he is not authorized. It is absolutely violating its duty if it supports and funds actions by the President to violate the law. It has a duty to say no to the President who overreaches.

The article goes on to say:

But Democrats have decided to shut down debate on the measure altogether, fearful that it could lead to the bill's approval and could prompt negotiations with the House that would put them at a disadvantage.

Fearful that the process could lead to the bill's approval during negotiations

with the House—isn't that what legislation is all about? Isn't that what it is all about? Shouldn't our colleagues have the right, if they don't like the language that constricts the President's power to carry on this unlawful act, to offer an amendment to strip it out? They have the ability to strike that language. Why don't they do that? No, they are blocking even moving to the bill in its entirety. Then they are attempting one of the most through-the-looking-glass, down-the-rabbit-hole arguments you have ever heard. They are saying Republicans are shutting down Homeland Security when they are not passing the bill that is on the floor today and we will be voting on. They are rejecting it. All it does is fund the Department of Homeland Security at a level agreed upon on a bipartisan basis, $40 billion.

What kind of world are we in when we do that? I would like to ask who is being protected here. The answer is clear. The New York Times said: They are protecting President Obama's political immigration directives.

I would ask this. Isn't it our duty to protect the Constitution? Isn't it our duty to protect the laws of the United States of America? Isn't it our duty to protect American workers from the decline in wages and their job prospects as a result of now legalizing 5 million people to be able to take any job whatsoever in the entire American economy, including working for the county commission, the power company, the trucking companies?

Isn't that what our duty is? Who should we be protecting here? Shouldn't we be protecting a lawful system of immigration?

But the President wants to take money. He wants Congress to appropriate money to give him at Homeland Security so he can spend it to undermine the law of the United States of America. What an unthinkable thing that is. But that is fundamentally what is happening. He wants and is demanding that this Congress not follow its promises to the American people—not follow its lawful and constitutional duty—but to give him the money so he can carry out a policy in contradiction to the laws of the United States of America and to the good policy of America. This is the way we do business in this country.

I think the reason our Democratic colleagues don't want to move to the bill is because they don't want to debate the substance of it. That is not a good reason. They don't want to debate the substance of it because their position is untenable. The American people understand that Congress is not shutting down the government and is not shutting down Homeland Security. Our Democratic colleagues are the ones that are refusing to pass the legislation that would fund Homeland Security. The President is backing them up and encouraging them, and apparently he has had success. He twisted arms or something because at least seven of the Members said they didn't agree with this, and more probably would have, had they been asked. But no, not now. Now they are all standing together with Senator REID, the minority leader of the Senate, to advocate this policy.

I don't appreciate it being said time and again by so many of our Democratic colleagues and the President that somehow Congress is acting improperly and that Congress is not funding Homeland Security. This is through the looking glass. This is beyond acceptance. I think the New York Times pretty well said it correct. I don't believe the media is buying this argument. I don't think the American people are buying this argument, and Congress shouldn't buy the argument. The right thing to do, colleagues, is to get on the bill.

Let me say this to my Democratic colleagues. I know many of you are uneasy about this. Let's get on the legislation. There will be amendments. There will be a number of amendments. Perhaps things could develop in a way that you can support them. We will protect the lawful constitutional powers of Congress and fund Homeland Security. We will do it in a way that strengthens the rule of law in America and strengthens our ability to have integrity in the immigration system. It creates a system the American people rightfully have demanded, pleaded for, and prayed for, and that Congress and the politicians have failed to produce for now over 40 years. That is the problem. The American people are angry, and they are not angry at immigrants. All of us have friends and relatives and neighbors who have immigrated to America. We are not against immigrants. I think there is a growing unease out there about the willful refusal of Congress to do what it takes to fix this system.

I would just say one more thing. American wages are down. Wages fell in December 5 cents an hour—not a good event after we have been told everything is getting so much better. There is a limit, colleagues, to how many people we can bring to America to take jobs when we have a limited number of jobs and falling wages.

We have the lowest percentage of Americans in the workforce working today since the 1970s. Things aren't going good. We can't accept everybody in the whole world to take jobs here.

We just had a report produced yesterday that said we have now discovered there are another 5 million people who have been—it looks to me—admitted to work in the country unlawfully. Through the Freedom of Information Act, it was discovered that not only do we have a million people a year come to America with green cards and permanent residency, we have 700,000 guest workers that come every year. Add to that the asylees, plus the refugees and other people. What they found out was we have now—in the last 5 years under this administration—given work authorization to 5 million more people than anybody knew. Do we think this doesn't impact people's wages, impact women to have a better job, their children to have a better job?

Somebody needs to be thinking about this. There is a limit here, and it is obvious the limits need to be discussed. We need to create a lawful system which protects American workers. We need to be less concerned about protecting President Obama's unlawful directives and more concerned with protecting the interests of the American working person.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for such time as I may consume.

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

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, today I rise to speak on the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act, a most important piece of legislation. I would like to thank Senator ISAKSON in particular for expediting this legislation through the Veterans' Affairs Committee. I admire his leadership. I admire his commitment to the veterans of America. It has been a pleasure to know him and to serve in the Senate with an advocate for our American veterans.

I would also like to thank Senator BLUMENTHAL, whose partnership I have been with for a long period of time. Without his leadership and support, this legislation would not be coming to the floor.

Every day approximately 22 American veterans commit suicide, totaling over 8,000 veteran suicides each year. I repeat: 8,000 veteran suicides each year. It is evident by these staggering numbers that our military and veterans affairs programs are not effectively treating post-traumatic stress disorder, known as PTSD, and other mental health illnesses that can lead to suicide. There are too many disconnected and ineffective treatment programs, and as a result our service men and women are suffering from the bureaucracy.

Against this backdrop, I wish to highlight the story of Clay Hunt, for whom this proposed legislation is named. Clay enlisted in the Marine Corps in May of 2005, deployed to Al Anbar Province near Fallujah in January 2007.

During that deployment Clay Hunt was shot in the wrist by a sniper's bullet that barely missed his head, a wound for which he received a Purple Heart. Despite having been wounded, Clay Hunt volunteered and graduated from Marine Corps Scout Sniper School in March 2008.

After another deployment to Afghanistan, Clay was honorably discharged from the marines in April 2009. After returning home, Clay suffered from the effects of PTSD for many years and struggled with inadequate care at his

local VA hospital. Subsequently, Clay took his own life in March 2011 at the age of 28. Clay is only one example of veterans who are trying to make their way in our country today, but who suffer, more so than they have to, because of Department of Defense and Department of Veterans Affairs mismanagement of resources for suicide prevention and mental health treatment.

This bipartisan bill will lay the foundation for improved mental health care and better suicide prevention resources for our American servicemembers. Specifically, this bill would require an independent evaluation of existing suicide prevention programs at the DOD and VA, gauge their effectiveness, and make recommendations for consolidation, elimination, or improvement.

Additionally, this legislation would establish a new single Web site that provides information for veterans regarding available mental health care services, create a pilot loan repayment program to recruit more psychiatrists to treat veterans at the VA, improve the exchange of training best practices and other resources among the VA and nonprofit mental health organizations, create a community outreach pilot program to assist with and mitigate the stressors of servicemembers transitioning to civilian life, and provide a 1-year extension for certain combat veterans to enroll in the VA.

Our Nation has a moral obligation to identify, resource, and make available to our veterans effective forms of treatment to help eliminate suicide resulting from severe combat-related psychological trauma. This bill is an important step to improve the care we provide to the men and women who have sacrificed for all of us and to whom we are forever indebted. We owe it to these brave men and women to act now.

Obviously I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this legislation.

THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET

Mr. President, I would like to briefly discuss the President's budget request for fiscal year 2016 as it relates to the Veterans' Administration. In this year's budget request, the President has stated he will submit legislation to reallocate part of the funding for the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014, legislation he signed into law just last August, to other programs within the VA.

In other words, he wants to take money from the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act and put it into other programs within the VA—a bill we just passed last August. It clearly suggests that the President of the United States is disconnected from the needs of our veterans and he may be more solicitous about supporting a bloated, demonstrably dysfunctional bureaucracy than ensuring that quality care is available to our veterans.

Our veterans have suffered long enough with wait times and scheduling delays at the VA, and deserve to have the right to choose where and when they get their health care. Taking funding away from this legislation, especially the choice card, shows a complete disregard for our veterans' well-being and the service they provide to our country.

If or when this legislative proposal comes to the Hill, I would urge my colleagues to vote against it—in fact, not even consider it.

I want to thank my colleagues. I am sure we will have an overwhelming vote today. I think it is an important step forward.

I would like to thank all of the veterans organizations and veterans advocates who have made the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention Act for American Veterans a reality. But I would also like to urge my colleagues to understand that this problem, this serious problem, of 8,000 veteran suicides each year is not going away anytime soon. So do not believe the passage of this legislation will somehow be a cure-all. That can only come through long and persistent efforts and care and concern for our veterans who have given so much to their country. So I am very honored to be a part of this legislation.

Again, I want to thank the chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and the ranking member, Senator SANDERS. I would like to thank Senator BURR, who was ranking member previously.

My friends, we have a long way to go. We have a lot of young men who have not been able to come all the way home. It is our job and our obligation to do everything we possibly can not only to honor them but to see that they have a safe and secure future, and one in which the thought of suicide would never be any consideration.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I rise today to express my strong support for the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans—SAV—Act, of which I am a cosponsor.

This bill addresses a true public health crisis facing our Nation's military members and veterans: suicide. You see, an estimated 22 veterans commit suicide every day. According to data from the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, young veterans are particularly at risk, dying by suicide more often than both Active-Duty troops and civilians. In fact, the Department of Defense, DOD, reports that in 2012 and 2013 more veterans died by committing suicide than died in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. This is a serious problem that must be addressed.

The legislation being considered today is named for a marine who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and who committed suicide in 2011. He was 28. After being honorably discharged from the Marine Corps, Clay Hunt sought VA medical care for post-traumatic stress disorder. He constantly voiced concerns about the care he was receiving, both in terms of scheduling and the treatment received, which consisted solely of medication.

Clay decided to move closer to his family but had to wait months to see a psychiatrist at the VA medical center. After the appointment, Clay called his mother on his way home and told her that the VA is way too stressful of a place and that he can't go back. Two weeks later, Clay took his own life. Despite Clay Hunt's proactive and open approach to seeking care to address his injuries, the VA system did not adequately address his needs.

Unfortunately, this story is far too common. In 2014, Jeremy Sears, a Camp Pendleton, CA, marine who survived several tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, also took his own life after struggling to receive adequate care from the San Diego VA Medical Center. It took the VA 16 months to respond to Jeremy's disability claim. After the long wait, Jeremy received a letter that he had been denied all disability payments, despite reporting symptoms of traumatic brain injury and hearing loss from his military service. The 35-year-old former Camp Pendleton marine tragically took his own life almost 2 years after being discharged from service.

These tragedies are unacceptable, and it is our moral duty to ensure that the men and women who bravely serve our country have access to the mental health care needed to address serious mental health conditions like depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

What does this bill do? The SAV Act is an important bill that will improve the delivery of mental health care to veterans and will address obstacles in the VA and DOD health care systems.

Under this bill, special care and attention will be given to service personnel transitioning from Active-Duty to veteran status through community outreach and peer support groups. The legislation also calls for a one-stop Web site with suicide prevention resources for veterans. In addition, to make recruitment of mental health professionals easier, the bill creates new incentives for psychiatrists who agree to serve at the VA. Both Department of Defense and VA suicide-prevention programs will also be required to be evaluated each year to increase accountability and improve care. Lastly, this bill empowers the VA to collaborate with Veteran Service Organizations and nonprofit mental health organizations to combat veteran suicide.

Suicide is a deadly epidemic for veterans that the Federal Government must address. This bill will be a starting point, by requiring the VA to prioritize suicide prevention. However, Congress must continue to work to address this critical public health issue,

and I hope this will be one of many steps we will take to prevent veteran and military suicides.

I urge all of my colleagues to support the passage of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans, SAV, Act.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I remain strongly committed to our veterans and their families. When America sends our men and women to war, we vow to care for them when they return. However, throughout the Nation, we have seen reports of our veterans enduring long wait times, substandard quality of care, and a lack of transparency at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

In my great State of Oklahoma, we have a large population of veterans at roughly 340,000. From 2005–2012, there was an increase of 34 percent in the annual veteran suicide rate in Oklahoma, totaling 1,018 veteran suicide deaths. An average of 127 deaths per year is not acceptable. We must help our veterans get access to the best mental health and suicide prevention programs.

I believe the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for Americans bill will provide opportunities for the VA to work collaboratively with local community organizations and require an evaluation of the various mental health care programs to identify the efficiencies or lack thereof. It will also allow the VA to compete in recruiting the necessary staff for the mental health care and suicide prevention programs. We cannot allow VA psychiatry positions to remain open for long periods of time, and the education loan repayment pilot program will assist the VA in attracting the much needed psychiatrists to support those currently employed with the abundant workload. With this bill, Congress will exercise its constitutional right to oversight of the VA while requiring the Department to use the resources it already has.

Freedom is not free. Many of our veterans and their families have paid and continue to pay the price for us and our great Nation. It is our duty to honor the promises made to them in return for their sacrifices.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I have spoken repeatedly on this floor about the cost of war. In doing so, I have tried to remind the American people and my colleagues that the cost of war does not end when the last shots are fired and the last missiles launched. The cost of war is very, very expensive not just in dollars and cents but in terms of human life and human suffering.

The cost of war in Iraq and Afghanistan is almost 7,000 dead. Nearly 52,000 servicemembers have returned with physical wounds; however, more than 200,000 service men and women are seeking treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury.

The cost of war is nearly 1,600 servicemembers who face amputations, to include a number of with multiple amputations.

The cost of war is veterans returning home unable to find jobs and get their feet back on the ground financially.

The cost of war is high divorce rates and the impact that family stress has on children.

The cost of war is mothers losing their children to suicide.

Late last session the Veterans' Affairs Committee heard from two mothers—Valerie Pallotta from Vermont and Susan Selke from Texas—whose lives have been forever changed because of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The experience these two mothers shared with the committee goes well beyond anything I can put into words. They shared powerful stories about their own cost of war—the tragic suicides of their sons following their return from combat. They talked about their sons' struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder and efforts to seek help from the Department of Veterans Affairs. It is with the stories shared by these mothers in mind that I come to the floor today.

As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I worked hard to listen to and address concerns brought to my attention by veterans, their family members and advocates within the military and veterans' community.

The ideas in the bill under consideration—which will be voted on shortly—are the result of the work of the families and friends of those who have committed suicide, advocates, and countless others who continue to search and fight for solutions to address the staggering rate of suicide among veterans.

This bill is a good start. Everyone needs to be thanked for their efforts, especially the mothers who came before our committee and shared their thoughts on mental health and suicide.

But, we can never do too much in the area of veterans' mental health and suicide. That is why I intend to pursue additional enhancements at another time. I do not want to slow down the bill we will be voting on today—but I want my colleagues to recognize that much, much more needs to be done to assist veterans and families struggling with either their own mental health conditions or a loved ones' mental health condition. We can never do enough.

Briefly, let me tell you what additional provisions I will be pursing at a later time.

Currently, returning veterans have 5 years from their date of discharge to enroll in the VA health care system and receive free health care for their medical conditions resulting from their service.

The bill we are voting on today would provide an additional 1-year window during which VA can provide health care for veterans whose eligibility for the initial 5-year period has lapsed.

Now, is that exactly what I wanted? No. I think the period of eligibility for health care at VA following separation from service should be 10 years.

We hear time and time again that for many veterans, problems do not necessarily manifest until years after they have returned from war. Then it might take some time before they actually seek assistance at VA. However, recognizing the importance of getting this legislation to the President's desk as soon as possible, I intend to pursue that provision at another time.

During her testimony before this committee last session, Valerie Pallotta, the mother of a veteran who succumbed to suicide, talked about her desire to see complementary and alternative medicine opportunities expanded at VA.

While VA has made significant strides in providing complementary and alternative medicine at VA medical centers, access to such services is not standardized across VA. I commend VA's current efforts, but more must be done.

I will pursue expanding access to complementary and alternative medicine at another time, so that we can increase the likelihood that veterans will get the care that not only meets their needs, but their personal preferences, as well.

We have also heard that families, who are caring for loved ones with mental health conditions, are highly stressed and looking for resources to help their loved ones. At the moment, VA has only limited capacity to offer support and education to family members and caregivers of veterans with mental health conditions. This is an issue I will pursue in the near-future.

We could never do too much to help veterans and their family members after these veterans return from war. As I said earlier, this bill is a good start—but we have much more to do.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I know we are close to a vote on the Clay Hunt suicide prevention bill. As chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, who has just left the Veterans' Administration this morning after a 3-hour meeting with employees, I want to tell all of the Members of the Senate how much I appreciate their commitment to this bill, how much I would appreciate their vote in favor of this bill.

Every day in America, 22 veterans commit suicide. Every year in America, 8,000 veterans commit suicide. Eight thousand is more than all who have lost their lives in Iraq and Afghanistan over the last 13 years. Suicide is a critical problem in the VA. The Clay Hunt bill focuses and targets on what we need: more psychiatric care, more accountability in the VA, and an investment in the future of our soldiers who have come home after defending our country for ourselves.

As chairman of the committee, I want to thank Senator MCCAIN, Senator BLUMENTHAL, Senator BOOZMAN, and Senator BURR for their tremendous effort and work to bring this about. I want to thank the members of the committee who unanimously passed

this out, including the Presiding Officer, in the very first meeting of the Veterans' Affairs Committee.

I encourage every Member of the Senate to vote for the Clay Hunt suicide prevention bill and make an investment in the future of the lives we will save of our veterans who return with mental health problems.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I want to begin by thanking Chairman ISAKSON for giving the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act the priority it needs and deserves. I know the Presiding Officer, as a veteran, understands and supports the vital mission of this legislation.

I also want to thank the veterans service organizations, particularly the IAVA, for the critical role they have played in heightening awareness and educating the American public about the scourge that veteran suicide reflects in our society, the unacceptable 22 veterans who commit suicide every day in the greatest, strongest Nation in the history of the world.

Our veterans all too often succumb to the invisible wounds and inner demons that come home with them. They lack the mental health care they need and deserve because the VA lacks the resources to provide that health care.

I know the VA is committed to do better. Senator ISAKSON and I have just returned from 3 hours at the VA, where we heard the Secretary, as well as his top-ranking staff, commit to using this act as a means of enhancing and increasing the quality and quantity of mental health care our veterans deserve. Far too many of our veterans have succumbed to suicide, including a friend of mine, Justin Eldridge, whose widow Joanna was my guest at the State of the Union.

She has struggled in the wake of his death with their children to survive this tragedy. Her courage and strength mirror those same qualities of bravery and fortitude demonstrated by Susan Selke who testified before our committee about her son Clay Hunt, for whom this bill is named. My hope is we can continue this bipartisan work together.

I thank Senator MCCAIN, the cosponsor of this bill, and hope we keep faith with all of our veterans and make the VA the pioneer and champion of mental health care so we end the scourge of veteran suicide in this great Nation.

I urge my colleagues to vote in favor of this measure.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask for a vote to be called, and I ask that it be a rollcall vote on the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act.

I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The bill was ordered to a third reading and was read the third time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

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

The result was announced—yeas 99, nays 0, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 50 Leg.]

YEAS—99

Alexander	Fischer	Murray
Ayotte	Flake	Nelson
Baldwin	Franken	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Perdue
Bennet	Gillibrand	Peters
Blumenthal	Graham	Portman
Blunt	Grassley	Reed
Booker	Hatch	Reid
Boozman	Heinrich	Risch
Boxer	Heitkamp	Roberts
Brown	Heller	Rounds
Burr	Hirono	Rubio
Cantwell	Hoeven	Sanders
Capito	Inhofe	Sasse
Cardin	Isakson	Schatz
Carper	Johnson	Schumer
Casey	Kaine	Scott
Cassidy	King	Sessions
Coats	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cochran	Lankford	Shelby
Collins	Leahy	Stabenow
Coons	Lee	Sullivan
Corker	Manchin	Tester
Cornyn	Markey	Thune
Cotton	McCain	Tillis
Crapo	McCaskill	Toomey
Cruz	McConnell	Udall
Daines	Menendez	Vitter
Donnelly	Merkley	Warner
Durbin	Mikulski	Warren
Enzi	Moran	Whitehouse
Ernst	Murkowski	Wicker
Feinstein	Murphy	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Kirk

The bill (H.R. 203) was passed.

RECESS

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

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:32 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, as we begin this debate on funding for the Department of Homeland Security, we face some fundamental questions: Are we going to prioritize the safety and security of the American people? Or are we going to put the country at risk because of an ideological disagreement?

That is the choice I believe we face with this bill. We can either pass a clean bill that makes critical investments in our Nation's security or we can put this country at risk by playing politics with the funding for the Department of Homeland Security.

We all know these are dangerous times that we live in. Every day, new threats emerge that endanger our citizens at home and our allies abroad. The Department of Homeland Security's role in protecting our country from these threats cannot be overstated, and its funding should not be controversial.

Right now, the U.S. law enforcement community is on high alert for terror threats after attacks in Sydney, Australia, and Ottawa, Canada, and in Paris. Just 2 weeks ago, an Ohio man was arrested when authorities discovered he was plotting to blow up the U.S. Capitol in an ISIS-inspired plan. I believe, as the Presiding Officer understands, the man was from Ohio.

ISIS has thousands of foreign fighters, including Americans, among their ranks who seek to return to their home countries to do harm—not to mention the barbarity of ISIS today in killing the Jordanian pilot whom they had in their custody.

These are very real threats—a clear and present danger to the homeland—and because they are so real, we need our counterterrorism intelligence community operating at full strength. We need the entire Department of Homeland Security fully engaged in keeping our Nation safe.

Last week, President Bush's two Homeland Security Secretaries, Tom Ridge and Michael Chertoff, joined former DHS Secretary Janet Napolitano in a letter to Congress. The three of them wrote:

> The national security role that the Department of Homeland Security plays . . . is critical to ensuring that our nation is safe from harm. . . . It is imperative that we ensure that DHS is ready, willing, and able to protect the American people . . . we urge you not to risk funding for the operations that protect every American and pass a clean DHS funding bill.

All three former Secretaries—two of whom served under a Republican President and one under a Democratic President—are warning us that the safety and security of our Nation are at risk if we hold up funding for Homeland Security operations.

Anything short of passing a clean funding bill will endanger important security operations and could very well put our citizens at risk. But because of the anti-immigration riders that have been attached by House Republicans, the bill we are about to vote on cannot become law. Senate Democrats are not going to support it. The President has already said he will veto it. And, furthermore, according to the nonpartisan

Congressional Budget Office, the bill also adds $7.5 billion to the deficit.

Last week, Senator MIKULSKI and I introduced a clean bill that is modeled after the bicameral, bipartisan agreement that was negotiated last December by Senator MIKULSKI, who was then chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Congressman HAL ROGERS, then chair of the House Appropriations Committee. The bipartisan bill negotiated by Senator MIKULSKI and Congressman ROGERS is a good bill. It is in line with the Murray-Ryan budget deal. It will help keep our Nation safe and secure, funding key counterterrorism, intelligence, and law enforcement activities, and will also strengthen the protections on our borders.

So our position on this issue is clear: Congress needs to pass a clean, full-year funding bill without any controversial immigration riders that are not going to be able to gain support, that the President has already said he is going to veto. It is that simple. There is too much at stake for the security of our Nation to play politics with this bill.

Before I conclude, I would note again that the House-passed Department of Homeland Security funding bill includes several immigration-related provisions that draw budget points of order against the bill. According to the Congressional Budget Office, the immigration-related provisions would increase the deficit by $7.5 billion over 10 years. In addition, the bill includes language relating to the budgetary treatment of these provisions. The result is multiple points of order that would not apply to the bill if the immigration provisions had not been added.

Mr. President, I have a parliamentary inquiry: Does a budget point of order lie against H.R. 240 pursuant to section 311(a)(2)(B) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair is advised that the point of order lies.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Does a budget point of order lie against the bill pursuant to section 311(a)(3) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair is advised that the point of order does lie.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. And does a budget point of order lie against the bill pursuant to section 306 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair is advised again that the budget point of order does lie.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Who seeks recognition?

The Senator from North Dakota.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I rise to highlight the importance of voting yes to proceed to the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill for 2015, H.R. 240. This bill, which has passed the House, is necessary to protect our borders, fight terrorism, and defend communities under threat from natural disasters. The list of national security-related programs this bill provides resources for is long, but before I speak to those programs in greater detail, I will reinforce the importance of proceeding to this DHS appropriations bill.

DHS's funding expires on February 27. To my colleagues on the other side of the aisle who do not want to proceed to this bill, I would just point out, we need to take up this DHS appropriations funding bill and debate it—to let the Senate do its work.

We just passed a Keystone bill after the consideration of more than 40 amendments. At the end of the day, we were able to produce a bill that garnered 62 votes. I urge my colleagues to let the Senate do its business. Vote yes on cloture on the motion to proceed.

Now I would like to walk through some of the things this bill funds. I want to remind my colleagues how critical these DHS operations are to the economic prosperity, public safety, and security of the American people.

The bill provides $39.67 billion in net discretionary appropriations plus $6.4 billion in disaster funding.

Let's take a look at some of the critical security functions this bill provides.

The bill provides $10.7 billion for Customs and Border Protection—an increase of $119 million over fiscal year 2014. It supports record levels of personnel, tactical infrastructure, technology, and air and marine assets, including 21,370 Border Patrol agents; 23,775 Customs and Border Protection officers; miles of fencing and border roads; fixed and mobile surveillance and detection technology; aircraft and vessels outfitted with the latest sensor technology, as well as unmanned aerial systems; reused technology from the Department of Defense, such as tethered aerostat radar systems.

The bill also includes funding for a biometric exit pilot program in airports in 2015, as well as improvements to the Department's biometric system to support exit implementation in the future.

The bill provides $5.96 billion for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, ICE—an increase of $689 million over fiscal year 2014, which is a 13-percent increase.

It holds the administration's feet to the fire by maintaining a record 34,000 adult detention beds.

It responds to the recent flood of families coming across our border by significantly increasing family detention beds from 96 to 3,828.

It provides increases for the criminal alien program and for fugitive operations, both of which are critical to identifying, apprehending, and removing the criminals that the administration claims are a priority.

The bill provides increases for Homeland Security Investigations to combat human trafficking, cyber crime, child exploitation, and drug smuggling.

It also includes $50 million for the Visa Security Program and supports enforcement to address visa overstays.

In addition, the bill provides strong support for the Secret Service, an organization that requires reform and congressional oversight, given recent incidents, with $81 million above fiscal year 2014.

In addition to funding increases associated with preparations for the 2016 campaign season, the bill provides $25 million to begin addressing security needs at the White House complex.

Recognizing the need for a state-of-the-art biosafety level 4 research facility to prepare for and respond to animal-borne and other biologic threats, this bill provides the funding necessary to construct the National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility.

The bill provides more than $10 billion for the Coast Guard. It continues our commitment to recapitalization of the Coast Guard fleet, including funding the 8th National Security Cutter. And it takes a serious step to address nearer term heavy ice breaker needs with $8 million for preserving the Polar Sea.

The bill supports our cyber security efforts as a nation, both protecting government systems and working with the private sector to share threat information and protective measures.

Since homeland security is a national effort, the bill continues funding for grant programs to State and local firefighters, emergency managers, and law enforcement—$467 million for State homeland security grants, including $55 million for Operation Stonegarden related to border security; $800 million for the Urban Area Security Initiative, port security grants, and transit security grants; $680 million for fire assistance grants; $350 million for Emergency Management Program grants.

For research and development efforts, funding is provided consistent with fiscal year 2014 levels. The Science and Technology Directorate supports research and development at our national labs, with our university partners, and in the private sector to meet homeland security needs.

The bill also provides for aviation security screening operations by the TSA, law enforcement training needs by the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and E-Verify, which supports businesses across the United States in hiring legal workers.

Finally, the bill provides the requested almost $7 billion for the Disaster Relief Fund to assist with recovery costs for communities hit by natural disasters.

What the bill does not fund is the President's Executive actions. The House bill includes several amendments that are targeted at reversing the President's actions and articulating priorities for immigration enforcement.

The President's actions overstepped his authority. His actions put illegal immigrants ahead of legal immigrants who are hoping to be a part of the American dream, who are following and respecting the Nation's laws.

The immigration system is broken, but it cannot be fixed through Executive actions that exceed the President's authority. Instead, it should be accomplished through legislative reforms that start with border security, do not provide amnesty, and respect the rule of law.

I leave my colleagues with this thought: We need to support these vital national security programs. Vote yes on cloture on the motion to proceed to this bill, and let's get to work.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, will my colleague yield for a question?

Mr. HOEVEN. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire is recognized.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I certainly appreciate Senator HOEVEN, who chairs the Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, for laying out the case for the importance of the funding for critical security agencies in this bill—for the Coast Guard, for Customs and Border Patrol, for efforts to address security at our border, for cyber security.

As the Senator pointed out, there is a lot of very important funding in this bill to address homeland security. I wonder if the Senator agrees with me that we should support the funding of this bill and that if we are going to have a debate about the President's Executive actions, it should be a separate debate on immigration rather than putting at risk the funding in this bill to protect our Nation.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, I would like to respond to my colleague from the State of New Hampshire. I thank her for her work on our Appropriations Committee on the Department of Homeland Security and—

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If the Senator will yield.

All time for debate has expired.

Mr. HOEVEN. I ask unanimous consent for 1 minute to respond.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HOEVEN. Mr. President, she and I will be continuing to work together on this and other important issues, but the reality is that we need to proceed to this bill so that we can get the funding in place.

Let's proceed to the bill. Let's have the debate. Let's have amendments. Let's do the work of the Senate on this important legislation. That is why we need a ''yes'' on this cloture motion to proceed—so we can get on this funding bill and go to work, have debate, have amendments, and do the work of the Senate on funding DHS, which is very important for our country.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 240, making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Richard Burr, Jerry Moran, John Thune, Johnny Isakson, Marco Rubio, Roy Blunt, Pat Roberts, Deb Fischer, John Boozman, David Vitter, Tim Scott, Roger F. Wicker, Richard C. Shelby, Michael B. Enzi, Rand Paul.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 240, an act making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 51, nays 48, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 51 Leg.]

YEAS—51

Alexander	Enzi	Paul
Ayotte	Ernst	Perdue
Barrasso	Fischer	Portman
Blunt	Flake	Risch
Boozman	Gardner	Roberts
Burr	Graham	Rounds
Capito	Grassley	Rubio
Cassidy	Hatch	Sasse
Coats	Hoeven	Scott
Cochran	Inhofe	Sessions
Collins	Isakson	Shelby
Corker	Johnson	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Lee	Tillis
Crapo	McCain	Toomey
Cruz	Moran	Vitter
Daines	Murkowski	Wicker

NAYS—48

Baldwin	Heinrich	Murray
Bennet	Heitkamp	Nelson
Blumenthal	Heller	Peters
Booker	Hirono	Reed
Boxer	Kaine	Reid
Brown	King	Sanders
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schatz
Cardin	Leahy	Schumer
Carper	Manchin	Shaheen
Casey	Markey	Stabenow
Coons	McCaskill	Tester
Donnelly	McConnell	Udall
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murphy	Wyden

NOT VOTING—1

Kirk

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 51, the nays are 48. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn not having voted in the affirmative, the motion is rejected.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I enter a motion to reconsider the vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is entered.

The majority whip.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday President Obama, as part of the rollout of his blueprint budget that calls for more than $2 trillion in new taxes and adds more than $8 trillion to our national debt over the next 10 years, visited the Department of Homeland Security to urge the House of Representatives to pass a funding bill for that Department.

It struck me as somewhat odd that the President would go to the Department of Homeland Security and ask the House to pass a bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security since they have already done it. They passed a $40 billion funding bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security. It seems to me the President—rather than giving a speech at the Department of Homeland Security—needs to be talking to Members of his own political party. If the President wants Congress to pass a Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill, then he needs to talk to our friends in the minority in the Senate who just blocked consideration of a $40 billion Department of Homeland Security funding bill.

I know what they will say. They will say: We don't like parts of the bill. But the only way to finish a bill is to start a bill, and today they voted to refuse to start that process.

Why in the world is it that the Senate Democrats will not even allow this particular legislation to be debated and amended? One of the reasons is that they probably don't want to revisit the President's own repeated assertions—22 different times—when he said he didn't believe he had the legal authority to issue the Executive action he issued in November of 2014. Twenty-two times he said: I don't have the authority.

In 2013, when the President was speaking at an immigration event, he was interrupted by a heckler who urged him to stop deportations by Executive fiat. In response, the President said:

> If in fact I could solve all these problems without passing laws in Congress, then I would do so. But we're also a nation of laws—that's part of our tradition.

Thus spoke the President of the United States on 1 of those 22 different occasions.

Maybe our colleagues in the minority don't want to debate this bill because they don't want to have to answer questions from their constituents about those 22 different occasions when the President said, ''I don't have the authority,'' and explain how they now agree with him and that somehow he miraculously got that authority absent an act of Congress.

I can think of another reason our friends on the Democratic side are reluctant to allow us to even begin debate on this legislation. I have had the honor of participating in naturalization ceremonies all across my State. I

have witnessed men and women who were born in other countries, came to the United States of America, raised their right hand and swore allegiance to the U.S. Constitution. They may have come from Mexico, India, Vietnam or from any one of a number of other countries, but they decided, notwithstanding from where they came, they wanted to be an American.

Those naturalization ceremonies are almost like birthdays—a celebration of one's birth—because in a way it is a birthday. It is a day when they become proud Americans.

As Americans we believe in the benefits of legal immigration because in many cases it was our parents, grandparents or great-grandparents who came here from another country in search of the American dream—a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

Sadly, the President of the United States has made it clear his administration is willing to take the people who played by the rules and applied for immigration and legal status to become an American citizen and kick them to the back of the line. This President has kicked the people who played by the rules to the back of the line, and he has moved people who did not play by the rules to the front of the line. That is fundamentally unfair. It also sends a terrible message that we are going to reward people who break the law and we are going to punish people who follow and comply with the law.

So maybe our colleagues across the aisle don't really want to talk about that, and that is the reason they voted not to proceed to even begin to debate this important Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill—again, a bill that was passed by the House that would fund, to the tune of roughly $40 billion, the functions of the Department of Homeland Security. Yet our friends in the minority have said: We don't even want to talk about it. I can tell my colleagues what they don't want to talk about. They don't want to talk about the President's unconstitutional Executive action which he issued or announced last November.

Here are some interesting quotes from some of our colleagues in the minority. The senior Senator from West Virginia said: I wish he wouldn't do it. He was talking about the President's stated intention to issue his Executive action.

The senior Senator from Missouri, a member of the minority party, said: I have to be honest. How this is coming about makes me uncomfortable.

Then there is the junior Senator from Indiana who said: I am as frustrated as anyone in Congress that it is not doing its job, but the President shouldn't make such significant policy changes on his own.

Then there is the junior Senator from North Dakota, a member of the minority party, who said: It could poison any hope of compromise or bipartisanship in the new Senate before it has even started. That is what a Democrat from North Dakota said about the President's stated intention to issue his Executive action.

The senior Senator from Minnesota said: I have concerns.

Then there is Senator KING from Maine who said: And I also frankly am concerned about the constitutional separation of powers.

The Senator from Maine isn't the only one because 26 different States have filed a lawsuit in the Southern District of Texas challenging the constitutionality of the President's Executive action, and the Federal district judge could rule at any time on that.

Then there is the Senator from Montana.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, will my colleague from Texas yield for a question?

Mr. CORNYN. I will not yield at this time, Mr. President. I will be glad to yield at the conclusion of my remarks if the Senator still has a question.

Then there is the Senator from Montana who said: I would prefer that the Congress act, yes.

Then there is the Senator from Delaware who said: What I would say to Congress, I am going to give you a little bit of time in the new Congress, and I expect you to do something.

So that is eight Members of the minority party who said they are more than a little uncomfortable about what the President has done. Yet today the Members of the minority party have voted in lockstep to deny a debate, any opportunity to discuss how to fund the Department of Homeland Security, how to rein in a reckless President who has overreached his constitutional authority.

Here are some other provisions that are actually in the House bill that perhaps some of the Members of the minority are a little bit nervous to talk about, much less vote on.

The House has offered as part of their bill a rider which defunds Executive actions treating domestic violence, sexual abuse, and child exploitation offenders as secondary priorities for removal. In other words, the President's Executive action took people who have actually committed crimes—not just entered the country illegally but committed other crimes—and made them nonpriority in terms of removal.

Then, of course, there is the provision of the House bill that says we don't want to disadvantage legal immigrants and people who played by the rules because the House recognized that is exactly what the President's Executive action did. It kicked the people who played by the rules to the back of the line and the people who did not to the front of the line. But our friends in the minority obviously don't want to talk about that either.

Millions of foreign-born immigrants have become successful, patriotic American citizens. We are richer as a country because of the contributions they have made to our great land.

The fundamental choice we have is, are we going to have controlled immigration or uncontrolled immigration? The President and apparently his political party have embraced uncontrolled, illegal immigration as their cause.

We, on the other hand, have said we believe in the benefits to our great country of legal immigration and assimilation because that is who we are. All of us have a family story somewhere back in our history. Mine goes back to the 19th century following a potato crop famine in Ireland that caused my forebears to immigrate to Canada and then to the United States. Everybody has a story like that.

But it is a sad and important realization that the President, through his Executive action, is disrespecting the very individuals who have played by the rules and whom we celebrate as great, patriotic Americans. But apparently our friends in the minority don't even want to talk about it, so that is why they stopped this funding bill—$40 billion to fund the Department of Homeland Security—and refused to even talk about it, much less debate it. They are going to come out here on the floor, I trust, and click through the days and say: Well, we only have 3 weeks until the Department runs out of money. It is like the old story about the teenager who murders his own parents, and then he goes to court and pleads for mercy because—he says: Judge, I am an orphan. That is what our friends in the minority have done.

This is a crisis of their own making. In fact, we don't want a crisis. We want to eliminate government by crises. That is why the House has passed the responsible piece of legislation they have. That is why we ought to take it up today. If they don't like it—I know there are Members on our side who disagree with certain portions of it—then we ought to debate it and we ought to vote. Any way we look at it, the Senate ought to at least have the debate on this legislation.

Last week our colleague from Illinois, the assistant minority leader, came to the floor and praised the new majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, for his leadership during the first few weeks of the new Republican majority here in the Senate. He said:

> I hope that in our role in the minority, we can work with you to achieve at least debate on the floor if not some significant legislation.

That was a nice moment. But then the very next day, on a call with reporters, my colleague from Illinois pledged to filibuster the House-passed Department of Homeland Security funding bill and refused to even allow a debate—a threat they made good on today.

So my request to our colleagues on the Democratic side is simple: Honor the promise the senior Senator from Illinois made last week to have an open and fair debate and not just shut it down and create government by crisis and add to the very dysfunction the voters repudiated on November 4.

I am glad to yield to the Senator from New York.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LANKFORD). The Senator from New York.

Mr. SCHUMER. I thank my colleague. I just have a few more questions, and then I will say my piece.

First, I ask my colleague, is it his party that is in the majority in this body?

Mr. CORNYN. Absolutely.

Mr. SCHUMER. Indeed they are—sad, from our point of view.

Mr. CORNYN. We are delighted to be.

Mr. SCHUMER. Isn't it true that the majority has the ability to put any bill they want on the floor just about at any time? They can rule XIV. They can go through committee. There are many procedural ways to get a bill on the floor; is that right?

Mr. CORNYN. Again, Mr. President, the distinguished Senator from New York knows well the answer to that is yes.

Mr. SCHUMER. My final question is this: Since we have a Department of Homeland Security that needs funding and the issue of immigration is a controversial issue—one on which we relish a debate—wouldn't it be possible for the majority to pass a Department of Homeland Security bill without extraneous and controversial amendments, send that back to the House, and then move immediately to debate the immigration proposal that was added to the bill by the House or any other immigration proposal they wish to bring forward? I am not saying they will do it; I am just asking my dear friend, isn't that possible procedurally for the majority to do?

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, responding to my friend from New York, I would say theoretically the answer to his question is yes. As a practical matter, we know the House has passed a particular piece of legislation that we would like to take up. It is what it is. It is the hand we have been dealt. That is the base bill to operate from. There are, of course, procedures to change it.

Senator MCCONNELL, the majority leader of the Senate, has said he believes there should be an open amendment process, and I trust our friends across the aisle would have a chance to offer an amendment and get a vote. If they have the votes, they are going to win.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from New York.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, the distinguished majority leader has stated that it is possible within the procedures of this Senate to pass a homeland security bill, as negotiated by our Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs—and I see the able head of the subcommittee here on the floor, the Senator from New Hampshire—and then move to immigration and bring it to the floor. So all of his arguments that we are afraid to debate immigration, that we don't want to debate immigration are false.

There is not one choice, there are two. One is to debate immigration fully and openly. The other is to a play a game of hostage, to say: We are kidnapping Homeland Security, and now let's have a debate on how much the ransom should be.

No one in America wants us to legislate that way. I know my colleagues in the Senate didn't do that. It was the House that did it, led by thinking by the junior Senator from Texas. His view, as I have heard him say, is that what the President did on immigration is so awful that we should shut down the Department of Homeland Security as a way of forcing the President to go along with what the junior Senator from Texas wants.

When are our colleagues on the other side of the aisle going to learn? They followed Senator CRUZ a year and a half ago when he wanted to shut down the government over ObamaCare. They actually did shut down the government for a few weeks and were so widely excoriated by just about all Americans that they backed off. But they haven't learned. They are following the junior Senator from Texas, Mr. CRUZ, into a cul-de-sac at best and over a cliff at worst.

We are happy to debate homeland security but not with a gun to our head or the President's head; not to say: If you don't do it my way, I am going to shut down the government. The vast majority of Americans—Democratic, Independent, Republican, North, East, South, West—don't believe that is how we should legislate. I am surprised—I am almost shocked, with some of the wisdom we have in the leadership of this body, that they are allowing that to happen. We will not. We have the ability to block it, and block it we will. We will not play hostage. We will not risk shutting down Homeland Security—as I am sure my colleague from New Hampshire will talk about—a vital Department. We will not let their being upset with DREAM kids jeopardize our safety with ISIS. We will not let that happen.

I urge my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to pass the bill that has already been put on the floor—a clean Homeland Security bill—then they may decide to put immigration on the floor, and we will be happy, happy, happy to debate it.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, I have to say that I am a little confused about what is happening right now. The Republican Party is in charge—totally in charge of Congress. I am sure Speaker BOEHNER's and Majority Leader MCCONNELL's staffs talk on a daily basis. I am sure they are talking, coordinating, and realizing the Republican Party now has the responsibility of showing this country they can run Congress.

So what do we do right out of the gate? We threaten to shut down the Department of our government that protects our homeland while ISIS is burning prisoners alive on film? The irony of this is Republicans are in charge. All they have to do is present a clean funding bill for Homeland Security, and the very next day take up immigration reform and debate it. But they are trying to play a political trick and trying to make it look as if somehow their disagreement with the President on immigration trumps the protection of our country and that somehow we will all go along with that.

Speaker BOEHNER mentioned me. My friend and my colleague from Texas just mentioned me. Yes, I said it. I am uncomfortable with the President issuing Executive orders such as this—no matter what party it is, no matter who the President is. But what I said when I made that statement is—I pivoted, and I said: Do you know how we prevent that from happening? We have a House of Representatives that is willing to take up and debate immigration reform. This body passed a bipartisan immigration reform bill by a wide margin. It wasn't even a squeaker. Many of my Republican colleagues voted for it, understanding this is a public policy area in our country that needs to be addressed.

We can't make it a political punching bag on either side. My party can't say: We are for the immigrants; we get their votes. And the Republican Party can't say: Well, we are for the tea party, and we are against all immigrants. We need to come together and do public policy in a system that is broken. The bill we passed here was amazing in terms of border security. But Speaker BOEHNER wouldn't take it up for more than 18 months. Speaker BOEHNER wouldn't even allow it to be debated on the floor of the House.

Now the Republicans are in charge. Do they take up immigration reform? Do they have a proposal? By the way, that is the way you get rid of the President's Executive order; that is, we do our jobs. We do our job. It is a little bit like ''replace'' for health care. I have heard repeal and replace for 4 years. Has anybody seen replace? Has it been identified anywhere? If it is out there, I would love to see it. It has been talked about a lot. The same thing for immigration. If you don't like what the President has done, then put up a bill and let's debate it.

By the way, the Republicans have the power to do that immediately after we fund Homeland Security. We don't have to talk about anything else. We can

stay on immigration reform and pound out a compromise and public policy that won't please everyone but will do exactly what the American people want us to do, and that is find a compromise that works.

As countries around the world have united in their opposition to ISIS and the barbarians who are participating in ISIS activities, as all of our allies and some who haven't traditionally been our allies are beefing up their cyber security, their border security, beefing up their homeland security, their airport security, adding more resources, what are we doing in America? Talk about a mixed signal—we are threatening to shut ours down. We are threatening to shut ours down to score political points.

I know there would be tough votes on immigration reform when we debate it, for me in my State and for many in their States. We had those tough votes last year and the year before. We pounded out a bill that nobody loved, but it was pretty good. It made sure, by the way, that people who had broken the rules went to the back of the line. If you want people who break the rules to go to the back of the line, then let's get busy on immigration reform. But this is exactly the nonsense that frustrates Americans—threatening to shut down a vital part of protecting our country in the name of politics.

The notion that the senior Senator from Texas, the assistant majority floor leader, just said—that we were denying a debate—is absurd on its face. We debate whatever the Republican Party wants us to debate now. They are in charge. So step up, fund Homeland Security, and move on to an immigration debate. You will find a lot of willing partners trying to find a way forward but not with this gamesmanship. It is not going to happen. It isn't going to happen because homeland security is too important, especially at this moment in our history.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator of New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I appreciate the remarks from the Senators from Missouri and New York because I think they reflect my sentiments as well. The senior Senator from Texas suggested that we don't want to debate immigration. We are happy to debate immigration. In fact, I would love to debate immigration reform with our colleagues. But the bill before us is not about immigration reform. It is about whether we are going to fund the Department of Homeland Security. The fact is many of the issues the senior Senator from Texas raised about immigration were addressed in the comprehensive immigration reform bill this body passed in 2013. I am happy to go back to that debate, but that debate should not come in place of our willingness to fund national security and the Department of Homeland Security. That is the issue that is before us today, and we should not hold up our willingness to fund the Department because there are certain Members of the Republican Party in the House and Senate who want to talk about the President's Executive action. This bill is not about that. It is about whether we are going to fund the Department of Homeland Security.

I thought it might be instructive to point out some of the changes Congress has made which are included in this bill and which actually strengthen border security, since that is one of the concerns that has been raised. Over the past 10 years, Congress has gone to extraordinary lengths to secure our borders against the threat of smugglers, of human traffickers, and of illegal immigrants.

Since 2005 the combined budgets for Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement have grown by an astounding 97 percent—97 percent—from about $8.5 billion in 2005 to more than $16.7 billion today.

In fact, the combined budgets for these two border security agencies now account for more than 42 percent of the entire discretionary appropriations of the Department of Homeland Security. But Congress just hasn't thrown money at the problem. We have made wise investments to ensure our borders are more secure than they have ever been.

Since 2011 Congress has steadily maintained 21,370 Border Patrol agents. That more than doubles the size of this force since 2001. Over the past 2 years Congress has added 2,000 Customs officers to help stop the flow of illegal drugs and prevent human trafficking while still facilitating legitimate trade.

I have been to the San Ysidro border crossing in San Diego. I have seen the advanced technologies that have been implemented to make sure that legitimate trade can get across the border yet stop those people who are coming illegally.

Congress has deployed enhanced border security technology, including integrated fixed towers, remote and mobile video surveillance systems, tethered aerostats, and other technology to secure our southern border.

We have also funded the construction of 652 miles of vehicle and pedestrian fencing at critical locations determined by the Border Patrol agents on the ground. The Department's ability to detect illegal border traffic has grown substantially due to simultaneous investments in airborne assets, including Blackhawk helicopters, multirole enforcement aircraft, and surveillance planes critical in the war against drugs, as well as nine unmanned, unarmed Predator aerial systems.

Since 2011 Congress has provided more than $721 million above the President's request for these important airborne assets that strengthen our border security. In the bipartisan full-year budget that Senator MIKULSKI and Congressman ROGERS negotiated last December—the same bill that Senator MIKULSKI and I have introduced in this session of the Senate—we included those critical investments made to continue those efforts to secure the border. These investments will not occur or they are going to be delayed if we have a short-term budget, if we continue with a continuing resolution and, heaven forbid, if we shut down the Department of Homeland Security, which some of the Members of this body and the House have suggested is not a problem for us to do.

The clean bill includes a $119 million increase for Customs and Border Protection. This is the funding level that supports the largest operational force levels in history—21,370 Border Patrol agents and 23,775 CBP officers. The agreement restores funding cuts to CBP's Office of Air and Marine proposed by the administration. That enables them to fly more patrols along the border and to continue purchasing critical assets.

The clean bill also increases funding for the border security, fencing, infrastructure, and technology account by $20 million to provide additional video surveillance systems and adapt surplus Defense Department equipment for border security purposes.

For Customs and Border Protection, a short-term budget also means that pending contracts for border security upgrades are going to be put on hold. When I met last week with CBP Commissioner Gil Kerlikowske, he told me that $90 million in contracts for mobile and remote video surveillance technology—the very technology that is going to help us keep illegal aliens from coming across the border—is going to be put on hold due to funding uncertainty.

A clean, full-year budget bill provides an increase of $700 million for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the agency responsible for apprehending and detaining undocumented immigrants in this country. If we don't pass on full-year bill, ICE will have insufficient resources to maintain a statutorily mandated level of 34,000 detention beds for detaining illegal immigrants, the vast majority of which are criminals. They are going to fall over 4,000 beds short of that mandated level under a continuing resolution. Furthermore, they will have no funding to complete construction and continue operating new family detention facilities in Texas.

Now, 3,000 family detention beds are supposed to be completed in Texas to deal with the surge of unaccompanied children and families to the southwest border. The very people who are complaining about border security, who are complaining about illegal immigrants coming into this country are opposing the funding that would address that border security. It makes no sense.

The bill also increases ICE's capability to engage in domestic and international investigations with a $67 million increase for antihuman smuggling

and traffic activities, to combat cyber crime, to combat drug smuggling, and to expand visa vetting capabilities. With a short-term budget, a continuing resolution, these additional investments will not be made. We should not be holding up this funding bill for the Department of Homeland Security with critical border protections in it because we have a few Members of the House and Senate who want to make this an ideological battle about the President's Executive action. Let's have that immigration debate, but this is not the place to do it.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

Mr. UDALL. Mr. President, let me thank Senator SHAHEEN for her leadership on the Homeland Security bill. She has taken that over this year and learned it, knows the ins and outs of it. She is someone who truly cares about being fiscally responsible. She just recently pointed out to our caucus that if we pass the House bill with all of the riders in it, it would cost $7.5 billion more and put us $7.5 billion more into debt, which I do not think is a fiscally responsible move. So we should be taking a very hard look at these riders as they come through from the House.

I have come to the floor to talk about how important it is for us to pass a clean appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security. I wish to talk about how failing to pass a bill will impact the southern border, impact my State of New Mexico, where DHS plays a vital role in security, in business, and in people's daily lives. The men and women at DHS make sure commerce is conducted smoothly across our border with Mexico. They make sure workers can get back and forth. They inspect shipments coming into the country, and they protect our communities from drug smugglers and crime.

It is inconceivable to me that Republicans would threaten to stop funding this agency over a policy dispute with the President. I have heard Republican leaders say the era of shutdowns was over, but here we are again, rapidly approaching the date when DHS funding expires. We need an appropriations bill that does not disrupt this important work.

I talk to New Mexicans who live in the border communities. I talk to ranchers and farmers in my State. Border security is not theoretical. It is not a political game. It is crucial to safety. It is crucial to trade at our ports of entry, such as Santa Teresa and Columbus. In New Mexico a shutdown of DHS is a threat to our security, to jobs, and to our economy.

I have read some reports where congressional Republicans have said on the record that a delay in funding DHS would not be a big deal. They say most of the Department's employees are considered essential so they would still be working at our borders and screening airline passengers. That may be true, but those employees would not get paid. I am not willing to tell our Border Patrol agents and TSA officers with families to feed that they still need to go to work, but they are not going to get paid because Washington cannot get its act together.

I know my constituents would feel a lot more secure in border communities if the Border Patrol officers were getting paid rather than worrying about their mortgages, their car payments, tuition payments, and other household expenses. Despite the Republican claims that DHS will not actually shut down, there would be significant consequences if Congress failed to fund DHS.

Consider what would happen to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, FLETC as they are called out in New Mexico. FLETC serves as the law enforcement training academy for 96 Federal agencies. FLETC in Artesia, NM, trains all of our Border Patrol agents and Bureau of Indian Affairs police officers.

If we fail to fund DHS, FLETC training grinds to a halt. This will impact every Federal agency whose law enforcement officers must complete basic training before they can be deployed in their posts of duty. A delay in training impacts securing the Nation's borders, aviation security, protecting our Nation's leaders and diplomats, securing Federal buildings, and other countless Federal law enforcement activities.

The economic impact is huge. Over 3,000 students, 350 of them in Artesia, NM, are expected to be in training at the end of February. If DHS is not funded, they have to go back home. This will cost about $2.4 million in airfare to send students back to their agencies, and then turn around and fly them back to FLETC when Congress does its job and funds DHS.

Regardless of your views on immigration policy, wasting law enforcement's time and taxpayer money does not improve our security. Artesia is not a big city. Its economy relies on FLETC. The students spend their money at local businesses. Many residents are contract employees at the facility. If FLETC closes, it has a real impact in our community.

As a New Mexican, I am appalled that a DHS shutdown is even being considered. We cannot risk our national security, our community safety, and our border commerce just so Republicans can prove some sort of inside-the-beltway point about how angry they are about immigration reform. The House Republican bill threatens to deport millions of people who have been living and working and going to school in our country for many years. The Senate should choose a different route: Put a clean bill on the floor, allow an open amendment debate, and enact a bill the President can sign before any shutdown occurs.

Few States understand the importance of comprehensive immigration reform as New Mexico does. We need a system that secures our borders, strengthens families, and supports our economy. In fact, we almost had just that. The Senate passed a bipartisan bill in the last Congress, but House Republicans let it die—would not even take it up, would not put it on the floor.

That bill was not perfect. It did not satisfy everyone in every case, but that is what compromise means. That is what a bipartisan effort requires. Due to the House's failure to act on immigration reform, over 400,000 people in my State live in immigration limbo, all the while they work and raise families. Deporting these children and families is not a realistic option. We need to focus limited resources, as the President has done, on securing the border. We need to go after drug dealers and gang members and potential terrorists.

I and so many other New Mexicans are appalled that Republicans want to take out their anger on the DREAMers. They will not commit to real reform, but they will commit to chasing down children—innocent children—brought to this country by their parents. These are inspiring young people in my State, when I talk about these young DREAMers. They have worked hard. They have persevered. They know and love this country as their own.

They are young leaders such as Mabel Arellanes. Mabel came to Santa Fe with her mother from Mexico when she was just 6 years old. Mabel graduated from Capital High School. Her dream was to go to college, but her immigration status made that impossible. From the age of 15, Mabel worked to help other DREAMers. She helped pass the New Mexico DREAM Act. Mabel eventually did get to college and graduated from the University of New Mexico with honors. She is in her second year of law school now.

Another one of the DREAMers—this is Alejandro Rivera. Another DREAMer, he moved to Belen, NM, when he was 7 years old. After high school, Alejandro enrolled at the University of New Mexico. Undocumented, he could not get financial aid. He and his mother worked hard to pay tuition. Alejandro also volunteered to help other young people get an education and to follow their dreams. He is at work now on his Ph.D. in education. We may disagree on the specifics of immigration reform, but these DREAMers have earned our admiration. They should not be pushed back into the shadows by the House deportation bill.

The men and women who work to keep us safe, who screen more than 1 million people a day through our ports of entry, who patrol our borders and help secure our communities should not be a bargaining chip. In New Mexico we believe homeland security should be a priority, not a talking point. Secretary Johnson at DHS has been very clear. Key security initiatives are left waiting. His predecessors have also been very clear. Last week all three former DHS Secretaries, two of whom are Republican, sent a letter

to the Senate leadership urging them to pass a clean funding bill.

We live in a very dangerous world. We face terrorist threats at home and abroad. Recent events make that very clear. Now is not the time to play politics with homeland security. In fact, there never is a right time for that. The American people are watching. The people of my State are watching. They are watching these games. What they see is a lot of sound and fury that leads nowhere. What they want is a government that works.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. AYOTTE). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I rise today to discuss a matter of utmost importance: the Department of Homeland Security funding bill, H.R. 240.

We live in a world of extraordinary threats. Around the world, terrorists continue to devise ways to harm Americans and our interests. In Pakistan and Afghanistan, we see a resurgent Al Qaeda, which continues to plot attacks from increasingly ungoverned safe havens. Throughout the broader Middle East, we see Al Qaeda's affiliate groups—from Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula to al-Shabaab—posing sophisticated new threats. In Iraq and Syria, we see the self-proclaimed Islamic State controlling vast swaths of territory, shocking the world with its brutality, and announcing its deadly serious intent to kill Americans. Within Western societies, we see the potential for radicalization at home, the danger of which has been made manifest in the attacks on Ottawa, Sydney, and Paris. Inside the United States, the Department of Homeland Security serves as our critical line of defense against many of these threats at critical points—from our borders, to our airports, to our coasts and our ports.

In the realm of cyber space, criminals, terrorists, and other nations' governments present sophisticated threats on a variety of fronts. Defending against these many serious threats requires efforts that range from securing critical infrastructure to guarding against the sort of espionage and blackmail that Sony recently experienced. These are enormously difficult tasks, especially in an ever-changing, high-tech operating environment. As the agency charged with protecting civilian networks and coordinating on cyber defense issues with the private sector, the Department of Homeland Security stands at the crossroads of our Nation's defense against this next generation of threats.

When the dangers we face are natural rather than manmade, the Department plays no less of a critical role. From hurricanes and tornadoes to volcanos and forest fires, the Department's component agencies, such as FEMA and the Coast Guard, play a critical role in the preservation of lives and property.

The House-passed bill provides the Department with nearly $40 billion in funding—a level consistent with the Budget Control Act's spending limits. That money will not only fund the critical programs I have mentioned so far, but will also provide critical improvements on a wide range of fronts, including more border control agents, new ICE detention facilities, increased funding for E-Verify, more effective security screening at our airports, improved Secret Service protection, increased support for cyber defense, and important disaster relief.

These provisions all enjoy broad bipartisan support, and I commend my colleagues on the Appropriations Committee for their hard work on this package. But this work has been complicated by a troubling development: some of my colleagues—almost all of them Democrats—actively seeking to block consideration of this vitally important funding. Why? Only because they seek to protect a President of their own party who has acted lawlessly and overstepped proper constitutional bounds. Instead of following the examples of great Senators of the past who stood up to Presidents of their own party on behalf of the Constitution and the rule of law, today we have witnessed far too many Senators instead shamefully toeing the party line.

Our Nation's Founders knew, in the sage words of Montesquieu, that ''in all tyrannical governments . . . the right both of making and enforcing the laws is vested in one and the same man . . . and wherever these two powers are united together, there can be no public liberty.'' For this reason, when drafting the Constitution, the Framers divided power between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and between the Federal Government and the States.

Despite these constitutional foundations, President Obama has decided that he ''won't take no for an answer'' when Congress refuses to go along with his agenda. In direct opposition to our centuries-old system of legislation and to the binding authority of the Constitution, the President has audaciously declared that ''when Congress won't act, I will.'' And he has followed up these threats with a variety of unilateral Executive actions, many of which are flatly inconsistent with the law and the Constitution.

Over the past weeks and months, I have come to the Senate floor to speak out about a series of specific instances that exemplified the brazen lawlessness of this administration. This pervasive and illegitimate overreach has come in many different forms.

With his recent move on immigration, President Obama seeks not only to prevent enforcement proceedings against millions of people unlawfully present in this country, but also to license their unlawful presence with affirmative work permits. In doing so, he not only ignores the duly-enacted laws of the land but also seeks to unilaterally replace them with his own contradicting policies.

The President and his allies in this Chamber want nothing more than to turn this into a debate about immigration policy, but that is not what this debate is about. Immigration is a complex and divisive issue, and Americans hold a wide variety of views on the matter that don't always divide neatly along partisan lines. Many conservatives—myself included—share some of the same policy goals as President Obama. Instead, this is a debate about loyalty. As Senators, where do our loyalties lie? Do we owe our loyalties first to the Constitution, to the protection of the American people, and to the goal of lawful and lasting immigration reform, or do we owe our loyalty, out of reflexive partisanship, to a President bent on dangerous unilateralism?

President Obama's Executive action is a direct affront to our system of republican self-government. The Constitution vests legislative authority with the Congress, not the President alone. Instead, the President is charged with the duty to ''take care that the laws be faithfully executed.'' This is not a suggestion or an invitation for the President to enforce the law; it is an obligation for him to do so.

The President and his executive branch exercise prosecutorial discretion—the discretion to choose not to prosecute certain cases. But that power stems from considerations of fairness and equity in particular cases. Instead of requiring individualized determinations based on individuals' specific situations, the President's latest action sweeps up millions of people based on only a few broad, widely shared criteria.

An administration, of course, cannot prosecute when there are not sufficient resources to do so. But the Obama administration has never explained how these Executive actions will save money. In fact, the administration's own policy advisers have acknowledged that a work-permitting program will be expensive and will actually take away resources from law enforcement.

While no one disagrees that capturing and removing violent criminals should be our highest immigration priority, President Obama has gone much further and made current immigration law essentially a dead letter for millions of illegal immigrants.

Despite the administration's claim to the contrary, President Obama's action is not comparable to the Executive actions taken by President Ronald Reagan and President George H.W. Bush. Even the Washington Post editorial board found that claim by the White House to be ''indefensible.'' Presidents Reagan and Bush simply implemented the enforcement priorities established in laws that Congress

actually passed. By contrast, President Obama sought to change the law before Congress has acted, so he cannot rely on Congress's authority to enforce the policy he prefers. Indeed, President Obama has acted directly in the face of congressional opposition, so we should call his Executive order what it is: an attempt to bypass the constitutionally ordained legislative process and rewrite the law unilaterally.

Perhaps the most persuasive case against this disturbing unilateralism was laid out by President Obama himself. On at least 22 different occasions since he took office, the President acknowledged that he lacked the legal authority to carry out these actions. As he himself said, by broadening immigration enforcement carve-outs, ''then essentially I would be ignoring the law in a way that I think would be very difficult to defend legally. So that's not an option . . . What I've said is there is a path to get this done, and that's through Congress.'' He was right then; he is wrong now.

Faced with this brazen lawlessness, the House of Representatives passed a bill that both funds our critical homeland security priorities and fulfills our duty to respond to the President's lawless actions. This is a careful line to walk, and our colleagues in the House deserve praise for their admirable work. Their bill represents a responsible governing approach by funding our critical homeland security needs while preventing President Obama's constitutional abuse.

When faced with such a sensible approach, I have frankly been shocked and dismayed by the opposition that many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have expressed to this bill. On the floor today, many of my colleagues have indicated that they will oppose letting us vote on Homeland Security funding and even oppose allowing a formal debate and an open amendment process on the bill unless we allow President Obama's Executive action to come into effect.

Senators of both political parties have often stood up to Executive encroachment—not for purposes of partisan gain or political grandstanding, but in defense of Congress as a coordinate and coequal branch of government with its own essential authorities and responsibilities.

Implicit in the constitutional design of separating the Federal Government's powers is the idea that each branch would have the incentive and authority to resist encroachments from the other branches, ensuring that unfettered power is not concentrated in any one set of hands. The Founders recognized this as indispensable to preserving the individual liberty of all citizens. As Madison counseled in Federalist 51, ''The 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.''

Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia embodied this institutional idea as much as anyone with whom I have served. Although he helped to lead this body for more than half a century and left us less than 5 short years ago, I was surprised and dismayed to learn recently that nearly half of current Members never served alongside Robert C. Byrd.

Senator Byrd fiercely defended this body's prerogatives and independence against the encroachments of the executive branch—whether they were Republicans or Democrats in the executive branch. He neither censored his criticisms nor weakened his defenses based on the President's political party. Even in his twilight years, when President Obama took office with extraordinarily high approval ratings, Senator Byrd was willing to hold the new President's feet to the fire to defend the Senate's right to give advice and consent to nominees. He publicly chastised the White House for its excessive reliance on czars, observing that unconfirmed policy chieftains ''can threaten the Constitutional system of checks and balances. At the worst, White House staff have taken direction and control of programmatic areas that are the statutory responsibility of Senate-confirmed officials.''

How far we have fallen since the days of Senator Byrd. Indeed, this brinksmanship by my colleagues in the minority represents the height of irresponsibility. They risk our homeland security funding at a time when our terrorist enemies have repeatedly demonstrated a renewed capability to threaten the homeland. They risk our very system of constitutional government by sacrificing our power to make the laws and the President's duty to enforce them. They risk many of the immigration reform goals that are shared across party lines.

I am committed to making real progress toward implementing lasting immigration reform. I supported the Senate's comprehensive immigration bill in the last Congress. Even though that bill was far from perfect, I voted for it because I believe in working together to make much needed progress on this vitally important issue.

As I have long argued, the way to get real immigration reform back on track is not for the President and his allies to insist on his ''my way or the highway'' approach. Responsible legislating—not unilateralism—is the right way forward on immigration. The President's Executive action risked the opportunity for meaningful bipartisan progress and undermined the Constitution in the process. And now, his allies in this Chamber are apparently willing to risk the security of our Nation at a time of extreme danger just to close partisan ranks and provide political cover to the President.

If my colleagues in both parties are serious about protecting our Constitution's separation of powers and the liberty it ensures, if they are committed to protecting Americans from the sorts of terrorist attacks we have lately witnessed with alarming frequency, and if they are committed to working together to achieve lasting immigration reform the right way, I urge them to reconsider their vote earlier today and to agree to—at the very least—debate this critically important bill.

Madam President, 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. MANCHIN. 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. MANCHIN. Madam President, I rise in opposition to what seems to be a politically motivated Department of Homeland Security funding bill that we had to vote on. Funding the DHS should be a priority of Congress. It really should be. I know it is for all of us, and we cannot afford to play any of the political partisan games. It is not what people in this country want see. It doesn't do any of us justice whatsoever. We jeopardize the funding for third largest agency in the country that will risk lapse in not only our border security, which is most important to all of us, but also cyber security, also Secret Service protection, disaster response, FEMA, TSA in airports. Our Nation faces many threats from our enemies, both overseas and here at home, more so than ever before.

The world is a troubled place. We all go home and the No. 1 thing people are concerned about is the security of our own Nation. They see this evil going on, and now this horrific, barbaric action we saw that took place with the Jordanian pilot is unimaginable to us, that people could act this way to other humans.

With that being said, we have to stand united in supporting our values and protecting our citizens in the United States of America. This is not the forum for debate on immigration, and I have said that. I would hope some of my colleagues would feel the same way. We should fully fund the DHS, and this is one that has necessary levels that must be funded for the protection of our country. Then we can deal with our immigration system which is broken. I think we have stated that in the Senate. We have stood bravely, we voted, and we did changes and took some tough votes that needed to be made.

I agree with all of my Republican colleagues that our borders need to be secure. I don't think any of us disagree with that. It has to be secured first and then must stem the tide of illegal immigrants flowing into our country. We have seen them coming in all different sizes, races, and sexes. It continues to be something we should be concerned about.

I also agree with my Republican colleagues that President Obama should

not have executed action—he should not have used his Executive action to make changes in our immigration system. I think we should have doubled down and gotten this bill before us and get the House. I disagree with the House's decision not to even take up the bill we sent. In a bipartisan fashion it was debated on this floor, put together by Democrats and Republicans.

I have been here for 4 years. I haven't seen a bill worked more intensely than the immigration bill. I haven't seen the border security worked more intensely and Republicans and Democrats working together to make sure we have a Homeland Security that will secure our borders. That is the first time I saw the Senate truly work since I have been here and saw what the potential would be if we worked together. I was very excited about that. I thought for sure we would get a vote. Now we are back to the same, putting together who is for what and how we are going to posture on this one. I believe this is not the place and this is not the bill for us to get into a political squabble. I don't.

I know the House put us in a difficult position. It came over here, it had to be voted on, and it was. Now we have to get on to serious business. How do we take care and make sure our Department of Homeland Security has the necessary funding through an appropriations bill that both Democrats and Republicans worked on, not for another continuing resolution which does not let our different branches that are responsible for Homeland Security be able to upgrade and fight the battle we need to fight.

When we think about all of the new equipment that is needed for our forces out there, our National Guard, also our Coast Guard, what they need to be updated and upgraded to and the things that have been planned, it will only happen through a bill we pass on this side. It will not happen through a continuing resolution bill. It will be the same as we have had. The status quo will not change.

I am willing to work with all of my friends in here to have a good, clean Homeland Security bill that does the job and protects the United States of America. I am not willing to do a bill that will jeopardize the security of our homeland, which is what I think we have received. I think we can do better than that.

I urge all of our colleagues to work together to get a piece of legislation that helps protect America and keeps America safe and also puts the emphasis where it needs to be. That is what the people back home in West Virginia expect. I know people in New Hampshire expect the same from the Presiding Officer. I know we can deliver, working together in a bipartisan way, putting America first and not our politics. That is what they expect. I hope we are able to rise above this, and we will get through this. I think we will get to a clean bill that basically secures America and keeps us safe.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I come to the floor to join my colleagues to call for an end to any political gamesmanship being played over this bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security. I thank Senators SHAHEEN and MIKULSKI for their leadership on this issue. They have introduced legislation I am proud to cosponsor and that provides the critical resources the Department of Homeland Security needs today and for the remainder of 2015.

The issue of funding the Department of Homeland Security has become particularly important to my State. It is important to every State. New Hampshire cares a lot about the Coast Guard and many of the other agencies involved in security.

In Minnesota we have actually had active recruiting, a first from al-Shabaab that recruited young men in the State of Minnesota—and particularly in the Twin Cities—to go to Somalia and to fight, including becoming suicide bombers. We actually had 18 Federal indictments that came out of that. Half of those people have already been convicted because of the fact our community—our Somali community—has been able to work with the law enforcement positively. We have been able to get the information to prosecute those cases.

Then we go to Syria, something our Presiding Officer knows a lot about and is an expert on. The first American who was killed fighting on the side of the terrorists was from Minnesota. There is active recruiting that has been going on there. I have seen the ads of some of the recruiting from the FBI that has been going on there. In fact, we had an indictment of people involved in going to fight for ISIS. So this is real for us. This isn't just something that is thousands of miles away. It is happening in our communities.

Just last fall a young man from the Twin Cities area was arrested by the FBI at the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport as he was trying fly to Turkey. The next day the young man's partner was able to board a flight for Turkey and is thought to be fighting with ISIS.

These are real people, real terrorists. I think we all know when it comes to Homeland Security it is not just our national security that is at stake, it is also our economy. Our border with Canada stretches over 5,500 miles, the longest in the world. Over 400,000 people and nearly $2 billion in goods and services cross our borders every day.

In Minnesota we understand the economic significance of cross-border commerce. Canada is our State's top international trading partner with over $19 billion in total business across the border. Think of that—$19 billion. Over 1 million Canadians visit Minnesota every year—that is a lot of Canadians—contributing $265 million to our local economy. A lot of them visit the Mall of America in Bloomington. Many of them go fishing up north. That relationship relies on a seamless United States-Canadian border with U.S. Customs and Border Protection keeping that border secure and efficiently screening all cross-border traffic.

We have made important strides in recent years with the trusted travel programs to make our northern border more secure while encouraging the cross-border tourism and commerce that is the lifeblood of so many Northern States, including Minnesota and New Hampshire. Withholding critical funding from DHS could threaten this progress, leading to a less secure border and also hindering economic opportunity. Withholding critical funding risks the safety of our people, the strength of our economy, and even our relationships abroad.

At a time when other countries around the world are stepping up their security, we can't be standing it down. Even a cursory look at world headlines shows the threats the United States and our allies face—from the terrorist attacks in Paris and Sydney to cyber attacks by North Korea. We need to be stepping up our security.

That is why it is so important we turn immediately to this bill to fund the Department of Homeland Security, a bill we can all agree on. The funding bill introduced by Senator SHAHEEN and Senator MIKULSKI and that I am proud to cosponsor does just that. It would provide funding for security while keeping crossings open for business. It would support 23,775 Customs and Border Protection officers working at our country's 329 ports of entry. It would ensure that we keep 21,370 Border Patrol agents at work keeping our country safe. It funds cyber security initiatives that protect our critical infrastructure and allows us to track down and punish hackers who are responsible for cyber crimes.

It provides over $1 billion for security-related grants to States—we are talking about firefighters and first responders—and localities to help ensure they are prepared to handle both manmade and natural disasters. No one knows this better than our State when we had a bridge fall down in the middle of a summer day on August 1 in Minneapolis, MN. An 8-lane highway right in the middle of the Mississippi River, 13 people died, dozens of people injured, dozens of cars submerged in the water after dropping 111 feet. No one knows this better than our State after we had the floods we shared with North Dakota across the Red River, floods that nearly swept away homes and resulted in a lot of economic loss. That happened in our State. No one knows better than our State, where we have had tornadoes similar to so many places in the Midwest, sweep across the prairies, taking everything in their path. That is when you know what FEMA is all about. That is when you know what Homeland Security is all about. That is

why we must continue to fund this important Agency.

It is my hope we can come together to pass the Shaheen-Mikulski Homeland Security appropriations bill. We should never play politics when it comes to protecting our homeland. That is why former Homeland Security Secretaries from the George W. Bush and Obama administrations have come together—Tom Ridge, Michael Chertoff and Janet Napolitano—and all agree on the need to pass a clean bill. Anyone who is watching C–SPAN and says, What is she talking about—a clean bill? Did it go through the laundry machine? This is a bill that focuses on what it is supposed to focus on, which is funding Homeland Security. It doesn't have other provisions in it that are better debated on other bills, that are comprehensive and focus on these issues. This bill should not have those kinds of things on it. This bill is about Homeland Security, and we shouldn't be shutting down our security over political fights.

As Senators, chief among our responsibilities is to do everything we can do to keep Americans safe. As a Senator from Minnesota, no job is more important to me than keeping our State and our country safe. I was a prosecutor for 8 years. I know how much this means to people. I deeply respect the work of the Department of Homeland Security and what they do every single day to protect us. Those workers deserve the best. The people of America deserve the best. That is why we have to pass this bill.

I urge my colleagues to pass the Shaheen-Mikulski bill without delay.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

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

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

CHOICE ACT

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I am on the floor today to speak about an issue that I spoke about just a few days ago, the Choice Act.

Let me take my colleagues back in history just a few months, just to last year. I don't imagine any of us don't remember the scandal the Department of Veterans Affairs was facing—the stories across the country of fake waiting lists, of services not provided, of the potential death of veterans while waiting for those services to occur. I also would think that at least many of my colleagues would agree that for much of the past few years the Senate hasn't done much of the business it was designed to do and that needed to be done in our country.

But I remember a day in August of 2014 in which the Senate and the House of Representatives were successful in passing a bill. It is somewhat embarrassing to me to be on the floor praising the accomplishment of a bill passage. It is a significant part of what should be the normal course of business of the Senate.

But those of us—and I would put all of my colleagues in this category who care about the service men and women who sacrificed for the benefit of their fellow countrymen and came home to a Department of Veterans Affairs that failed to meet their needs. I have indicated that since I came to Congress, both in the House and the Senate, I have served on the Veterans' Affairs Committee. This is an issue that we need to make certain we get right.

Just this week, in fact this morning, we passed a piece of legislation, the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. That is an accomplishment. I remember the testimony of the two mothers in the Veterans' Affairs Committee who came to talk to us about the importance of this legislation, their experience as mothers, and the death of their sons by suicide.

In the time that I have been in Congress, it is among the most compelling testimony I have ever heard. The part that sticks with me the most is the belief by these two mothers that had the Department of Veterans Affairs done their work, their sons would be alive. What that tells me is the decisions we make and those decisions as implemented by the Department of Veterans Affairs in some cases—in fact in many cases—are a matter of life and death.

We saw the scandal that came about last year. We know the decisions we make have huge consequences on veterans and their families. We rejoiced—at least I did—in the passage of the Choice Act, which gave veterans the opportunity to choose VA services, to choose health care to be provided in their hometowns by their hometown physicians and doctors.

The criteria that is set out in the Choice Act for that to occur is pretty straightforward. It says if you live more than 40 miles from a VA facility, you are entitled to have the VA provide the services at home, if that is what you want. It says that if those services can't be provided within 30 days of the time you need those services, then the VA shall provide those services at home if you choose. You can see the hospital, you can be admitted to the hospital of your choice, and you can be seen by the doctor of your choice.

That was actually something to rejoice about, to be excited about—that this Congress and this Senate came together and passed what I know to be a very significant and important piece of legislation. It is important for the reasons that common sense tells us it is important—that a veteran who lives a long way from a VA hospital or a VA facility can now get services at home. A veteran who had to wait in line for too long could now get those services at home.

The other aspect of that is that the Department of Veterans Affairs has told us time and again about the inability to attract and retain the necessary health care providers, the doctors and others who provide services to our veterans.

So one way to improve that circumstance is to allow other health care providers, those in your hometown, to provide that service.

The Choice Act was a good measure for the Department of Veterans Affairs to meet its mandate to care for our veterans, and the Choice Act was a good measure for veterans who live long distances from a VA facility, especially in States such as mine and the Presiding Officer's, where it is a long way to a VA facility.

So I remember the moment in which that bill passed and was sent to the President. Finally something good has come. A bill has been passed. Something important to our veterans is occurring.

But the reality is the implementation of the Choice Act has created many problems and, in my view, the Department of Veterans Affairs is finding ways to make that implementation not advantageous to the veteran but self-serving to the Department.

This is what catches my attention today. We are reviewing the President's budget, and within that budget is this language:

> In the coming months, the Administration will submit legislation to reallocate a portion of Veterans Choice Program funding to support essential investments in VA system priorities in a fiscally responsible, budget-neutral manner.

What the President's budget is telling us is that there is excess money within the Choice Act. We allocated money—emergency spending—to fund the Choice Act, and the President's budget is telling us: Well, we think there is too much money in there. We are going to submit legislation to reallocate that money to something we think is a higher priority.

I don't expect many of my colleagues to remember, but I was on the Senate floor last week talking about a specific problem in the implementation of the Choice Act, and it was this: The Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide services at home to a veteran who lives more than 40 miles from a facility.

Well, the problem I described last week is that the VA has determined that if there is an outpatient clinic within that 40 miles, even though it doesn't provide the services that the veteran needs, that veteran, he or she, must drive to the VA, wherever that is

located, and does not qualify for the at-home services.

Does this make any sense to any of us, that the VA says: Oh, there is an outpatient clinic within 40 miles of you, Mr. Veteran? Even though it doesn't provide the service that you need, we are still going to require you to drive to a VA hospital to receive those services and you don't qualify to go see your hometown doctor or be admitted to your hometown hospital.

Who would think—in fact, I admired Secretary McDonald in his early days at the Department in which he talked about how the VA is going to serve the veteran: The decisions we make at the VA will be directed at how do we best care for our veterans.

I respect Secretary McDonald for that attitude and approach, and I want the Department to follow his lead in accomplishing that mission.

But clearly deciding that a facility, even though it can't provide the service you need, precludes you from getting services at home makes no sense, and it certainly doesn't put the veteran at the forefront of what is in the best interest of a veteran.

So why would the Department of Veterans Affairs make that decision? We have a facility within 40 miles, but you don't qualify. So drive 3 or 4 hours to the VA hospital.

Well, one might think they have made the decision that we are going to enforce that aspect of the Choice Act. We are going to enforce the idea that you don't qualify because they don't have enough money to pay for those services. But, lo and behold, the President's budget says there is excess money that we now want to transfer to other priorities.

So, clearly, it is not funding issues. The Department is making decisions for some reason that makes absolutely no sense, defies common sense, and certainly doesn't put the veteran ahead of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

I don't know what the story is that these kinds of decisions would be made, but it certainly is worthy of the Senate to make certain the Department implements its moment of triumph, the Choice Act, in a way that benefits those we intended for the legislation to serve.

I will ask some questions of the Department, and I wonder about the attitude. I have been on task trying to get services provided closer to home for veterans for as long as I have been in Congress.

One of the other programs, aside from the Choice Act, is a program called ARCH for accessing services closer to home. There are pilot programs across the country to do that. One of them is in Kansas.

In an internal memo from Washington, DC, to a VA hospital in Kansas, the Department of Veterans Affairs indicated to the VA hospital in Kansas they could not promote, encourage or market the idea of a veteran seeking services at home.

So already I bring skepticism about the attitude at the Department of Veterans Affairs. For a long time they have been told not to encourage veterans to find health care outside the VA hospital, outside the VA outpatient clinic.

Here are a few questions. How do you reach the conclusion that there is excess money when the program is just now being implemented and, in fact, there has been a significant delay in getting the choice cards out to veterans so they could determine whether they were interested and qualified?

I also have learned that the Department of Veterans Affairs has intentionally narrowed the veteran population that is eligible for the choice program by rule, narrowing the number of medical procedures for which they will consider whether it can be performed outside the VA on the 30-day rule.

I didn't say that quite right. I didn't say it quite as well as I would like. But the VA already narrowed, by regulation, the services that might qualify for hometown services if it takes longer than 30 days to get those services.

The VA added an unnecessary reimbursement requirement. I am told now that if there is a third-party provider and you have some insurance, the VA is going to require that the veteran pay the copayment up front and then seek reimbursement from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Of course, the fourth one is how can you reach the conclusion that a veteran, who needs colonoscopy—in my hometown, as I talked about last week, one must drive 3 or 4 hours to Wichita to the VA to get the colonoscopy because there is an outpatient clinic within 40 miles of my hometown, but the outpatient clinic doesn't provide colonoscopies.

Now we learn that it is not a matter of money. It has to be a matter of attitude, approach, and culture.

Just today, a few minutes before I came to the Senate floor to talk about this issue, I received an inquiry from a constituent who is a health care provider. What they indicated to me is their interest in providing services under the Choice Act. They have contacted the VA, pursued the opportunity to be a provider for that veteran population in rural Kansas, and they were told the rate of reimbursement would be something significantly less than Medicare.

The Choice Act says the Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide these services up to paying Medicare rates. The VA says if you are going to provide services to our veterans, we are only going to reimburse you at something significantly less. That is something this health care provider didn't believe they could make any money doing, but ultimately they concluded it was their responsibility to try to help veterans who lived in rural Kansas, and so they went back to the VA and said we are willing to take less rates. Certainly let's negotiate and see if we can find something mutually agreeable between the VA and us to provide those services. They have yet to receive a return to their inquiry to the VA—again, trying to preclude a willing provider who is willing to provide services at less than cost. How can that be common sense? How can that be putting veterans ahead of the VA?

I look forward to working with my colleagues. I look forward to our Committee on Veterans' Affairs—a committee the Presiding Officer serves on—trying to make sure we get this right. I want to return to the day in August when the Senate passed the Choice Act and there was this feeling of accomplishment of something beneficial and useful.

If the VA continues to implement this bill—if it doesn't reverse course, if it doesn't put the veteran first, we will have missed another opportunity to care for the needs of those who served our country. What American would we expect to receive the best health care possible in this country? Well, of course, I want all Americans to receive quality health care at an affordable cost. But I would say there is no group of people for whom it is more important that they receive what is their due, what was committed to them, than those who served in our military and are now our Nation's veterans.

I represent a very rural State. The congressional district that I represented as a House Member is larger than the size of the State of Illinois. It has no VA hospital. How do you get to a VA hospital when you are a 92-year-old World War II veteran and the hospital is 4, 5, 6 hours away?

I thought we had finally come to a solution. I thought that earlier with the passage of legislation I introduced in the House that ultimately became the ARCH pilot program. While it gets rave reviews from veterans who are in those pilot program areas, it has not been expanded. It doesn't solve the country's rural needs.

Then I thought, well, a great day has occurred; we passed the Choice Act. But as I look at the implementation, as I look at the decisions being made today at the Department of Veterans Affairs, I have to wonder if one more time we are providing false hope, false promises to those who served our country. We owe them something different than what is occurring today.

I reaffirm my commitment to my colleagues, but also to the leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to work closely, side-by-side, to make sure the choices made fit the reality of those who served our country in the circumstances they find themselves in today. Help those veterans who can't get the service because they can't get there. Help those veterans who need the services more quickly than the Department of Veterans Affairs can provide them.

This seems straightforward to me, but I raise this concern today to make

sure my colleagues and I are united in the effort to see that good things happen as a result of the passage of the Choice Act in 2014.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

The Senator from Wisconsin.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, it is no secret we are living in dangerous times and that we face a variety of threats. We face the threat of ISIL, a barbaric and despicable terrorist organization. We face threats to the security of our personal information both online and in our daily life. We still face threats from Al Qaeda and rogue nations such as North Korea. With all of these ongoing threats to our Nation and its citizens, shouldn't our colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to work together in a bipartisan manner in order to fund the government agency responsible for protecting us from those threats?

Evidently they do not. Instead, they are playing a partisan game while threatening to shut down the Department of Homeland Security. They are playing politics with our homeland security. The vote the Senate just took relates to a bill that put partisan politics ahead of our national security while also needlessly creating another manufactured budget crisis, and that is why I voted no.

I understand our Republican colleagues have concerns about the President's Executive actions on immigration, and I believe there is a time and place for this body to debate those issues, as we have in the past and we must in the future. But to jeopardize our Nation's security by playing politics with this vital funding measure is extremely disappointing.

I would actually like to remind our colleagues that the President's actions on immigration reform devote even more resources to securing our Southwest border and to deporting felons, not families, and identifying threats to our national security.

The President's Executive action on immigration also provides certain undocumented immigrants temporary relief, after background checks and other security measures are passed, bringing families out of the shadows so they can work and pay taxes like everyone else.

I remain committed to finishing the job on bipartisan and comprehensive immigration reform here in Congress, but until we can achieve that goal, I support the President keeping his promise to take action and do what he legally can to fix our broken system.

Consistent with the actions by previous Presidents of both parties, President Obama is right to follow in the footsteps of every President since Eisenhower to address as much of this problem as he can through Executive action. The status quo is simply unacceptable.

In fact, the Congressional Budget Office—also known as the nonpartisan scorekeeper—recently found that including a reversal of these Executive orders in the homeland security funding bill would actually increase our deficit.

Instead of attaching these transparent attacks on the President, the Congress should pass a clean, straightforward, bipartisan bill. And there is such a bill. That bill was previously negotiated and it was just introduced by the vice chairwoman of the Committee on Appropriations, BARBARA MIKULSKI, and the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security, Senator SHAHEEN.

As a new member of the Subcommittee on Homeland Security of the Committee on Appropriations, I am a strong supporter of the Mikulski-Shaheen bill because it would fund programs that are critical to our Nation and to my home State of Wisconsin. Their straightforward funding bill funds essential Departments such as the Coast Guard, which keeps the Great Lakes safe and open for business; and it funds FEMA grants, which have helped communities in western Wisconsin, for example, plan and prepare for floods; and it funds fire grants that help rural fire departments with equipment they could never afford through the proceeds of annual pancake breakfasts. These are critical assets that my constituents rely on, and putting them at risk is simply irresponsible.

It is time for our colleagues to drop this dangerous political stunt and to join with Democrats to pass a bipartisan bill that gives the Department of Homeland Security the resources it needs to keep Americans safe.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HEALTH CARE

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, today the House of Representatives held yet another vote—I think they are maybe up to 50-some—to repeal the Affordable Care Act, showing once again their objective is to dismantle the health care law. House Republicans voted to repeal the law. They like to say ''repeal and replace,'' but the ''replace'' doesn't ever really quite come forward.

Think what that would be like. It would take us back to the day when children with preexisting conditions such as cancer or asthma could be turned away from health coverage. Let me illustrate.

Several months ago a couple came to my coffee, which I hold every Thursday when the Senate is in session. It is open to anyone from Ohio who wants to stop in. A woman came from Cincinnati. She lives in one of the most conservative parts of the State. We talked for a few minutes about home schooling and her desire to be able to get some support from the Federal Government in a variety of different ways for home schooling.

Then she said: I want to thank you for the Affordable Care Act.

I said: Certainly. I was proud to support it.

She said: You see, my son—and she pointed across the room. He was about 15. He was diagnosed with diabetes when he was 7 or 8 years old.

She hesitated. She said: I counted them, 33 times, we were turned down for health insurance because of his preexisting condition. We signed up last week for the Affordable Care Act.

So if the House's effort to repeal the Affordable Care Act had come to the Senate and become law, someone would have to explain to her why she loses her health care. Again, if this is repealed, insurers could place lifetime or annual caps on health coverage. We know that tens of thousands of people in this country have gotten sick and their insurance has been cancelled because their insurance was so expensive. That is prohibited under the Affordable Care Act. That would be back if we repealed the Affordable Care Act.

Seniors were forced to pay huge out-of-pocket costs when they hit the gap in prescription drug coverage known as the doughnut hole.

A decade ago, when I was a Member of the House of Representatives, I voted against that Medicare plan in part because it had this huge gap in coverage. So if you have an illness or a series of illnesses and buy a lot of prescription drugs, between the second thousandth dollar and the fifth thousandth dollar, there is a gap in coverage. In other words, you continue to pay the premiums for prescription drug coverage but get no assistance from the government. Under the Affordable Care Act, we have closed that gap. We have already cut it better than half, and over the next 3 or 4 years it will be eliminated entirely. We know the Affordable Care Act is working.

In my State, 100,000 young Ohioans, a little older than these pages, between the ages of 18 and 26, are on their parents' health insurance plans right now. They would be dropped from that coverage if the Affordable Care Act were repealed.

Ohio seniors have saved $65 million in prescription drug costs by the closing of the coverage gap, the so-called doughnut hole. Those savings would end. Those with preexisting conditions would no longer be covered or would be

charged higher premiums, and 700,000 Ohioans—people in my State—now have health insurance they did not have 5 years ago.

So if we repeal the Affordable Care Act, somebody has to explain to those 700,000 people why they no longer have insurance, why those 100,000 young people are getting dropped from coverage; those families like the woman's who would lose her insurance because her child has a preexisting condition, and all the consumer protections the Affordable Care Act has been part of.

Last month I spoke with Charles McClinon, a Cincinnati resident who suffered from severe epilepsy and, as a result, was unable to work. After Ohio chose to expand Medicaid—and I give Republican Governor Kasich credit for that—Mr. McClinon qualified for health care coverage and was able to schedule surgery. Thanks to this lifesaving coverage, he has returned to work.

Isn't that what we want? If people are ill, injured, sick, don't we want to take care of them so they can return to work? Mr. McClinon never wanted to miss work, but he had to. Because of the expansion of Medicaid, because of the Affordable Care Act passed by a Democratic Senate, signed by a Democratic President, because of a Republican Governor in Ohio expanding Medicaid, unlike Republican Governors in many States, people such as Charles McClinon can now go back to work and live a healthier, more productive life and pay taxes.

Since its creation in 1965, Medicaid has been a joint Federal and State program, providing free or low-cost health coverage to qualified individuals. One of the key components of the Affordable Care Act expanded both the eligibility and the Federal funding for Medicaid. States were given the opportunity to expand Medicaid to individuals with incomes of up to 130 percent of the Federal poverty level. Many people on Medicaid who are now on the expanded Medicaid in Ohio and Kentucky and many other States hold jobs, just like the parents of the 130,000 Ohio children who now have insurance because of the Children's Health Insurance Program. Their parents are working at places such as Walmart and McDonald's, making $8, $9, $10 an hour. Those companies generally don't provide health insurance and don't pay wages high enough to be able to buy health insurance.

What kind of society do we want to be? Where people are working every bit as hard as all of us as U.S. Senators work, with very little compensation, without health insurance, generally without pensions?

Do we want to say: Well, we don't care about you? If you weren't smart enough, if you weren't educated enough, if you weren't smart enough to get a good-paying job with insurance, then we are going to turn our backs on you? Of course we are not that kind of society. That is what the Affordable Care Act is about.

The expansion of Medicaid has saved Ohio about $350 million. It also helped Ohioans who already have insurance. When people lack health insurance, someone has to pay for their care.

The Presiding Officer's State of Colorado is not much different, just smaller dollar amounts because it is a smaller State. But Ohioans spend over $2 billion on care for people who can't pay. It is a hidden tax on the insured estimated to be about $1,000 a year per insured family.

So prior to the Affordable Care Act, somebody who went to a hospital in Denver, Cleveland, Dayton or Colorado Springs or Pueblo or Youngstown—because those without insurance would go to hospitals and get care; that is what we do; we take care of people if they show up in an emergency room—because they were not paying, because they were low income, they were unemployed, and they had no insurance, the cost of their treatment got shifted onto those of us with insurance. Economists say pretty much everybody pays about $1,000 additional for their health insurance because of the problems of the uninsured. So when we expand Medicaid, when we pass the Affordable Care Act, when we get people into the health exchanges, it means we are not charging people that $1,000 hidden tax, so it is a savings to those of us with insurance. Ultimately it is better for taxpayers, ultimately it is better for our health care system, and ultimately, most importantly, it is better for a healthier society.

We should be helping Ohioans gain health care, not cutting them off. That is the importance of expanding Medicaid.

I urge the Ohio legislature to work with the Governor to include Medicaid expansion in the budget. I urge my colleagues here in this Chamber to end their grandstanding attacks on a law that is helping Americans such as Charles McClinon get the care they need. It helped him go back to work. It will help others live more healthy lives. It will help all our communities. We should be helping Ohioans gain health care, not cutting them off.

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

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

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I call for the regular order with respect to the motion to proceed to H.R. 240.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The motion is pending.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 240, making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015.

Mitch McConnell, Thad Cochran, Tom Cotton, Roger F. Wicker, David Vitter, Jerry Moran, Daniel Coats, Michael B. Enzi, Mike Crapo, Bill Cassidy, John Boozman, John Thune, Tim Scott, John Hoeven, James Lankford, Jeff Sessions.

MORNING BUSINESS

CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY HONORING 1ST SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE, THE ''DEVIL'S BRIGADE''

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today I had the honor of addressing the legendary World War II-era 1st Special Service Force, a joint American-Canadian special forces military unit called the Devil's Brigade, on the occasion of the surviving members of that elite unit receiving the Congressional Gold Medal. I ask for unanimous consent that my remarks be printed in the RECORD.

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

Sometimes, truth can be more impressive than fiction.

When it comes to the heroes we honor today, that's certainly the case.

Members of the elite ''Devil's Brigade'' excelled in rock-climbing and amphibious assault.

They advanced on skis and through the air. They survived by stealth, and trained in demolitions.

Some of their more daring mission plans would've made James Bond blush.

And through it all, they helped save a continent in chaos. They helped defeat some of the greatest menaces our world has known.

But this isn't just some Hollywood script. It's a true story about a fearless group of young Canadians and Americans—including many Kentuckians—who were willing to put their lives on the line in the truest sense of the term.

Some probably did it to protect neighbors and families. Others to defend cherished democratic ideals. Many likely fought for all these reasons.

And they volunteered for this danger. Here's how the force's recruiting slogan read:

Vigorous training.
Hazardous duty.
For those who measure up, get into the war quick.

Typical Madison Avenue spin, this was not. But it was honest.

The fighting could be fierce. Conditions could be awful. The missions, seemingly impossible.

Yet, dark masses of boot polish and young courage—fighting knives gripped tightly in hand, elements purged consciously from thought—advanced against the Wehrmacht and held strong against forces of fascism.

The Devil's Brigade, heeding Churchill's call for ''specially trained troops of the hunter class'' who might unleash ''a reign of terror'' against the Nazis, became a feared adversary.

But these ''Devils'' only rented space in the shadows. They moved within darkness in order to defeat it.

And today, here they are. Champions of freedom. Heroes in two nations. Saviors to many others.

To you, we offer our most profound gratitude for distinguished service.

To the families gathered today, know that your loved one made a difference. Know that the veteran you've loved made a contribution to history that we as a people will not soon forget.

As the son of a World War II veteran, I'm particularly determined to ensure we don't.

That's why we will soon dedicate the highest civilian honor Congress can bestow.

It may only be a piece of metal, but it carries the gratitude of a nation.

May you always remember it.

KENTUCKIANS CELEBRATING THE VIETNAMESE LUNAR NEW YEAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish our friends in the Vietnamese-American community in Louisville, KY, and across the Commonwealth, a very merry celebration of Tet Nguyen Dan. Tet Nguyen Dan means ''first day,'' and is the celebration of the Vietnamese Lunar New Year and the arrival of Spring. The Lunar New Year is the most important celebration in traditional Vietnamese culture. This year it falls on February 19.

The celebration of the Lunar New Year lasts for several days. It is seen as the precursor for events of the coming year, and therefore is celebrated by paying homage to one's ancestors, having family reunions, and paying old debts.

At midnight of the Lunar New Year, the event is celebrated with firecrackers, gongs, and drums. Children wear new clothes to visit their relatives, and elders offer children little red envelopes full of money.

The festival then continues for several days with special events on each day. Many traditional foods are served during the Lunar New Year celebrations, including banh chung, a dish made of sticky rice, and mung beans and pork, all wrapped in banana leaves.

Of course, one doesn't have to be in Vietnam to celebrate the Lunar New Year. Louisville has a strong and vibrant Vietnamese-American community that contributes to the mosaic that is the River City, and this year they will celebrate the Lunar New Year with great gusto. Celebrations are scheduled across the city for several days.

I know that Louisville and the Commonwealth of Kentucky are better off for the values that Vietnamese-Americans celebrate during Tet Nguyen Dan—love of family, appreciation of one's elders and ancestors, and optimism about the times ahead. I convey to my friends in Kentucky's Vietnamese-American community my best wishes and I ask my U.S. Senate colleagues to join me in wishing them a happy, healthy, and prosperous Lunar New Year.

CLAY HUNT SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR AMERICAN VETERANS ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I am a proud cosponsor of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act and am pleased my colleagues chose to support it unanimously. The bill is designed to help reduce—and hopefully eliminate—veteran suicides by improving access to and quality of mental health care for veterans.

An estimated 22 veterans a day take their own lives. That is twice as high as the general population. Veterans of all ages and from all wars are affected by conditions that can contribute to depression and thoughts of suicide. We are learning more and more, for example, about how common post-traumatic stress disorder is among our returning heroes. PTSD can surface years—even decades—after a veteran was in combat. It is one of many factors that contribute to this disheartening problem.

The number of suicides is disproportionately high, however, for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Young men and women just out of the service and receiving health care from the government committed suicide at nearly three times the rate of active-duty troops in 2012. We have to work harder to make sure our heroes have access to the help they need.

The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act will create a peer support and community outreach pilot program to connect transitioning service members with programs that could help them. The bill will create a pilot program to repay the loan debt of psychiatry students so it is easier to recruit them to work at the VA. It also will improve the accountability of VA mental health and suicide-prevention programs by requiring an annual evaluation.

Today, in a bipartisan fashion, the Senate said we need to do more to make sure our heroes have access to the assistance they need. I hope the step we took here today helps many veterans regain a path to wellness and happiness.

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I rise today to commend my colleagues for swift passage of the Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act. This act will build upon the Veterans Choice Act and put in place needed measures to improve responsiveness, reporting, oversight and accountability for mental health outreach, intervention, treatment, and counseling in the Department of Veterans Affairs. Sometimes the greatest hurdle for ailing veterans is just getting started. There is nothing more frustrating and potentially demoralizing and debilitating for a veteran in crisis to seek mental health care from the VA and be told he will have to wait weeks or months for an appointment because VA facilities lack sufficient personnel with an expertise in psychiatric medicine to provide timely care. Left to fend on their own, many veterans become depressed and feel powerless, some resort to high-risk behaviors, from isolation, self-medication with alcohol and prescription drugs, to suicide.

This bill authorizes a pilot program to expand the VA's capacity to help repay loans incurred by individuals who are eligible to practice psychiatric medicine and agree to serve the VA in that field. In doing so, we recognize that serving veterans is a noble cause that some are called to, but working in such a demanding field requires economic incentives, especially in areas where abundant career options exist or in more remote locales, where attracting talent is difficult for the VA.

The Clay Hunt Act also facilitates greater veteran's access through a consolidated interactive website, where veterans can visit from the privacy of their own home or wherever they may be when the need arises.

Most importantly, the bill directs VA to establish a pilot program for community-based support networks in the VA's Integrated Service Networks to ease the transition of veterans and provide peer-based support for those who are encountering difficulties coping with those life changes. These community outreach teams at each medical center will be aimed at getting care to the point of need with the least amount of delay and help those veterans who are unwilling or unable to seek professional help on their own.

Make no mistake, the suicides of our veterans are preventable with the right intervention and proper continuum of care. When a veteran takes their own life due to untreated mental pain, it is a stark and sobering sign that somewhere, someone who loved them was unable to reach them and recognize the warning signs to help or that the veteran just couldn't carry a heavy burden any longer and found stability or some greater peace and solace elusive. It is at these moments, with nowhere to turn and perhaps no one to trust, that some of our veterans want to escape life. The sooner we can fully transform the VA into a place where veterans in crisis at any time can find access to caregivers and peers ready to light the path to a better place in our society, the better outcomes we will see and the surer we will be that the promises we have made to them are being kept.

RECOGNIZING BURTON SNOWBOARDS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, for generations, Vermonters have contributed to the global culture of winter sports. Whether the sport is snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling or

snowboarding, Vermonters never pass up an opportunity to claim the first run of the day.

Almost four decades ago, Jake Burton's passion for winter sports led to the creation of Burton Snowboards, one of the leading snowboard manufacturers in the world. Jake at a young age enjoyed ''snurfing''—surfing on snow—but he never anticipated the path he would eventually take, becoming one of the pioneers in snowboard manufacturing.

In the late 1970s, Jake started exploring the idea of manufacturing snowboards, building prototypes from a barn in Londonderry, VT. At the time, most ski resorts did not allow snowboarders, as snowboarding was not yet considered a sport, and gaining recognition as a sport proved to be harder than one might expect. Jake didn't let his optimism or passion wane, and interest in the fledgling sport finally spread. Jake and his wife Donna explored the European market, eventually opening a distribution center in Austria, while maintaining their national headquarters in Burlington, VT. For a little-known sport, it quickly gained international notoriety and stature. In 1998, snowboarding debuted at the winter Olympics in Nagano.

Jake is now one of the most successful business leaders Vermont has ever known. His commitment and passion allow him to remain one with the pulse of his company, with consumers, and, most of all, with the sport, on a level unique to Burton Snowboards.

The Wall Street Journal recently chronicled the multiple ways in which Jake keeps himself healthy, in shape, and on the slopes. Jake's lifestyle is one that truly speaks to the Vermont spirit. Marcelle and I are proud to have Jake and Donna as friends.

I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD the article from The Wall Street Journal.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Dec. 22, 2014]

JAKE BURTON, SNOWBOARD KING, SETS MULTIPLE GOALS FOR HIS WORKOUT

(By Jen Murphy)

The founder and chairman of Burton Snowboards, finds multiple ways to keep his lower body in shape for snowboarding and surfing.

Jake Burton sets an annual goal of snowboarding 100 days a year. A snowboard pioneer, and founder and chairman of Burton Snowboards Inc. in Burlington, Vt., has hit that goal nearly every year during the past 19 years, with the exception of 2011, when he was diagnosed with testicular cancer. Mr. Burton went through three months of chemotherapy. In January 2012, his doctors gave him a cancer-free bill of health and he slowly began regaining his strength in the pool and at the gym. Today, at age 60, he is charging harder than ever on the mountain.

''I got in 114 days this season,'' he says. And when the snow is gone, he takes to the ocean for his other obsession, surfing.

Mr. Burton relies on four regular activities—hiking, yoga, swimming, and biking—to keep him fit enough to snowboard and surf. He thinks of his workouts on a point system, awarding himself one point per workout, with 10 being his target each week. ''I usually manage six.'' Some days he tries to double up on workouts by mixing business with an activity. He might bike with a colleague and discuss new snowboard gear.

Mr. Burton includes his family in as many activities as possible. He and his wife, Donna Carpenter, who is president of Burton Snowboards, have trails within minutes of their Vermont home in Stowe. They often set out together on hikes, but ''hiking with Jake is a solo sport,'' jokes Ms. Carpenter. ''He recently had a minor knee surgery and still beat me up the mountain.''

He takes about six surf trips a year. This year he brought his three sons, ages 18, 21, and 25, on a surf trip to the Maldives. Recently, he and his wife started booking bike tours when they visit cities such as Florence and Paris.

THE WORKOUT

Hiking is Mr. Burton's main form of cardio. ''I have to keep it up to keep my weight in check,'' he says. One of his favorite hikes is up the Pinnacle Trail, which is 10 minutes from his home. It takes him about 50 minutes to hike up and another 50 minutes to hike down. He will also drive to Mount Mansfield, Vermont's highest peak, and hike the Long Trail, which is nearly 5 miles round trip. Mr. Burton always takes a watch when he hikes. ''My watch is like a heart rate monitor. The times tell me how hard I'm working,'' he says.

In the winter he often hikes up the mountain with his dogs and snowboards down four or five times before the ski resort is officially open. Bigger trips, most recently to Japan, allow him to have full days snowboarding in the backcountry.

While attending New York University, he was the captain of the swim team and he continues to get in the pool every other day when he is home. He swims intervals, warming up with 800 meters and then doing a few intervals of 500 meters and 50-meter intervals for speed.

Two days a week, Mr. Burton uses weight machines at the Swimming Hole, a nonprofit pool and gym facility in Stowe that he and his wife helped fund. He does an all-body workout with a focus on legs. ''The stronger my legs, the better my snowboarding,'' he says. He says he used to lift more but scaled back when he began practicing yoga. ''I might not be as strong as I once was but I feel better doing yoga,'' he says. ''It makes surfing easier and every day things easier, like standing on one leg when you're drying your feet after you get out of the shower.''

He takes a private Ashtanga-style yoga lesson in his home once a week.

THE DIET

Mr. Burton is pescetarian and tries to eat mostly organic. He and his wife hire someone to help prepare meals, which are left in the fridge. ''We're spoiled,'' he says. In the morning Mr. Burton has a smoothie made from frozen mangos and frozen peaches or frozen berries and bananas. Lunch might be vegetable soup and an avocado and tomato sandwich with a tiny bit of mayo on whole wheat bread. They might have a squash soup with some cheese or lentils and a salad with avocado. ''I average more than two avocados a day,'' he says. His wife's vegetable garden provides many of the ingredients that go into meals. They freeze vegetables to use during the winter. His splurge is pizza.

THE GEAR

Mr. Burton estimates he has about 30 different snowboards at home. His favorites are the Burton Namedropper (retail $419.95) and the Burton Barracuda (retail $519.95). Right now he is riding with Burton EST Genesis bindings (retail $329.95) and wearing Burton Ion leather boots (retail $499.95). Mr. Burton likes to hike in Adidas trail running sneakers. In 2006, Burton purchased Channel Islands Surfboards and Mr. Burton is constantly trying out new boards. He has recently been riding the Average Joe short board (retail about $1,500) and a Waterhog longboard (retail $765) from Channel Islands.

THE PLAYLIST

''I'm hooked on hip hop,'' he says. ''It drives Donna nuts so I try not to listen to it at home but I'll put on my headphones when I hike. The music is so clean and raw. It really motivates me.'' He says he'll listen to the classics from Biggie [The Notorious B.I.G.], Tupac, and 2 Chainz or he'll put on the hip-hop channel on Sirius XM Radio. ''I also love classic rock so much that my kids now like it.''

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

RECOGNIZING THE LEGACY OF STORER COLLEGE

• Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I wish to honor Storer College, a historic educational establishment that truly left a significant imprint on the history of our State and our Nation.

Located in West Virginia's Eastern Panhandle in beautiful Harpers Ferry, the legacy of Storer College began following the Civil War. It was established by the Reverend Dr. Nathan Cook Brackett and philanthropist John Storer of Sanford, ME, whose goals were to create a school that was open and accepting of all students regardless of gender, race, or religion.

Particularly now, during Black History Month, it is fitting to recognize such a tremendously important endeavor as Storer College because it had such a significant impact on civil rights in the decades following the Civil War. This educational institution was a constant refuge for former slaves who found themselves without the necessary skillsets to lead marketable lives. Attendees were taught how to read and write, but they also gained a sense of purpose.

John Brown's raid is largely considered the motivation for the school's creation in Jefferson County, as the 1859 rebellion liberated countless African Americans in the area. Frederick Douglass, also a trustee of Storer College, once spoke at the school about John Brown and the raid's significance.

On October 2, 1867, Storer Normal School opened its doors with 2 teachers and 19 attending students. Under the leadership of Henry T. McDonald, Storer converted into a college in 1938.

Storer College set the groundwork for integrated education across the rest of the Nation. For many years, it was the only school that allowed African Americans to acquire an education past elementary school.

By the end of the 19th century, our Nation faced another battle marked with Jim Crow laws and legal segregation. To combat these injustices, many brilliant leaders in the African-American community created the Niagra

Movement, a precursor to the NAACP. The second meeting of the Niagra Movement was held at Storer College in 1906. It was supported by such leaders as W.E.B. Du Bois, William Monroe Trotter, and Booker T. Washington.

In 1954, legal segregation came to an end with the Supreme Court's decision in Brown v. the Board of Education. This decision, while revolutionary across our Nation, also brought an end to Federal and State funding for Storer College, and regrettably, its doors closed a year later.

Today, though no longer a learning institution, the National Park Service continues the college's mission to welcome individuals of all backgrounds by using the campus as a training facility. It continues to serve as a staunch reminder of triumph over injustice.

As we reflect on Storer's history, it is important that we continue to pass down this legacy for future generations because it remains relevant in so many ways to this day.●

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 2:16 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bills, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 361. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to codify authority under existing grant guidance authorizing use of Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding for enhancing medical preparedness, medical surge capacity, and mass prophylaxis capabilities.

H.R. 615. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to take administration action to achieve and maintain interoperable communications capabilities among the components of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

H.R. 623. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group, and for other purposes.

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

H. Con. Res. 12. Concurrent resolution authorizing the use of the rotunda of the United States Capitol for a ceremony to present the Congressional Gold Medal to Jack Nicklaus.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 361. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to codify authority under existing grant guidance authorizing use of Urban Area Security Initiative and State Homeland Security Grant Program funding for enhancing medical preparedness, medical surge capacity, and mass prophylaxis capabilities; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 615. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require the Under Secretary for Management of the Department of Homeland Security to take administrative action to achieve and maintain interoperable communications capabilities among the components of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

H.R. 623. An act to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to authorize the Department of Homeland Security to establish a social media working group, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

MEASURES PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following bills were read the second time, and placed on the calendar:

S. 338. A bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S. 339. A bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 entirely.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

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

S. 192. A bill to reauthorize the Older Americans Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

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. BLUNT (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. PORTMAN, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 340. A bill to make certain luggage and travel articles eligible for duty-free treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. CARPER):

S. 341. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent certain small business tax provisions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mr. RUBIO):

S. 342. A bill to promote the use of blended learning in classrooms across America; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN):

S. 343. A bill to ensure that individuals do not simultaneously receive unemployment compensation and disability insurance benefits; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. BURR):

S. 344. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to equalize the excise tax on liquified petroleum gas and liquified natural gas; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself and Mr. TOOMEY):

S. 345. A bill to limit the level of premium subsidy provided by the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation to agricultural producers; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. WYDEN (for himself and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 346. A bill to withdraw certain land located in Curry County and Josephine County, Oregon, from all forms of entry, appropriation, or disposal under the public land laws, location, entry, and patent under the mining laws, and operation under the mineral leasing and geothermal leasing laws, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 347. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide that the individual health insurance mandate not apply until the employer health insurance mandate is enforced without exceptions; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. HATCH (for himself and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 348. A bill to impose enhanced penalties for conduct relating to unlawful production of a controlled substance on Federal property or while intentionally trespassing on the property of another that causes environmental damage; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 349. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to empower individuals with disabilities to establish their own supplemental needs trusts; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FISCHER (for herself, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. GRASSLEY, and Mr. CRAPO):

S. 350. A bill to amend title 31, United States Code, to provide for transparency of payments made from the Judgment Fund; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. HELLER:

S. 351. A bill to prevent homeowners from being forced to pay taxes on forgiven mortgage loan debt; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. SCHATZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. BROWN, Mrs. CAPITO, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KAINE, Mr. KIRK, Mr. MORAN, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. ROBERTS, and Mr. RISCH):

S. 352. A bill to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 353. A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to prevent unjust and irrational criminal punishments; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE):

S. 354. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 820 Elmwood Avenue in Providence, Rhode Island, as the ''Sister Ann Keefe Post Office''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 355. A bill to support the provision of safe relationship behavior education and training; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. REED, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. Res. 63. A resolution congratulating the New England Patriots on their victory in Super Bowl XLIX; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CASEY, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. KING, and Mr. CORNYN):

S. Res. 64. A resolution designating February 2 through 6, 2015, as ''National School Counseling Week''; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 48

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the names of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 48, a bill to prohibit discrimination against the unborn on the basis of sex or gender, and for other purposes.

S. 53

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 53, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to clarify eligibility for the child tax credit.

S. 165

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) and the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) were added as cosponsors of S. 165, a bill to extend and enhance prohibitions and limitations with respect to the transfer or release of individuals detained at United States Naval Station, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and for other purposes.

S. 183

At the request of Mr. BARRASSO, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 183, a bill to repeal the annual fee on health insurance providers enacted by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

S. 185

At the request of Mr. HATCH, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 185, a bill to create a limited population pathway for approval of certain antibacterial drugs.

S. 207

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 207, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use existing authorities to furnish health care at non-Department of Veterans Affairs facilities to veterans who live more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest medical facility of the Department that furnishes the care sought by the veteran, and for other purposes.

S. 212

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) and the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) were added as cosponsors of S. 212, a bill to amend the Help America Vote Act of 2002 to ensure that voters in elections for Federal office do not wait in long lines in order to vote.

S. 228

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the names of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS), the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN), the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO), the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from North Dakota (Mr. HOEVEN), the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 228, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide for congressional and State approval of national monuments and restrictions on the use of national monuments.

S. 240

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 240, a bill to promote competition, to preserve the ability of local governments to provide broadband capability and services, and for other purposes.

S. 257

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the names of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) and the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) were added as cosponsors of S. 257, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to physician supervision of therapeutic hospital outpatient services.

S. 258

At the request of Mr. ROBERTS, the name of the Senator from West Virginia (Mrs. CAPITO) was added as a cosponsor of S. 258, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to remove the 96-hour physician certification requirement for inpatient critical access hospital services.

S. 271

At the request of Mr. REID, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 271, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit certain retired members of the uniformed services who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 272

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. MURPHY) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 272, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

S. 275

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 275, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the coverage of home as a site of care for infusion therapy under the Medicare program.

S. 309

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 309, a bill to prohibit earmarks.

S. 310

At the request of Mr. CASSIDY, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) were added as cosponsors of S. 310, a bill to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government.

S. 314

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 314, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of pharmacist services.

S. 326

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 326, a bill to amend the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 to provide cancellation ceilings for stewardship end result contracting projects, and for other purposes.

S. 336

At the request of Mr. CRUZ, the names of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER), the Senator from Alaska (Mr. SULLIVAN) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) were added as cosponsors of S. 336, a bill to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care and Education Reconciliation Act of 2010 entirely.

S. 338

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S. RES. 52

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. Res. 52, a resolution calling for the release of Ukrainian fighter pilot Nadiya Savchenko, who was captured by Russian forces in Eastern Ukraine and has been held illegally in a Russian prison since July 2014.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. KAINE (for himself, Mrs. MCCASKILL, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 355. A bill to support the provision of safe relationship behavior education and training; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, it is widely recognized that relationship violence and campus sexual assault are major issues facing our Nation. According to the Department of Justice more than 290,000 Americans are victims of rape and sexual assault each year with young women between the ages of 16 and 24 consistently experiencing the highest rate of intimate partner violence. Secondary schools can play an important role in educating young people about relationship behavior and dating violence, but comprehensive health education courses are not required to include these topics, even though similar requirements for including age appropriate content and abstinence-only education already exist.

Safe relationship behavior education is age-appropriate education that promotes safe relationships and teaches students to recognize and prevent physical and emotional relationship abuse, including teen and adolescent dating violence, domestic abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment. This includes education regarding consent as well as emotional health and well-being in relationships. Currently there is no federal requirement that sex education courses cover topics like sexual assault prevention and discussions about communication in safe relationships.

This is why I am proud to introduce with my colleagues, Senator MCCASKILL and Senator BLUMENTHAL, the Teach Safe Relationships Act of 2015, which would build upon the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act to develop and implement prevention and intervention policies in middle and high schools, including appropriate procedures for students who are experiencing or perpetrating domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or sex trafficking.

The idea for this legislation developed as a result of a meeting at the University of Virginia with members of One Less, a sexual assault education group that advocates for survivors of rape and sexual assault. With the alarming statistics on the prevalence of sexual assault on college campuses and in communities across the country, secondary schools should play a role in promoting safe relationship behavior and teaching students about sexual assault and dating violence.

Currently, it is not mandatory for schools to offer health education. But if they do, this proposal is consistent with existing requirements in current law. This bill will amend the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act, ESEA, to include safe relationship behavior education in comprehensive health education and assists State and local educational agencies and institutions to meet the Title IX requirements of the Educational Amendments of 1972. Additionally, this legislation authorizes grant programs to enable secondary schools to educate staff and administration, and provide age appropriate educational curricula for students regarding safe relationship behavior. In addition to being age-appropriate the training and education programs must also be culturally and linguistically appropriate, reflecting the diverse circumstances and realities of young people.

I am hopeful the Teach Safe Relationships Act will be one part of the solution as lawmakers, parents, colleges and universities, and law enforcement continue working together to embrace comprehensive reforms to make our country safer. I strongly encourage my colleagues in the Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee to consider this legislation in any ESEA reauthorization.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 63—CONGRATULATING THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS ON THEIR VICTORY IN SUPER BOWL XLIX

Ms. WARREN (for herself, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. REED of Rhode Island, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Ms. COLLINS) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation:

S. RES. 63

Whereas on Sunday, February 1, 2015, the New England Patriots won Super Bowl XLIX with a score of 28 to 24, defeating the Seattle Seahawks in Glendale, Arizona;

Whereas Malcolm Butler's goal line interception with 20 seconds remaining in the game clinched the Super Bowl XLIX Championship for the New England Patriots;

Whereas the Super Bowl XLIX victory is the fourth Super Bowl Championship for the New England Patriots;

Whereas quarterback Tom Brady broke, tied, or extended 9 Super Bowl records in leading the New England Patriots to their fourth Super Bowl victory and was named the ''Super Bowl Most Valuable Player'' for the third time;

Whereas Head Coach Bill Belichick, Coordinators Matt Patricia and Josh McDaniels, and the staff of the New England Patriots brilliantly created successful game plans throughout the 2014 season;

Whereas extraordinary efforts by players of the New England Patriots, including Tom Brady, Julian Edelman, Rob Gronkowski, Brandon LaFell, Danny Amendola, Shane Vereen, LeGarrette Blount, Darrelle Revis, Chandler Jones, Jamie Collins, Vince Wilfork, Rob Ninkovich, Devin McCourty, Don'ta Hightower, Sealver Siliga, Alan Branch, Ryan Allen, Stephen Gostkowski, Brandon Browner, Matthew Slater, and Malcolm Butler, significantly contributed to the Super Bowl XLIX victory;

Whereas the offensive line of the New England Patriots was crucial to their victory in Super Bowl XLIX, and strong efforts by Nate Solder, Sebastian Vollmer, Bryan Stork, Ryan Wendell, Dan Connolly, and Cameron Fleming resulted in the New England Patriots conceding only one sack out of the 51 times quarterback Tom Brady dropped back to pass during Super Bowl XLIX;

Whereas Robert Kraft, the owner of the New England Patriots, deserves great credit for his unwavering commitment and leadership, and for his gracious acknowledgment that the team's Super Bowl Championship would not have been possible without the strong support of the millions of fans who comprise ''Patriots Nation''; and

Whereas all members of the New England Patriots ''did their job'' to help deliver a fourth Vince Lombardi Trophy to New England and are now ''on to the White House'' to celebrate their victory: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate congratulates the New England Patriots on their dramatic Super Bowl XLIX victory.

SENATE RESOLUTION 64—DESIGNATING FEBRUARY 2 THROUGH 6, 2015, AS ''NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK''

Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. CASEY, Ms. STABENOW, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. KING, and Mr. CORNYN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 64

Whereas the American School Counselor Association has designated February 2 through 6, 2015, as ''National School Counseling Week'';

Whereas school counselors have long advocated for equal opportunities for all students;

Whereas school counselors help develop well-rounded students by guiding students through academic, personal, social, and career development;

Whereas personal and social growth results in increased academic achievement;

Whereas school counselors play a vital role in ensuring that students are ready for college and careers;

Whereas school counselors play a vital role in making students aware of opportunities for financial aid and college scholarships;

Whereas school counselors assist with and coordinate efforts to foster a positive school climate, resulting in a safer learning environment for all students;

Whereas school counselors have been instrumental in helping students, teachers, and parents deal with personal trauma as well as tragedies in their communities and the United States;

Whereas students face myriad challenges every day, including peer pressure, bullying, mental health issues, the deployment of family members to serve in conflicts overseas, and school violence;

Whereas a school counselor is 1 of the few professionals in a school building who is trained in both education and social and emotional development;

Whereas the roles and responsibilities of school counselors are often misunderstood;

Whereas the school counselor position is often among the first to be eliminated to meet budgetary constraints;

Whereas the national average ratio of students to school counselors is 471 to 1, almost twice the 250 to 1 ratio recommended by the American School Counselor Association, the National Association for College Admission Counseling, and other organizations; and

Whereas the celebration of National School Counseling Week will increase awareness of the important and necessary role school counselors play in the lives of students in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates February 2 through 6, 2015, as ''National School Counseling Week''; and

(2) encourages the people of the United States to observe National School Counseling Week with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of the role school counselors play in schools and the community at large in preparing students for fulfilling lives as contributing members of society.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 3, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 3, 2015, at 10:30 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Internal Revenue Service Operations and the President's Budget for Fiscal Year 2016.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 3, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SH–216 of the Hart Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Fixing No Child Left Behind: Innovation to Better Meet the Needs of Students.''

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 3, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON WESTERN HEMISPHERE, TRANSNATIONAL CRIME, CIVILIAN SECURITY, DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on February 3, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Understanding the Impact of U.S. Policy Changes on Human Rights and Democracy in Cuba.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Eric Bader, a detailee from the Coast Guard, be granted floor privileges for the duration of debate to consider the fiscal year 2015 Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill.

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

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, pursuant to Public Law 94–304, as amended by Public Law 99–7, appoints the following Senators as members of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki) during the 114th Congress: the Honorable ROGER WICKER of Mississippi, Co-Chair; the Honorable RICHARD BURR of North Carolina; and the Honorable JOHN BOOZMAN of Arkansas.

The Chair, on behalf of the majority leader, pursuant to the provisions of Public Law 99–93, as amended by Public Law 99–151, appoints the following Senators as members of the United States Senate Caucus on International Narcotics Control during the 114th Congress: the Honorable CHUCK GRASSLEY of Iowa, Co-Chairman; the Honorable JOHN CORNYN of Texas; the Honorable JAMES E. RISCH of Idaho; and the Honorable JEFF SESSIONS of Alabama.

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 64, which was submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 64) designating February 2 through 6, 2015, as ''National School Counseling Week.''

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 64) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, February 4; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m., equally divided, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; and that following morning business, the Senate recess until 2 p.m. to allow for the bipartisan conference meeting.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MCCONNELL. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:19 p.m., adjourned until Wednesday, February 4, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.