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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, March 13, 2015, at 11 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2015

The Senate met at 9:30 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.

Lord of life and love and laughter, You are the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end. Thank You for the gift of this day, for life and health, for forgiveness and freedom, for family and friends. Lord, we are grateful for the hope we have in You and for the joy we find in Your presence. You have given us this great gift of prayer, enabling us to reach out to You whenever we desire.

Today, use our Senators to make our Nation stronger and our world better. Open their ears to the cries of despair and give them wisdom to solve difficult problems. Sanctify their thoughts, words, and deeds so that they will live worthy of Your great love.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). The majority leader is recognized.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, every year in America countless innocent victims, including children, are bought and sold into modern-day slavery. This heinous crime of human trafficking is shameful and disgraceful, and the Senate can do something about it by passing the bipartisan human rights legislation before us today.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, introduced by Senator CORNYN and his Democratic colleague Senator KLOBUCHAR, would give voices to the voiceless and justice to the children suffering in the shadows. Their bipartisan human rights bill may not be that long, but it sure is effective, and it is transparent. This bill has been available for any Senator and any member of the public to read since January. This bipartisan legislation was considered and strengthened in an open and transparent committee process. This human rights bill conforms with longstanding bipartisan law that so many of our Democratic friends have supported repeatedly. It is no wonder that once Senators have read the bill, they can't seem to help but support it.

We welcome the 13 Democratic cosponsors of this human rights bill. We welcome the messages of support our Democratic friends have delivered as well.

Here is what one Democratic Senator from New York had to say just a few days ago. ''We should pass Senator Cornyn's Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act,'' she said. She explained that this bipartisan bill would ''support programs for survivors of human trafficking and child pornography and ensure that the johns who are buying trafficking victims are actually prosecuted in Federal court.'' She is right. All of those measures are contained in the text of this bipartisan bill.

We also heard the Democratic Senator from North Dakota who called on me to bring ''S. 178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, to the floor for a vote.'' I was happy to do it. I am appreciative of her support.

I am appreciative of the support from so many from across the aisle who have read and support this bill. The children who suffer from such terrible oppression and injustice must appreciate their support too. They must appreciate our Democratic friends closely examining this bipartisan human rights bill of modest length and then voting unanimously to support it in the Judiciary Committee.

On Monday they must have appreciated seeing our Democratic friends join with us to unanimously advance the same bipartisan human rights bill. Here is what the Democratic leader had to say that day—right after I called for strong bipartisan backing for our human rights legislation. ''On human trafficking, I underscore, appreciate, and agree with the statement of the Republican leader. I feel very confident we will clear on our side moving to that. I think it would be a waste of the

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

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Senate's time to have a vote on a motion to proceed and a waste of time afterward. . . . I doubt there will be problems on my side,'' the Democratic leader said. ''If there are, I will work to clear them.'' I was very appreciative of my good friend making that statement after examining this bipartisan legislation.

This bipartisan human rights bill may not be that long, but it is critical to helping lift innocent victims out of the shadows.

A broad coalition—everyone from the NAACP to the National Domestic Violence Hotline—has called it ''vital.''

They wrote:

> The [Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act] provides unprecedented support to domestic victims of trafficking who are too often invisible and underserved.

They continued:

> As leaders in the anti-trafficking, anti-violence, child welfare, civil rights, runaway and homeless youth, and human rights movements, we urge Congress to pass this critical piece of legislation.

So I would urge Members on both sides of the aisle to help pass this transparent and bipartisan human rights legislation overwhelmingly.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

HEALTH CARE SUBSIDIES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, around the country we see a number of stories appearing. I will take one of the stories from the New York Times and read just a little bit of it. It is a long article, but everyone gets the drift of it. There are a few paragraphs I am going to read.

> The Obama administration said Tuesday that 11.7 million Americans now have private health insurance through federal and state marketplaces, with 86 percent of them receiving financial assistance from the federal government to help pay premiums.
>
> About three-fourths of people with marketplace coverage—8.8 million consumers—live in the 37 states served by HealthCare.gov, the website for the federal insurance exchange. The other 2.9 million people are in states that created and operate their own exchanges.
>
> Sylvia Mathews Burwell, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, underlined the importance of subsidies for people in states using the federal exchange—subsidies that could be withdrawn if the Supreme Court rules against the Obama administration in a pending case.
>
> Administration officials suggested that more than 7 million people could lose subsidies, making insurance unaffordable, if the court ruled that such assistance was unavailable in the federal exchange. The plaintiffs contend that the Affordable Care Act does not allow subsidies in the federal exchange.
>
> In Florida, nearly 1.6 million people have selected or been automatically re-enrolled in health plans—the largest enrollment of any state in the federal exchange—and 1.5 million of them qualified for subsidies in the form of tax credits, which averaged $294 a month.
>
> In Texas, 1.2 million people selected or were re-enrolled in health plans, and one million of them qualified for financial assistance averaging $239 a month.
>
> In North Carolina, 560,400 people selected health plans in the federal marketplace, and 515,500 of them qualified for subsidies averaging $315 a month.

A lot rides on what the Supreme Court does, affecting millions and millions of people. If the Supreme Court can't see the absolute clear language of that bill, millions of people will lose their health insurance, and that would be a tragedy. It would be so very bad if suddenly people find themselves with no health insurance after they waited for so long to get it.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, an ancient Greek philosopher once said, ''To be doing good deeds is man's most glorious task.''

Today the Senate has an opportunity to do a good deed. We have a chance to do something to address human trafficking. It is hard to fathom that in the 21st century, slavery continues to rear its ugly head in the form of human trafficking. But in the shadows of American society, there are children, women, and men who are literally being enslaved and subjected to the most shockingly inhumane treatment imaginable. The victims of human trafficking suffer physical and sexual abuse and violence. Forced to live in squalor, they have no hope. This legislation before this body aims to change that. It seeks to not only prevent trafficking but also gives survivors hope for a new life.

This legislation creates a domestic trafficking victims fund that will help support victims of trafficking and child pornography get back on their feet by providing housing, job training, and other support services. This legislation provides funding to train law enforcement in rescuing and supporting survivors of human trafficking and effectively prosecuting traffickers. It officially designates child pornography as a form of human trafficking and ensures that victims have direct access to child advocacy centers. It protects victims and witnesses by treating suspected human traffickers as violent criminals. It keeps victims of trafficking and child pornography informed regarding any plea bargain or deferred prosecution related to their cases.

This legislation is good for our country. It will go a long way in curbing human trafficking and child pornography. That is why it is supported by 200 law enforcement and victims' rights groups nationwide.

Unfortunately, Republicans are committed to turning a bipartisan bill into an unrelated and unconscionable political fight. We can give all the speeches out here we want saying somebody should have read the bill more closely. The question is—and we can have all kinds of debates out here as to how it got in the bill. A number of people feel it was by a little bit of sleight of hand and that it shouldn't be in there. In this legislation that is meant as an outline to stop child trafficking and human trafficking generally, there is a provision dealing with abortion. It has nothing—nothing—to do with this.

I served in the House of Representatives with a very fine man. He has had his name affixed to an anti-abortion bill—anti-abortion legislation for almost three decades, and it has been continued year after year in appropriations bills. What I am talking about, what is happening in this legislation, it would make it permanent. It is wrong.

If my friend the Republican leader is so in tune with getting this passed, take that provision out of the bill; otherwise, it will not pass. Take it out.

It is unfortunate that Republicans are committed to turning a bipartisan bill into an unrelated, unconscionable political fight. Is it worth it? Is it really worth endangering a piece of legislation that would do good for our country?

Democrats will not allow a bill to prevent human trafficking and child pornography to be hijacked by a Republican ploy. We can do a lot of good with this legislation, and I hope my Republican friends will choose to do the right thing and take this out of this legislation and pass this bill without any gimmicks.

LETTER SENT TO IRAN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, talking about gimmicks, there have been a number of reports in the press in the last couple of days about how this unprecedented letter to the leaders of the Iranian regime originated. We know 47 Republican Senators signed it. There are news accounts reporting that this was intended as a big joke. A big joke? Others say Republicans say it was a political organizing exercise after being hammered so hard with their nonfunding of Homeland Security. Others say it was simply designed to sabotage negotiations. Pick whatever one of the three you want. Whatever the reason, one thing is clear: This is not a joke; this is not an organizing exercise; this is about Iran getting a nuclear weapon.

I am disappointed that so many of my Republican colleagues are destroying the long tradition of bipartisanship in defending Israel and stopping Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. I am heartened that a few Republicans—seven to be exact—didn't sign the letter. That is nice. Seven out of 54 didn't sign the letter. Seven is certainly better than nothing.

As some of the seven Republican Senators have said, they agree with Democrats that this letter was not appropriate. We are witnessing a fundamental test of Republicans' ability to govern. They are treating nuclear negotiations as a chance to play games—

political games. They are treating a human trafficking bill as a chance to play some of these games. This is not the time for games. Republicans' behavior on these issues is irresponsible and beneath the dignity of this institution. We can and should do better.

Mr. President, what is the business of the day?

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, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided. The Democrats will control the first half and the majority will control the final half.

The assistant minority leader.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, last week I had an opportunity to cross the street into the Supreme Court, and I witnessed the first oral argument I have ever seen. It was a historic moment for me and for our Nation because it was a moment for the Court to argue about the Affordable Care Act and the intention of Congress when it was creating this Affordable Care Act.

Having been here at the time it was debated and having voted for it, it was interesting to hear arguments made on the floor of the Supreme Court that suggested something we had never intended. The exchanges that were created under the Affordable Care Act are exchanges created by each State or Federal exchanges. There was never a distinction made in the debate nor any intention that the subsidy given to those who bought insurance in these exchanges would be different if the exchanges were State-created or federally created, and that is basically the argument before the Supreme Court.

One can only imagine what the final decision of the Supreme Court will be, but we know it is critically important to millions of Americans. In the past year alone, 10 million uninsured Americans finally have insurance because of the Affordable Care Act. In the private market, millions more now have access to expanded coverage for preventive health services, such as a mammogram or a flu shot, without any cost sharing. Because of the Affordable Care Act, a person no longer needs to stay in a job simply to carry health insurance or be denied coverage because of a preexisting condition—a situation which virtually every family faces. And because of this law, prescription drugs for seniors cost less.

Last week, when the Supreme Court heard arguments in King v. Burwell, the plaintiffs made an argument that those who were governed by Federal exchanges were supposed to be treated differently under this act. That was never the intention of those of us who were part of the creation and voting for this legislation.

A ruling in favor of King would change this provision as we intended it. It would mean 8 million Americans would no longer be able to afford health insurance.

According to the Urban Institute, premiums for people able to purchase insurance would increase by 35 percent. I can't imagine that even Senators who voted against this bill are cheering at the prospect that 8 million Americans would lose insurance and many others would face higher premiums.

Well, the Republicans have argued they have an alternative to the Affordable Care Act in the Senate. They put out a draft proposal last month. The chairman of the Ways and Means Committee in the House said he was going to release his own plan.

The Affordable Care Act puts families in charge of their care instead of insurance companies. It expands health care coverage and lowers health care costs, makes Medicare stronger, and lowers the deficit.

What part of that do my Republican colleagues disagree with?

Before the enactment of the Affordable Care Act, 50 million Americans lacked health insurance while health care costs for working families and small businesses were increasing by double digits. The Affordable Care Act changed all of that. Ten million people now have private health insurance, millions more are covered by Medicaid, and for the first time ever insurance companies have to live up to their promise of being there when you actually need them.

The Senate Republican proposal falls short. It would allow insurance companies once again to charge higher premiums to women, to decide that people with preexisting conditions will not get any coverage at all, and to decide that certain individuals will only get so much help for paying their bills. If Republicans have their way, insurance companies will get to decide again whether you can renew your health insurance policy as you become older. Worse yet, under the Republican proposal, 12 million people would lose their health insurance and taxes on working families would go up. That is not right.

The Supreme Court would put in jeopardy health insurance coverage for Ariana Jimenez. She lives in Chicago and works part time as a nursing assistant at a community health center. Ariana pays $52 a month for her health insurance premium. When asked what would happen to her coverage if the Supreme Court took away the tax credit, she simply said: ''I wouldn't be able to afford it.''

In Illinois over 800,000 people now have health insurance. Over 290,000 people purchased their plan through the Illinois marketplace, which is a Federal marketplace. An additional 530,000 people have enrolled in Medicaid, and 125,000 young adults in Illinois can still stay on their parents' health insurance plan.

Since September 2010, children under the age of 18 enrolled in the employer-based or marketplace plan have been eligible to receive vaccinations for diseases such as measles without any cost sharing.

A few years ago Domingo Carino found out he had a health condition that required medication he couldn't afford. Thanks to the Affordable Care Act and to some help from staff at the Asian Human Services Family Health Center in Chicago, Domingo found good health insurance that only costs him $11 a month. Domingo's plan not only allows him to afford the medication he desperately needs, but he is also able to keep his current primary care physician. According to Domingo, he can now live without worrying about how to afford his medication.

For Domingo and millions like him the tax credits provided by the Affordable Care Act are a lifesaver. If those who oppose the Affordable Care Act prevail in the Supreme Court, that tax subsidy, or tax credit, will not be available to Domingo.

Over 54 million people also benefit from Medicaid. Before the Affordable Care Act, two out of three people on Medicaid were pregnant women and children. That is 36 million vulnerable Americans. Medicaid also provides for people with disabilities.

Before the Affordable Care Act, almost 3 million people were covered by Medicaid in Illinois. More than half a million births were covered by Medicaid in Illinois, too. Since the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, another 290,000 people in Illinois are covered by Medicaid. That means these people finally get better from a condition they could not afford to treat. That is a success story.

The new Republican plan uses something else out of an old playbook. Republicans want to cap Medicaid spending for each beneficiary. This budget gimmick would hurt the most vulnerable people in America—low-income seniors, people with disabilities, children, and pregnant mothers. States would be forced to make harsh choices on what they would cover and what they would not cover.

Is that what America wants?

According to a recent Gallup poll, the uninsured rate dropped 3.5 points from 2013 to 2014. In Illinois the uninsured rate dropped 4.5 percent in the same period of time.

The Affordable Care Act includes changes meant to help slow the growth in health care costs, and they are working. We need to stick with the Affordable Care Act.

HEALTH CARE RESEARCH FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, another critical part of this conversation is health care research.

One of the most outstanding men serving the Federal Government in America is named Francis Collins. He is an amazing man who heads up the National Institutes of Health. He is a great physician and a great researcher.

When the United States wanted someone to head up the Human Genome Project, they picked Francis Collins. He managed to bring that project to success by providing more information than anyone ever dreamed of, and now we are better in treating problems and diseases across America.

I went to see him last year at the National Institutes of Health. We talked about medical research in America, and what he had to say was terrifying. There has been a 23-percent decline in medical research in the United States over the last 10 years. We have not even kept up with inflation in providing money for medical research, and that is not lost on people in the research field.

We are now finding that our medical researchers are older and older. Younger researchers have given up. They don't think they are getting approvals for their research applications. As they leave the field, the new generation of researchers has diminished and our ability to find cures has also diminished.

At the same time that the United States is backpedaling and falling away from its leadership in biomedical research, the rest of the world is charging forward. The European Union is making massive investments in medical research and in just a few years the Chinese will pass the United States for the first time in their investment in biomedical research. They understand that in addition to finding cures, biomedical research is really the opening for entrepreneurship, profitability, pharmaceutical companies, medical devices, and they want to make sure China is in the lead. Why isn't the United States in the lead?

I will speak about two particular diseases that need to be researched.

Mr. REID. Will my friend yield for a question?

Mr. DURBIN. I am happy to yield.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I have to leave the floor in a moment, and I would like to direct my question to my friend, the senior Senator from Illinois.

I too met with Francis Collins. He is a genius. We are so fortunate that he is there. He told me something I can't get out of my mind—sequestration. It took $1.5 billion away from the things that the Senator from Illinois has been talking about. The second year of sequestration will take away $2 billion.

I read in the press that Republicans in the House—with their budget and the budget over here—are going to continue the sequestration.

I ask my friend, what will that do to Francis Collins and the people he has working at that institution?

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I will respond to the Democratic leader and say that I have heard the same thing. There are some Republicans in the House who believe that sequestration—this across-the-board cut—is what we should do, and I could not disagree more.

I chair the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. If we go forward with the sequestration, this will be devastating to America's national defense. If we get into this practice of cutting back in biomedical research, it will not only deny us the basic money we need to fund research grants—and we are now funding a lower percentage than we have in decades—it will also mean a discouraging message to researchers. They are going to think: What is the point in becoming an NIH researcher if the government and Congress will not provide the basic resources we need? The third element, which we cannot overlook, are all of the millions of people in the United States and around the world who are praying that we will be able to come up with breakthroughs when it comes to medical research.

In the United States of America, a person is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease once every 68 seconds. Last year we spent over $200 billion on Medicare and Medicaid for the care of Alzheimer's patients.

What Francis Collins has said to me is that if we can dedicate growth in research funds, we can—with the grace of God and maybe miraculously—find a cure or find a way to delay the onset of Alzheimer's, even for a few months. The savings to the Federal Government would be so much more than the actual cost of the medical research.

This notion of cutting back on NIH research, which some in the House are pushing, is really an effort that will cost us more in the long run—not to mention the human suffering.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if I could, through the Chair, ask my friend one final question. During my last trip to the National Institutes of Health, when I met with Dr. Collins and others, one of the issues they were so in tune with was that they were so close to having a universal vaccine for flu. In the past they would come up with the best solution they could for a flu vaccine every year. If we are fortunate, it is 50-percent effective. They are very, very close to having a universal vaccine for flu.

Tens of thousands of people in the United States die from the flu every year. Why didn't they proceed? Sequestration. They didn't have the money to continue the research.

I thank my friend very much for bringing this subject up. It is something that is devastating not only to the scientific community, but it is devastating to the people out there who would benefit from the research who really don't know what could be in store for them.

It is such a shame for our country that China—Japan has done a good job for many, many decades. They have the lowest death rate in the world. The European Union is trudging way ahead of the United States in something on which we have lead forever.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Nevada.

It was not that long ago that America was consumed with Ebola and what it meant in terms of threats to life in Africa, the United States, and around the world, and it was right that we focused on stopping the scourge of the Ebola epidemic in Africa.

But there was a concern, as well, expressed over and over again this last fall, about how many Americans would be a victim to this Ebola epidemic. It turns out at the end of the day that fewer than a handful were actually affected by it, but every year in the United States and around the world, hundreds, if not thousands, die from flu—influenza.

Again, just to get to the point the Senator from Nevada makes, we are penny wise and pound foolish by denying the money for research for a universal flu vaccine that will save lives around the world. A minimal investment in the United States can make a dramatic improvement in the morbidity and mortality of those who are affected by flu.

So I thank the Senator from Nebraska for joining in this conversation this morning and talking about the biomedical research deficit which we are facing in the United States.

I wish to mention one or two other specific examples in this field. The kind of research we are talking about at NIH holds great promise when it comes to treating disorders such as multiple sclerosis. MS is an unpredictable and disabling disease that affects the central nervous system. Symptoms range from numbness and tingling to blindness and paralysis, and there is no known cure.

Today more than 2.3 million people have been diagnosed with MS worldwide, including 20,000 in my home State of Illinois.

Typically, MS is diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 50, but between 8,000 and 10,000 children and adolescents live with it in America, people such as Meghan Malone. In 2004, at the age of 14, Meghan was diagnosed with MS. Her first symptoms began when she was in the eighth grade. She lost vision in her right eye for a few days. One year later her feet went numb while she was out trick or treating with friends. By the next morning she couldn't feel her thighs, and a few days later she was completely numb from the waist down.

Her parents quickly brought her to the hospital where she was diagnosed with MS. She panicked, thinking she was too young for this disease and afraid of what it meant for her future, but she is doing what she can to stay healthy. She spends a lot of time exercising every day. She tries to think positively.

Since her diagnosis, Meghan has gathered her friends and family to participate in Walk MS every May. There is one in my hometown of Springfield, IL. They have raised over $50,000—Meghan has—to help fight the disease. Meghan said:

> I walk to give hope to others who are newly diagnosed with MS. It wasn't easy to hear those words and I think by walking I can help others find ways to be positive about their diagnosis.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society has been sponsoring Walk MS since 1988 and they have raised $870 million to support research. The National Multiple Sclerosis Society and people such as Meghan are doing their part, but if the Federal Government is going to do something it has to do its part. We have to make an investment at the National Institutes of Health to complement the efforts by private citizens and generous people across America to fund research in these diseases.

Let me give an example. Jonah Chan and his team at the University of California in San Francisco can teach us a lesson. Dr. Chan's team invented a new technology that led to the discovery of a drug normally used for allergies that has the potential to repair the nervous system in people with MS, but this important discovery needs further Federal investment in biomedical research to move these early findings to promising treatments. Here is what I have done. I have introduced the American Cures Act. It will increase funding at the Nation's top four biomedical research agencies, a 5-percent annual budget increase over and above inflation—the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, the Department of Defense, and the Veterans' Administration medical research programs. The American Cures Act will make funding for critical biomedical research projects less political and more predictable.

Dr. Collins at NIH told me: If you gave us regular funding increases of 5 percent real growth a year for 10 years, I will prove to you that investment will come back tenfold in helping the improvement of health in the United States and reducing the cost of health care. I believe him. I have confidence in him. So why would we not do it? We should be making this commitment.

Cystic fibrosis is another example of federally funded basic research that improves people's lives. The other day Patrick Magner, a sophomore at Loyola Academy in Wilmette, IL, wrote to me about his two young brothers. John is 12 years old, a fully functioning sixth grader, and Matthew is 9 years old and plays sports in school. On the outside, one would never know they are dealing with cystic fibrosis.

John and Matt both take about 30 pills a day to help with their basic digestive functions. This doesn't include several other prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, and daily therapy. They consider themselves lucky because 50 years ago people with cystic fibrosis didn't live long enough to even attend school. Today, with more advanced treatment, life expectancy for people with cystic fibrosis has increased over 800 percent. Research generated by NIH funding continues to give John and Matt hope for their future.

Their older brother Patrick wrote:

> Without this funding, my two younger brothers might not be alive today. This funding is crucial to not only curing cystic fibrosis, but other diseases as well.

That is the promise of the American Cures Act. It allows America's smartest medical researchers to continue to find treatments to stop progression and one day, God willing, find a cure for diseases such as MS, cystic fibrosis, and many more.

Last week I joined Senator BOB CASEY of Pennsylvania on his resolution to support Multiple Sclerosis Awareness Week. I would also like to acknowledge the work of Senators WYDEN, HATCH, BROWN, MARKEY, and others on behalf of fighting this terrible disease. Together, along with the American Cures Act, these efforts are improving people's lives.

In order to lead to breakthrough cures for these diseases, we need as a nation—as a government—to take the lead. This research shouldn't be a low-budget priority; I think it should be one of the highest.

I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make Federal funding for biomedical research the true national priority which it is.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Senator from Washington.

KING V. BURWELL

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about the oral arguments in King v. Burwell that took place last week. Similar to many of us on the floor today, I was here when we fought to get the Affordable Care Act passed. I know firsthand our top priority was to help all Americans get more affordable health care coverage. That goal is clear in the history and in the text of this law. I am confident the Supreme Court will reach the same conclusion; that no matter how the health care exchange is set up in any State, if people qualify for tax credits, people should get them just as Congress intended. Unfortunately, many of our Republican colleagues appear to be hoping for the opposite outcome.

I wish to take a step back to note how appalling this particular situation is. Right now Republicans seem to be rooting for a ruling that would take away millions of Americans' health care coverage. They seem to want a ruling that would put their own constituents' health at risk, and that amounts to a tax increase on 6.5 million people of about $3,200 a year.

Working families should not have to pay the price for Republican political games, including this Supreme Court case that they pushed for. If I were a mother who no longer has to worry about what happens if my child breaks an ankle or a struggling worker who now has a little bit more to spend on groceries because their health care insurance no longer costs so much, I would have a lot of tough questions for Republicans right now. I would wonder why on Earth Republicans are so focused on taking apart a law that is helping families get quality, affordable health insurance.

The Affordable Care Act was a critical step forward in terms of making sure our health care system puts patients and families first. Over 10 million Americans have gained coverage in the last 2 years. In fact, today the uninsured rate is at a near-historic low. Health care coverage is more affordable for families across the country, and we are seeing important improvements in the quality of care patients are getting.

We have a lot more work to do to strengthen our health care system, but there is no question that this law is doing what we set out to do: expand access to affordable health care for all—all—Americans. Democrats want to build on this progress.

So while we see Republicans putting politics first ahead of families' needs, Democrats are going to be focused on building on the Affordable Care Act with more coverage, not less; more affordability, not less; and better quality, not less.

We know the work to put patients first didn't end when the Affordable Care Act passed. That is why we are going to keep working to move our health care system forward, not backward, for our families.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

WASTEFUL SPENDING

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, last month I came to the floor to launch what I call the ''Waste of the Week.'' We look at how we spend the taxpayers' dollars. We all know the biggest issue over the past several years is now sort of fading into the ether is the fact that the government continues to spend the taxpayers' money in reckless ways, including not balance our budget and go deeply into deficit spending every year, then borrow to cover the cost, and increase our debt limit from the staggering $18 trillion-plus and growing. My purpose in coming to the floor was to highlight some examples of this waste.

I wish to step back for a moment to say this follows numerous bipartisan efforts to deal with a larger issue, and that is our debt and deficit, in a way that we can put a budget proposal together to get us out of this mess and stop loading up our children and grandchildren with the responsibilities and costs they probably will not be able to repay without significant sacrifice in terms of their standard of living.

Having failed every one of those over the past 5 years—Simpson-Bowles, the Gang of 6, the Committee of 12, the supercommittee, the dinner committee on which I serve 7 arduous months trying to come to some minimal agreement in terms of how to deal with our debt and deficit because the President blocked every single attempt. I thought the least we could do was look at the simple things, the easy things. We started with—not such a small thing—duplication of efforts in terms of benefits that went to people that were actually illegal totaling $5.7 billion, the difference between Social Security disability and unemployment insurance.

Last week I talked about duplication. There are 52 programs—through the Federal Government, through a number of agencies, to provide assistance on economic development. Do we need 52? Can't we consolidate some of these down to three or four? Why does every agency in the government have to duplicate what is being done in every other agency? We talked about the savings that would come from that.

It is my understanding that the minority leader and the minority whip—No. 1 and 2 on the Democratic side—came down here and talked about the fact that in the budget we may be cutting funding for the National Institutes of Health and how tragic it would be if we took one penny away from them. I can give them a very simple example on the third week of Waste of the Week in terms of how they can save some money or better utilize some money through the National Institutes of Health.

This is a study for which I have to give credit to my former Senate colleague, Dr. Tom Coburn. For years Dr. Coburn highlighted examples of government waste, fraud, and abuse. He was a champion of transparency and made great strides in giving the American people a more accountable government.

So I come here today to share one of Dr. Coburn's taxpayer issues he brought before the Senate, and I think it needs to be brought here now. How timely it is when I was just preceded unknowingly by those who came to the floor saying we can't take a penny out of NIH because it goes to critical research.

I support NIH. I think it is an important agency. We need to do some of that research. But does NIH need to do this: Does NIH need to fund a study to determine the benefits of massage by using 18 white rabbits from New Zealand that receive 30-minute massages four times a day?

According to co-medical director of the Ohio State University Sports Medical Center, ''We tried to mimic Swedish massage because anecdotally, it's the most popular technique used by athletes.''

That study amounted to a cost of $387,000 of taxpayer money given in a grant. Why didn't they just ask the football team? Why didn't they just walk in the locker room and say: Hey guys, you have just been beat up for 60 minutes and you probably have a lot of aches and pains. A good hot shower and a massage—does that help?

I think every one of us—we have all had aches and pains—understands that a massage helps relieve the soreness. Do we need to spend $387,000 on a study and take 18 white rabbits and give them massages four times a day on taxpayer dollars to prove the point that massages actually work?

So once again, while this is a small thing, we have to add to our chart showing that we continue to expend taxpayer money and waste taxpayer money on frivolous things that are not needed. You can point out every egregious agency spending.

Until we are willing to have the political will to stand up and deal with the runaway entitlements, these discretionary programs will continue to be squeezed. Unfortunately, we have come to a roadblock under this Presidency in terms of any effort left to deal with the larger issue of runaway spending and runaway debt. This burden is being placed on the future of America and the children and grandchildren of Americans and that is generational theft, and it is irresponsible for this body to not take action.

At the very least, can we not at least do the most simple of things in terms of eliminating waste of taxpayer dollars through duplication, and unnecessary studies?

Eliminating waste like this will not change Washington's long-term fiscal picture, but it does point out that it is important to ensure that taxpayer funding of projects like this keep, like the Energizer bunny, going and going.

I hate to say this, but sadly, after the project was over, the 18 New Zealand white rabbits were euthanized. It is my hope that in going forward, instead of killing rabbits, we can kill taxpayer-funded government waste like this project.

I see my colleague from Arizona has come to the floor. I have just finished the latest ''Waste of the Week.'' We will be back next week with ''Waste of the Week'' No. 4.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to thank my friend and colleague from Indiana for his ''Waste of the Week'' speech, although I wish it were the ''Waste of the Day'' event that we celebrate. But I wish to thank him for his steadfast and longstanding efforts at eliminating government waste and mismanagement. If we are going to convince the American people that we need to make significant sacrifices, we have to start with an efficient government that does not waste the taxpayers' dollars. So I thank my friend from Indiana.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate in morning business.

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

REMEMBERING BORIS NEMTSOV

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, last week Senator GRAHAM and I introduced a Senate resolution condemning the murder of my friend and a true Russian Patriot, Boris Nemtsov. The resolution calls upon the Russian Federation to support an independent investigation into Boris Nemtsov's murder and take immediate steps to end its suppression of free speech and justice. It also urges President Obama to continue to sanction human rights violators in the Russian Federation and to increase U.S. support to like-minded human rights activists in Russia.

My friends, I was devastated to learn of Boris's murder in Moscow last month. My thoughts and prayers remain with his family and many friends in Russia and around the world. With his death, the struggle for free speech and human rights in Russia has suffered another shattering blow.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Boris Nemtsov was one of Russia's earliest and most vigorous economic and political reformers, a champion of liberalization and democracy. His leadership of Russia's laboratory of reform eventually brought him to Moscow, where he served as Deputy Prime Minister and was once a favorite for the Russian Presidency.

But then Russia took a dark turn when Vladimir Putin entered the Kremlin. Boris was one of the first to warn of the coming Putin dictatorship, even when many of his fellow liberals could not see it. As Putin's grip on power tightened, Boris's hopes for a free, just, and economically vibrant Russia, at home and at peace in Europe, were dashed. Yet, even after multiple arrests and countless threats on his life, Boris never stopped fighting the corruption and lawlessness of the Putin regime, never stopped seeking to advance democracy, human rights, free speech, free market reforms, and the rule of law.

In December 2011 Boris Nemtsov helped mobilize the largest anti-Kremlin demonstrations since the early 1990s, leading tens of thousands of Russians to march in protest of widespread fraud and corruption in the parliamentary elections. He stood up to harsh laws that vastly expanded the definition of ''treason,'' increased government control over the media, and limited the scope and activities of opposition parties and civil society organizations—laws that Vladimir Putin and his cronies have exploited to intimidate the Russian people into obedience.

Shortly before his death, Boris Nemtsov was reportedly planning to release a report on Russia's military involvement in Ukraine. At the protest march scheduled 2 days after his murder, he was set to demand ''the immediate end to the war and any aggressive actions towards Ukraine.'' He investigated and saw through the fabricated

rationalizations of Putin's war. Putin didn't invade Ukraine to protect Russian-speaking peoples or to establish a federal state. Putin didn't invade Ukraine because he is crazy or merely to reassert Russia's sphere of influence in the near abroad. Rather, Boris Nemtsov wrote that the goal of Putin's ''fratricidal war'' is the ''preservation of personal power and money at any cost,'' a ''cold strategy for lifelong despotism.'' Putin was willing to doom Russia to isolation and sanctions and to sink his country ''into lies, violence, obscurantism, and imperial hysteria'' for his own personal power and enrichment. As Boris Nemtsov knew, this is not Russia's war; this is not Ukraine's war; this is Vladimir Putin's war.

That is why Boris Nemtsov's murder is not just a tragedy for the people of Russia but for the people of Ukraine. He was one of the few brave Russians who sought to pierce the veneer of Putin's cynical and false narrative that Russia was not at war in Ukraine. There are many who now believe that Boris is yet another casualty of that war. At the memorial march honoring his life in Moscow on Sunday, one woman held a sign that read ''The war killed Nemtsov.''

I had long been concerned about Boris's safety and said so publicly. I will never forget the last meeting we had in my office. I begged him to be careful, and Boris told me he would never give up the fight for freedom, human rights, and rule of law for his fellow Russians, even if it cost him his life. I am heartbroken that it has come to that.

That Boris Nemtsov's murder occurred on a bridge in a shadow of the Kremlin in one of the most secure parts of the Russian capital raises serious questions about the circumstances of his killing and who was responsible. In KGB fashion, Vladimir Putin will round up all the usual suspects, but I fear we will never know who really pulled the trigger that night. Putin's farcical oversight of the investigation ensures that it will be a sham.

We don't need any investigation to know who was responsible for Boris's murder. Vladimir Putin may not have ordered Boris's assassination, but perhaps what is most frightening about Putin's Russia is that he didn't need to. Boris is dead because of the culture of impunity that Vladimir Putin has created in Russia, where individuals are routinely persecuted and attacked for their beliefs, including by the Russian Government, and no one is ever held responsible.

Sadly, Boris Nemtsov was not the first and certainly will not be the last victim of Putin's repression. The culture of impunity has steadily worsened, deepened by the increased surveillance and harassment of members of opposition and civil society groups, the ongoing detention of numerous political prisoners, and by the continued violent attacks on brave journalists who dare to publish the truth about official corruption and other state crimes in Russia.

According to one news report, at least 23 journalists have been murdered in Russia for reporting on government criminality and abuse since Vladimir Putin came to power in 2000, along with several anti-Kremlin political activists. In only two of these cases have there been convictions.

Igor Domnikov, a reporter who was writing about government corruption, was severely beaten in Moscow. He died 2 months later.

Sergei Yushenkov, a leader of a Russian opposition party, was shot and killed at the entrance of his apartment building. At the time, he was serving on a commission investigating the Kremlin's potential role in the 1999 apartment bombings in Russia.

Another member of that commission, a reporter who was investigating corruption in Russian law enforcement, was poisoned to death.

American journalist Paul Klebnikov was investigating Russian Government connections to organized crime when he was shot to death in Moscow.

Anna Politkovskaya, a journalist and human rights activist, was a fierce critic of Vladimir Putin's brutal war in Chechyna. She was murdered in the stairwell of her apartment building on Vladimir Putin's birthday in 2006. The lawyer who represented her family later survived a poisoning attempt.

Former FSB officer Alexander Litvinenko exposed the Putin regime's massive corruption, ties to organized crime, and involvement in assassination and murder. He was poisoned in 2006 with a radioactive isotope in a brazen act of nuclear terrorism.

Ivan Safronov was investigating a secret sale of Russian missiles and fighter jets to Syria and Iran. He was pushed to his death from the window of his Moscow apartment.

Sergei Magnitsky blew the whistle on tax fraud and large-scale theft by Russian Government officials. He was thrown into one of Russia's harshest prisons without trial, beaten and tortured, denied medical care, and died in excruciating pain. Even after his death, the Russian courts convicted him of tax evasion in a show trial.

As Orwell once wrote, ''In a time of universal deceit—telling the truth is a revolutionary act.''

Russia has fewer and fewer revolutionaries, but Boris Nemtsov was certainly one of them. Boris told the truth and was willing to lay down his life for it. He told the truth about Putin's reign of terror and hatred. He told the truth about Putin's kleptocracy, rampant corruption, and systematic theft perpetrated against the Russian people. He told the truth about Putin's illegal invasion of the sovereign Nation of Ukraine and Russia's continued support for violence, instability, and terror.

Boris told the truth, and we must honor his memory by speaking these same truths fearlessly. Our Nation and free people everywhere must draw strength from Boris's example and continue to resist Vladimir Putin's dark and dangerous view of the world.

Last Sunday, over 50,000 Russians marched in tribute to Boris Nemtsov, still seeking, despite the odds, what a Russian poet once called the footprints of the forgotten truth. At a funeral on Tuesday, thousands more waited in line in the cold for more than 1 hour to pay Boris their respects.

Finally, as the hearse carrying Boris Nemtsov pulled away, mourners tossed flowers and chanted: ''Russia will be free!''

As I remember my friend Boris Nemtsov, that is my most sincere hope and fervent prayer.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. 178, which the clerk will report.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 178) to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

Pending:

Portman amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking.

Portman amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of ''homeless person'' under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, the Senate is presently considering a series of human trafficking bills that will help law enforcement and nongovernmental organizations to take swift aggressive action to protect our most vulnerable populations and work to ensure justice, restitution, and healing for victims of these most horrific crimes.

Human trafficking—modern-day slavery—is not a vestige of the past. It is an evil presence here and now. Children and young adults are being bought and sold in our back yard. This problem knows no borders. It is happening in communities across Ohio. It is a particular problem in Toledo—northwest Ohio—where several north-south and east-west highways come together.

It is difficult even to obtain accurate information on this depraved crime

that happens in the shadows. But we know that as many as 17,000 individuals may be trafficked into our Nation each year, and some estimate that as many as 100,000 American children may be victims of trafficking within the United States each year.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act will give the Department of Justice additional tools to help victims and to crack down on this crime. It would enhance services for victims of human trafficking, and it would expand victim restitution, as well as provide additional resources to law enforcement to help improve human trafficking reporting and investigation.

There is bipartisan and bicameral support for the tracking provisions of this bill. This is a bill about human trafficking. We should not let it become a fight about abortion. I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will agree with this and strip out the Hyde language that has become such a point of controversy. I know reasonable people can disagree about the Hyde amendment, but now is not the time or place to debate it.

There is agreement—broad, wide, deep agreement—on the need to address trafficking. Americans from all walks of life have come to us asking that we do something. We can and we should. These new tools would be essential in assisting the Department of Justice, which has made combating trafficking a priority.

I would like to commend Attorney General Holder for his leadership on this issue. Under his management, DOJ's commitment to preventing human trafficking and bringing these criminals to justice has never been stronger. The Attorney General has really stepped up on this. This bill will give our next Attorney General, Loretta Lynch, the tools she needs to build upon Holder's efforts.

Another area where we can do more to prevent human trafficking is giving law enforcement in our communities the resources to find kids before they fall prey to traffickers. That is why I plan to introduce an amendment that would provide grants to local law enforcement for tracking down homeless and runaway youth, and that will include assistance for retired Federal agents to assist local law enforcement in these investigations. We must find these at-risk children and teens and bring them home before their youthful rebellion becomes something so much worse.

A group of retired FBI agents in northwest Ohio came to my office and asked for our help in the creation of a pilot program that would allow retired agents to assist local law enforcement in finding runaway kids and teens. Generally, northwest Ohio children who become involved in trafficking do so within about 2 weeks of running away from home. So finding them quickly is essential. About one-third of runaways become victims of trafficking. Think of that. One-third of runaways become victims of trafficking.

Toledo has just one detective working on cases of missing children, both adult and children. These retired FBI agents want to help local law enforcement investigate the 18,000 runaways in Ohio every year, but they need help. Police don't have the manpower to track these children, but every city has retired agents who could assist the overworked departments.

I will also be introducing a series of amendments, which I hope will be bipartisan, including the Rape Survivor Child Custody Act, a bill I introduced in the last Congress with Senator AYOTTE. We know that human trafficking victims are especially vulnerable to sexual assault. Women who give birth to a child conceived through rape can often face intimidation from attackers who pursue, amazingly enough, parental rights.

My amendment would help protect these survivors by encouraging States to pass laws allowing women to petition for the termination of their attacker's parental rights, if there is clear and convincing evidence the child was conceived through rape. These women have already been subjected to horrific crimes. They should not have to suffer a life of intrusion by the man who raped them.

I was first moved to introduce this bill because of the case of Ariel Castro in Cleveland. He was on trial in Ohio for kidnapping, raping, and holding prisoner three women for nearly a decade. He asked the judge for parental rights to visit his 6-year-old daughter he conceived through rape.

While the judge denied his request, Ohio has no law that prevents rapists such as Castro from claiming parental rights and forcing their victims to let these criminals into their children's lives. I hope this law encourages Ohio and other States to pass laws making it clear that anyone who commits such a terrible act forfeits any right to parent a child he forced on his victim. This amendment will help protect rape survivors, ensuring their right to care for their children free from fear.

Senators KLOBUCHAR, CORKER, and LEAHY also have their own bill, which they plan to offer as amendments, and which will help us to work to stamp out this terrible crime.

Finally, I want to commend those in my State who have helped lead the way on this issue. There is a history of strong bipartisanship on this issue that cuts across all ideological lines. State Representative Teresa Fedor helped to lead a successful fight for passage of the safe harbor bill in the Ohio legislature 3 years ago.

Dr. Celia Williamson, a professor of social work at the University of Toledo, is recognized nationally, and even internationally, as a leader in human trafficking research and activism. She has been a tremendous force on this issue. With her help and leadership, the University of Toledo just established the Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute. The university has hosted annual human trafficking conferences, and the formation of this institute is a terrific next step in its commitment to addressing a problem that plagues Toledo and too often goes unacknowledged and unaddressed.

Finally, I want to commend the members of the Lucas County Human Trafficking Coalition, which has had some very diverse membership and has worked for several years to better coordinate and provide services to victims.

Human trafficking is a problem that knows no borders and, of course, knows no political party. I hope we can continue to work together to combat this awful epidemic. I hope we will be able to work through our issues to resolve the issue with the Hyde amendment language.

We must take swift and aggressive language to prevent these crimes and work to ensure justice and restitution and healing for its victims.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, we are debating a bill today that should be about an issue we can all agree on—eliminating human trafficking. This bill should be about protecting women's health and rights and about fighting back against the unacceptable presence of human slavery in our country. In other words, if anything should be bipartisan, this bill is it.

I know many of us were hoping this bill—the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act—would be an example of Republicans and Democrats working together because surely we can agree these problems need to be addressed—and urgently—and that the gridlock and dysfunction we see far too often in Congress should have absolutely no place in this discussion. So I am appalled that on a bill intended to help women, Republicans actually have chosen to double down on their political fight against women's health. Republicans have tried to sneak in a provision that would hurt women and drag this bill into yet another partisan fight. They just can't seem to help themselves.

The provision the Republicans are hoping to sneak in—again, on a human trafficking bill—would be a permanent extension of the so-called Hyde amendment. It would move beyond the status quo, which only applies to appropriated taxpayer money, and expand it into the new nontax-funding streams this bill would authorize. That means if this law passes—a law intended to help women who have experienced truly horrific violence and hardship—Congress would at the same time allow politicians to interfere even more with the most deeply personal health decisions a woman can make.

Trying to slip a women's health restriction into a women's safety bill is akin to slipping a tractor ban into the farm bill. It doesn't make sense.

This isn't the first time Republicans have tried this political stunt. Again

and again Republicans in Congress have picked completely unnecessary political fights over women's health. They threatened a government shutdown over Planned Parenthood funding in 2011. They have tried to jam through reproductive health riders on appropriations legislation. House Republicans even attached women's health restrictions to the education bill they tried to pass this month. It is shocking to see it happening again.

The good news is that the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act can still be the bipartisan legislation it should be. Democrats are here and ready to work with Republicans to fix this bill and move past this partisan debate over women's health. We are very hopeful that once that happens, we can get this bill passed and take a step toward solving a horrible problem we all know needs a solution.

I hope my Republican colleagues agree with me that women deserve better than one step backward for every step forward when it comes to their health and their rights. I hope they agree that a bill to end modern-day slavery in the United States is not the right time to try to sneak in a political victory for their base. If they agree, they will prove that by working with us rather than focusing on political fights we have seen more than enough of in this Congress.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to set aside the pending amendment to call up my amendment No. 285.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. BROWN. I object on behalf of a number of Members on this side.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, it is hard to adequately express my frustration that we can't get moving on this bill.

First of all, the underlying bill that our friends on the other side are blocking progress on is a very sensible, important, constructive bill. I commend Senator CORNYN for having introduced this. I am proud to be a cosponsor.

This is the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

Let's be clear what this is about. We have a huge problem in this country. In all 50 States there are people who actually engage in the buying and selling of human beings, mostly women and young children, in a sex trade. That is what is happening. And this is a bill that would enhance the penalties and thereby discourage this activity. It would take some of the proceeds from the penalties paid by these monsters who would engage in this kind of activity and it would use those proceeds to help victims. I don't understand where the objection comes from for a bill such as this, and now we can't move ahead on my amendment.

My amendment is a little bit different but it is in a similar vein. It is designed to help protect children from sexual predators in schools, and we just heard the objection. The folks on the other side of the aisle somehow object to legislation that would enhance a protection for the kids in our schools. Let me explain why this is so important.

The inspiration for this bipartisan bill that I have introduced with Senator MANCHIN and which I just tried to call up as an amendment and I was prevented from doing so—the inspiration for this is an absolutely horrendous story that begins in Delaware County, PA.

There was a schoolteacher who for years was molesting boys in his care. He raped one of the boys. The prosecutors discovered what was going on, but they never had enough evidence to actually press charges. The school knew what was going on, so they decided: Why don't we make this monster someone else's problem? And that is exactly what they did.

They wrote a letter of recommendation so this animal could go across the State line—which he did—get hired by a school in West Virginia—which he did—and become a teacher, eventually rise to be principal, and along the way continue molesting we don't know how many kids, but we do know in the end he raped and killed a 12-year-old boy. Because that is what these people do. And there is a practice that happens—as hard as this is to talk about, as unbelievable as this is in practice, it is a reality that some schools would like these people to become someone else's problem, and they actually give them a letter of recommendation so they can go somewhere. And they do indeed become someone else's problem. That is what I am trying to stop here. That is what we are trying to stop.

This happened with a teacher who left Pennsylvania and went to West Virginia, and the little boy's name was Jeremy Bell.

Senator MANCHIN from West Virginia and I have teamed up on a bill that would make this practice of knowingly and willfully aiding a known pedophile from getting a job somewhere else—we would make that illegal.

We wouldn't think we should have to do that because we wouldn't think anybody with a conscience could do it, but it happens. We know it happens. We have heard these stories time and again.

By the way, this is not such an isolated event as we would like to think it is. Last year alone, 459 teachers and other school employees across America were arrested for sexual misconduct with the kids they were supposed to be taking care of and looking after.

We all know that for the vast majority of schoolteachers it would never occur to them. It would never cross their mind, they would never do such a thing. But there are a number of pedophiles—monsters who prey on kids. And they know where the kids are. So they try to find their way into these schools so they can prey on the victims.

The 459 who were arrested last year were the ones we knew enough about that prosecutors felt they could prosecute, so they made an arrest. How many more are happening but we don't know enough of the specifics, we don't have a strong enough case to actually make an arrest?

So far this year, we are not off to a much better start. We are 69 days into the new school year, and already 82 people have been arrested across America.

This isn't some isolated one-time problem. This is a genuine problem we need to do something to solve, so Senator MANCHIN and I have come together with a bill that addresses this.

The whole idea, the whole goal, is very simple: Let's make sure schools are not hiring these predators and we are protecting our kids from them. It does that with two mechanisms, two simple provisions that achieve this.

One is it requires background checks that will get the job done and screen out those who have a previous conviction; and it will also make it illegal to have this terrible practice of passing the trash—this terrible practice of recommending a teacher who is a known pedophile. Neither of these mechanisms should be controversial.

This is almost identical legislation which passed the House unanimously. The House is not exactly known for not having any partisan divides, and yet it passed unanimously. We have Members of this body who were Members of the House in the last Congress and voted for it then, are now cosponsors of this legislation, and amazingly to me we are having this discussion.

I am being blocked from offering this amendment. The language in my amendment is almost identical to the language we had in the child care development block grant, which this body voted for and all but one Member voted in favor of that bill, which would provide exactly this kind of criminal background check on employees for daycare.

This body has voted to ensure the protection of really young kids, as it should have. I fully supported that. Why would we block providing comparable protection to kids who are just a little bit older? How can it be that we want to make sure pedophiles don't get into our daycare centers but it is OK for them to be in elementary schools, in middle schools, and in high schools? This makes no sense at all. And it is necessary, because while every State

has some kind of background check system, there are huge loopholes, there are huge gaps, there are huge inconsistencies that are allowing people to get through.

Our legislation would require background checks on any adult hired by a school who would come in unsupervised contact with kids—teachers, contractors, schoolbus drivers, a sports coach—anybody so that we would be protecting our kids from pedophiles who actively seek the opportunity to prey on these kids.

One of the things we do to make sure the background check would be thorough is we require that the school districts would check both the State and Federal databases. Let me give a story about why this is so important.

In Alaska, parents got a very rude awakening when they discovered this story. It was on August 29 of last year. Alaska State troopers arrested a middle school teacher in Kiana, AK.

The teacher had fled Missouri 4 years earlier to escape an arrest warrant. Multiple witnesses accused the teacher of over a decade of sexual and physical abuse of his own adopted kids. He had raped and starved his own children. These kids literally burrowed a hole through the wall so they could take frozen food out of the freezer. They heated it up on a furnace just to survive. It is just one of those unbelievable horror stories—while this monster was able to obtain a teaching certificate in Alaska and teach there—teaching kids for 4 years.

When asked how this could possibly happen, the Alaska Department of Education explained that Alaska's background checks only check the State's criminal registry. Now, had our legislation been in force, they would have been required to check the Federal registry, and they would have learned that he was a fugitive with an arrest warrant and a criminal record in another State. That is the kind of ability we have to have to prevent these people from going across States and committing these kinds of crimes.

The other provision that I mentioned earlier is a provision that would preclude—make it illegal—for someone knowingly to recommend a pedophile to be hired at another school. Again, you would like to think that something like that wouldn't even be necessary. But it is, and another story reveals this recently.

A Las Vegas, NV, kindergarten teacher was arrested for kidnapping a 16-year-old girl and infecting her with a sexually transmitted disease. That same teacher had molested six children, all fourth and fifth graders, several years before when that teacher was working in the Los Angeles school district.

The Los Angeles school district knew all about these allegations. In 2009, in fact, the school district recommended settling a lawsuit they were facing because the teacher had molested the children. The Nevada school district to which the pedophile went had specifically asked if there were any criminal concerns regarding the teacher, and the Los Angeles school district not only hid the truth that they knew about this guy's predations, but they actually provided three references so that he could get hired in Las Vegas.

So for people who say the States can solve these problems themselves, I would ask: What was that 16-year-old girl supposed to do? What could Nevada have done about the Los Angeles school district's behavior?

So I am not going away on this. This is something that we need to do. I have three young kids. When any one of us parents anywhere in America puts our children on the school bus in the morning, we have every right to expect they are going to a place where they will be safe—as safe as they could possibly be. We know that there is more that we could be doing here to make them safer. It is unconscionable that we don't act on it.

So I will be back, because we are going to have a vote on this one way or another, and I am very disappointed we couldn't have it this morning.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. I would like to follow up on something that the Senator from Pennsylvania just said on the process—not on the substance of these amendments.

We are in a situation where we have a bill before the Senate that has broad bipartisan support, and it came out of the committee I chaired, the Senate Judiciary Committee, on a unanimous vote. Now we are stalled on proceedings, and I would like to emphasize what is different and why this bill should be moving forward in the year 2015 as opposed to the last few years when the other political party controlled the Senate.

In the U.S. political system, elections are supposed to have consequences, and as a consequence of the last election, there is a new majority in the Senate. That new majority results from campaign positions taken in the last election that if we had a new majority, the Senate was going to be run in the way that James Madison implied that it ought to run—as a deliberative body, as a body where every Member could participate, where you would reach consensus, and where you give very serious thought to legislation that comes before this body—and do it in a way differently than the House of Representatives was meant to do business and has done business for the 230 years under our Constitution.

So we ran on a platform that we would have the Senate debate and be open for amendments, and the leader announced that when this bill was going to come up, it would be an open amendment process. Everybody could participate. Now we are in a situation where the minority is not allowing us to move forward on amendments because they have objections to a provision that was in this bill since its introduction. Every Member had not only days but weeks to consider it before it came out of committee on a unanimous vote. And those provisions that were in this bill from the introduction—and every Senator knew they were in there, and every Senator's staff knew they were in there. If they didn't know that this language was in there, then they didn't read the legislation. There are plenty of people to read legislation around here, even beyond the Members of the committee.

So this language deals with what is called the Hyde amendment, which for either 39 or 40 years has basically said that taxpayers' money should never be used to finance abortions. So all of a sudden there is objection to that language in this bill, which was in the bill when the very same Members who are objecting to it now on the floor of the Senate knew it was in there, and we can't move forward because they object to the amendment.

So I proposed to them that they offer an amendment to strike what they don't like and find out where the votes are. If they win, they win. If they don't win, we move forward. But you can't hardly hold up a piece of legislation over language that is in the bill that has been part of the law of this country for 39 or 40 years and then say that you didn't know it was in there, when it was in there when you voted to get it out of committee.

Senator TOOMEY just gave a speech about his amendment. He asked unanimous consent to bring it up. The minority in the Senate, which has the same right to offer amendments that any other Senator can offer, refused to let him get a vote on his amendment or even disputed the fact of laying an amendment aside to move forward on it. So we are at a standstill.

Statistically, I would like to show how the new majority is intending to operate the Senate on a different basis than had been operated on in previous years and use statistics of last year. If the statistics are off by 1 or 2 numbers, I hope somebody will forgive me. But roughly, we had 18 rollcalls on amendments last year, because there was every effort to be made to stall the Senate so amendments couldn't come up for a vote. Already this year we have had approximately 40-some rollcall votes on amendments, and more than a majority of those have been amendments offered by the minority party in the Senate.

So the elections showed that people want the Senate to work as a deliberative body, where every Senator can participate, and we ought to move forward on that.

I would ask the people who object to moving forward on this amendment to offer an amendment to strike the provisions they don't like and move on so that the other several Members of the Senate who are stalled now on offering their amendments can offer their

amendments and eventually we can get through those amendments and vote on a bill that got out of the Senate Judiciary Committee without a single dissenting vote from either Republicans or Democrats.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, of course I also would like to see the trafficking bill go forward.

I am looking around the floor of the Senate, and I think I am the only person standing on the floor who has actually prosecuted people for molestation and endangerment of children.

I am not going to repeat what I said yesterday. I talked about some of those horrible cases, and I did mention having young children of my own at the time and how hard working on those cases hit me. When normally preparing for trials—in the evenings, in most cases—I could just work at home preparing for the trial. When preparing for these types of cases however, I didn't come home. I would work in my office for two reasons. I didn't want to take any chance, inadvertently, that one of my children would see any of the pictures or the exhibits that we were going to have in the trial, as graphic as they were. But also, I didn't want them to see their father crying, which I did as I would read these files, and have them ask me why I was crying, because I couldn't lie to them. It was better just to stay in the office.

I say that because we have to approach this not just in the after-the-fact manner expressed. I like the idea of having the $30 million to help those who have been hurt—the victims. I worry, as the House of Representatives worried, that if it is simply money that comes from fines, we are never going to see that money. All the people I prosecuted on crimes against young people went to prison. If you could have given them a $50 million fine or a $50 fine, they weren't going to pay it. They had no money. After their defense was over, they had no funds.

At some point we are going to have to correct that. Say $30 million is a good target, and any fines will go into that fund, but we should take taxpayers' funds to make up any difference.

When we lock these people up, we spend $25,000 or $35,000 a year to lock them up. But half of the time we tell the victim: It is terrible what happened to you. Sorry, we can't do anything for you.

We also have to approach the things necessary to prevent what happened. I am filing a Leahy-Collins amendment, the Runaway and Homeless Youth Trafficking Prevention Act. I will file that. The amendment will help runaways such as Holly Austin Smith. She was 14 years old when she was lured away from home by a man who promised her a glamorous life in California. Instead, he sold this 14-year-old for sex. She told her devastating story to the Senate Judiciary Committee last month. Both Senator GRASSLEY and I were there and heard it. I was certainly moved by her words and call for action.

She told us to protect girls such as her, saying that ''policies on prevention should be one of our highest priorities.'' I agree. That is why Senator COLLINS and I are offering this amendment.

Of course we should have the ability to go after somebody who has committed these crimes. But wouldn't it be better for the victims if we could stop the crime from happening in the first place? If we can do something to help people such as this 14-year-old and we can stop it from happening in the first place, we would be much better off.

Too many of the runaway and homeless youth in this country have no place to go. They have no place to sleep at night. They are alone on the street without resources or adults to protect them, and human traffickers know that. One shelter survey found that 50 percent of the homeless youth have been solicited for sex by an adult within 48 hours of leaving home.

I ask any parent or grandparent in this Senate: What would you think if your children or grandchildren were put in that situation?

This is not a Republican or a Democratic issue, this is a human issue—this is an American issue.

It is our hope that we can work around what I hope is a momentary glitch in this bill so we can get to these things.

I will say again, based on my own experience as a prosecutor and based on everything I have heard over the years—part of the time as the ranking member and part of the time as chairman of the Judiciary Committee during the past 40 years—that when it comes to the fight against human trafficking, we cannot simply focus on ending demand and arrest our way out of this problem. We have to eliminate the conditions that make these children so vulnerable.

The good news is the program supported by this amendment has helped thousands of young people get back on their feet by providing shelter, job training, and caring adults to counsel and guide them. These programs work. They keep kids safe, and they save lives.

A growing number of homeless and runaway youth are LGBT, and many of them have been thrown out of their homes for who they are. Again, as a parent and grandparent, that is heartbreaking to me. We have to ensure that these particularly vulnerable children, who have already been rejected once, do not face rejection again, and that is why Senator COLLINS and I included a nondiscrimination provision in our amendment that will make clear that any program accepting Federal dollars must help care for all of these children. They can't turn these young people away because they do not like the way they look or dress or who they love. No program that takes Federal money should be allowed to discriminate, period.

The nondiscrimination language in this bill is nearly identical to the language that 78 Senators—Republicans and Democrats alike—supported in this body when we passed the Violence Against Women Act in the last Congress, the Leahy-Crapo bill. It is the same language the Republican-controlled House passed and the President signed into law 2 years ago.

Last year, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, I moved this legislation through committee and Senator GRASSLEY and Senator CORNYN, to their credit, and almost every Republican on the Judiciary Committee voted for it. If these protections are acceptable for adult victims of domestic and sexual violence, why shouldn't they be for children? No one should be discriminated against, but especially not these vulnerable children who have already faced more adversity than many of us will ever know.

We, as Senators, lead a privileged and sheltered life. We work hard, but it is still a privileged and sheltered life. We are not facing what these children are facing—a scared, vulnerable, lonely child at a bus stop or trying to get somebody to buy them a pizza because they are hungry or looking for a place where they can sleep out of the cold. We are never going to face that, but too many Americans do.

Some may argue and say that the antidiscrimination language somehow threatens religious freedom. That is not true. No one's religious freedom is threatened by this language. This is not about religion, it about supporting all of the children who most desperately need our help.

I understand their concerns. We have narrowed the scope of this provision so it applies only to these programs being reauthorized in this amendment. We have also clarified that nothing in this bill stops organizations from providing necessary sex-specific programming, such as shelters for homeless, runaway, or trafficked girls.

I have heard from dozens of service providers in my State of Vermont, and also across the country, that these programs work.

As Cyndi Lauper, a long-time advocate for homeless and runaway youth, wrote in an op-ed for The Hill yesterday, ''The time to act is now, because homeless youth don't have the time for us to wait until tomorrow.''

Who will help these young people if we do not? These children are too often left behind, and for too many being left behind means being trafficked. We cannot and should not leave them behind today.

I urge all Senators that when the amendment is called up to support it. I ask unanimous consent that the op-ed that was in The Hill be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From The Hill, March 10, 2015]

DON'T LET THE SENATE THROW AWAY 40 PERCENT OF AMERICA'S HOMELESS YOUTH

(By Cyndi Lauper)

''Enough is enough.'' It's a phrase that is said all too often about so many issues in our society, but unfortunately not enough when it comes to our nation's most vulnerable young people.

Congress must reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA), our nation's only federal law that specifically funds vital services for homeless youth. Republicans and Democrats have come together to ensure that our Federal Government offers much needed support to all homeless youth.

Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) have introduced bipartisan legislation to reauthorize RHYA, which will likely be brought up for a floor vote in the Senate this week—possibly as soon as today.

The act includes a non-discrimination clause that will help ensure lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) homeless youth not only have access to critical services, but that those services are safe, welcoming, and tailored to meet the needs of all youth.

We need that clause and some groups are trying to push to have it taken out. I was taught to listen to Proverbs 31: Speak up for those who cannot speak up for themselves. Our kids need us to protect them, not to discriminate against them.

Research shows that while LGBT youth make up to seven percent of the general youth population, they comprise, on average, 40 percent of the 1.6 million youth that are homeless in this country each year. Think about that. It's impossible to ignore.

There is no getting around the fact that these kids are too often being thrown out of their homes and left to fend for themselves on the streets. The fact that this occurs each and every day in our country is simply a tragedy—a tragedy that does not have to continue.

At the True Colors Fund, we continue to hear stories of young people being discriminated against, offered improper services, and even turned away by service providers just because they happen to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. By continuing to leave 40 percent of our homeless youth unprotected, we are cutting our society off at the knees.

Kids actually ARE our future. What kind of future do we have in store if we do not care for all of our youth? ALL deserve to have their needs met so that these incredible and courageous young people can achieve their dreams and become healthy, happy, and contributing members of our society. These are our future teachers, parents, and leaders and we cannot afford to leave even one of them behind.

Programs and services receiving federal funding must be inclusive of all youth. Congress can start by passing the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act to ensure that all youth are protected in the vital programs that it would reauthorize. The time to act is now, because homeless youth don't have the time for us to wait until tomorrow.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. 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. GRASSLEY. 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 New York.

Mrs. GILLIBRAND. Mr. President, I rise to offer an amendment to Senator CORNYN's bill, S. 178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

Under current law, there are many trafficking victims who, even after gaining freedom from their captors, have to live their lives stuck with a criminal record because of things they were forced to do in captivity.

Imagine being freed from the hell of sexual slavery only to find yourself unable to get a job or stable housing because the law considers you a criminal.

My amendment, the Federal Criminal Procedure Post-Conviction Relief For Victims of Trafficking Act, would vacate the criminal convictions of trafficking victims who were forced to break the law while they were trafficked. It would expunge the criminal records of trafficking victims and it would give trafficking victims a chance to restart their lives without stigma and without a criminal record.

These boys and girls were snatched into captivity. They were forced into sexual slavery, and they were denied the freedom to make their own decisions, including the chance to say no to committing a crime.

These victims are not criminals. Their bodies are scarred. Their memories are shaken by trauma. The least Congress can do is give them the dignity of a clean record and a new chance to lead a fulfilling life. I urge my colleagues to support this amendment.

I also wish to urge my colleagues to support a bill Senator RUBIO and I introduced called the Strengthening the Child Welfare Response to Trafficking Act. This bill would require each State to develop a plan to protect young victims of labor and sex trafficking from falling back into captivity after they have escaped.

As it stands now, many of the various services and programs that are meant to keep children from these dangerous, oppressive cycles are failing to do their jobs. Instead of being protected and comforted as victims of violent crime, young trafficking survivors are sent into the juvenile justice system and treated as criminals—as if it were their own fault and their own choice that they were held in captivity and forced into exploitation. This is just not the case.

This bill would give American children better trained protective service workers, better lines of communication between victims and protective services, and better data on where trafficking crimes are actually occurring, how often, and whom traffickers are targeting.

I commend my colleagues for bringing this issue of human trafficking so boldly to the Senate floor, and I encourage everyone in this Chamber to support these legislative efforts to solve our country's trafficking problem.

I yield the floor.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 284 TO AMENDMENT NO. 271

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I send a second-degree amendment to the desk, Vitter amendment No. 284, to Portman amendment No. 271, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Louisiana [Mr. VITTER] proposes an amendment numbered 284 to amendment No. 271.

Mr. VITTER. I ask unanimous consent that the reading of the amendment be dispensed with.

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

The amendment is as follows:

(Purpose: To amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. __. CITIZENSHIP AT BIRTH FOR CERTAIN PERSONS BORN IN THE UNITED STATES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1401) is amended—

(1) by inserting ''(a) IN GENERAL.—'' before ''The following'';

(2) by redesignating subsections (a) through (h) as paragraphs (1) through (8), respectively, and indenting such paragraphs, as redesignated, an additional 2 ems to the right; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

''(b) DEFINITION.—Acknowledging the right of birthright citizenship established by section 1 of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, a person born in the United States shall be considered 'subject to the jurisdiction' of the United States for purposes of subsection (a)(1) only if the person is born in the United States and at least 1 of the person's parents is—

''(1) a citizen or national of the United States;

''(2) an alien lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States whose residence is in the United States; or

''(3) an alien performing active service in the armed forces (as defined in section 101 of title 10, United States Code).''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a)(3) may not be construed to affect the citizenship or nationality status of any person born before the date of the enactment of this Act.

(c) SEVERABILITY.—If any provision of this section or any amendment made by this section, or any application of such provision or amendment to any person or circumstance, is held to be unconstitutional, the remainder of the provisions of this Act and the amendments made by this Act and the application of the provision or amendment to any other person or circumstance shall not be affected.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, this is the same amendment I presented—tried to present—and discussed on the floor of the Senate yesterday. It addresses a very serious problem with our

broken immigration system as well as a problem that leads to serious abuse and trafficking, which is why it is certainly relevant and pertinent in this ongoing discussion of the bill on the floor.

First of all, let me again compliment Senator CORNYN and everyone who has joined him on a bipartisan basis in support of his antihuman trafficking amendment. I think that underlying bill is very positive and very significant. I certainly fully support it, apart from how my amendment fares. Obviously I hope my now second-degree amendment to the Portman amendment is adopted, but I certainly support this underlying effort, which is very important.

As I said, my amendment pertains to birthright citizenship and the fact that that now acts as an enormous magnet to increase and encourage illegal crossings into our country. It also has spawned an entire subculture and industry, quite frankly, that has given rise to significant abuse—often very dangerous and horrific conditions for the women and families who are caught in it.

Yesterday, as part of my floor statement, I submitted for the RECORD several news reports that underscored these cases of abuse. This came to light in part because of the raid by Federal agencies just within the last few weeks of these so-called birth tourism businesses, and those Federal raids uncovered some truly grizzly situations in California and elsewhere that underscore my point.

This ad, which is an ad on behalf of one of these birth tourism companies in China, also underscores my point. The Presiding Officer and I couldn't come up with a cartoon such as this and call it fiction if we were challenged to, but this is real. This is an actual cartoon ad enticing birth mothers in China to go to the United States, to come back with their baby having been born in the United States, and the baby wrapped in the American flag means automatic U.S. citizen. That of course triggers all sorts of significant benefits and opportunities for the immediate family of that baby to in the future come to the United States and become citizens.

This birthright citizenship has clearly mushroomed into a significant problem and a significant form of abuse of our immigration system.

According to the Center for Immigration Studies, every year about 300,000 to 400,000 children are born to illegal aliens in the United States, and under this practice—and I underscore ''practice''—of birthright citizenship—and I will come back to that word because it is not mandated by the Constitution—they automatically are recognized as U.S. citizens simply and purely because of the physical location of their physical birth.

I said ''practice'' for a reason. It is not mandated by the Constitution as opposed to what we hear on a regular basis. It isn't even mandated by statutory law. It is the practice of several administrations, including this one. It is a very uncommon practice if we look worldwide. Only Canada, among advanced or industrialized countries, follows this practice along with the United States. No other advanced or industrialized country—for instance, no European country—follows this practice of counting folks, giving them citizenship based purely on the fact, on the accident of the location of their physical birth.

My amendment would change this. It would simply say a person can only be a citizen if they were born in this country and at least one parent is a U.S. citizen or a legal, valid green card holder or a serving member of the U.S. military. That is a commonsense rule that I think the vast—in fact, I know from public polling and other means—the vast majority of Americans of all stripes, of all walks of life, and of both parties support.

Again, let me be clear. My amendment would say a child born in this country is a U.S. citizen if they are born in this country and at least one of the parents is a U.S. citizen or a valid green card holder or a member of the U.S. military.

If there is any policy reason why that rule is unreasonable, I would love to hear it. I have been promoting this debate, I have been pushing this change of policy for several years now, and I have never heard a real debate on the policy, on the merits. There are lots of excuses that people don't want to bring this up, don't want to have a vote, but I have never heard a real debate and objection on the merits.

That being said, let me move to one of the excuses, and the most popular excuse given is that somehow this is embedded in the Constitution—specifically, the 14th Amendment—and we can't change this absent a constitutional amendment. I am absolutely convinced that is not true, and I will explain why.

The first reason I think we can glean that it is not true is the language of the 14th Amendment. That is a good place to start, right? We are talking about the 14th Amendment. We are talking about a specific constitutional provision, so let's start by going there and see what it says. Does it say everyone physically born in this country is a U.S. citizen, period? No, it does not. So what does it say? It extends citizenship to ''all persons born or naturalized in the United States and subject to the jurisdiction thereof.'' The key phrase is ''and subject to the jurisdiction thereof.''

As the Presiding Officer knows, our Founding Fathers, including our later Founding Fathers who came up with the language of the 14th Amendment, chose their words carefully, and it is a fundamental rule of either constitutional or statutory construction that any word there, any phrase there must be there for a reason. It is not there just to add extra words without adding meaning.

So that phrase absolutely has to mean something. It has to be there for a reason. When we look at the history of the 14th Amendment, the debate, the discussion in Congress, it is very clear it was there for a reason. It was there to exclude persons born in the United States who had allegiance, who had some calling to another country. Specifically, the folks participating in that debate talking about this language said, We are not including American Indians; they have an allegiance to the tribe. We are not including aliens. Aliens—that word was broadly used. We are not including aliens. That certainly includes in today's language illegal aliens who have an allegiance to another country. They are citizens of another country. We are not including the children of diplomats who happen to be born here during their diplomat parents' stay. They clearly are citizens of another country. They have an allegiance to another country.

This line of thought was further elucidated by court decisions. In fact, there is a specific court decision with regard to American Indians. The Court directly said in that case, no, the 14th Amendment does not make American Indian children automatically U.S. citizens—based on the specific language I am citing. Because of that, it wasn't until the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924 was passed, explicitly making those children American citizens, that they became American citizens. Much more recently, respected jurists such as Judge Richard Posner of the Seventh Circuit wrote in a 2003 case:

> Congress would not be flouting the Constitution if it amended the Immigration and Nationality Act to put an end to the nonsense.

Talking specifically about birthright citizenship. So I hope we get through these excuses, these flawed constitutional arguments, these flawed arguments. Really, they are excuses to avoid the debate, to avoid the issue, to avoid giving any reason why we should not go to the rule I am proposing. Why we should, in fact, recognize any child physically born in this country as automatically a U.S. citizen, even if neither parent is a citizen, neither parent is here in the country legally, neither parent is a green card holder, neither parent is a serving member of the U.S. Armed Services.

As I explained at the beginning, this is a very real, in fact, exploding phenomenon. There is a whole industry, an underworld, that is selling so-called birth tourism. This ridiculous but true cartoon is an example. This acts as a magnet—a potent, powerful magnet growing in power by the year to lure more and more folks to come across the border in specific cases to have their babies here, 300,000 to 400,000 per year.

In the last few weeks, as I mentioned earlier, there was a raid by the relevant Federal agencies on some of

these underworld and trafficking operations related to birth tourism. It hit the news. It made significant news, as it should have. It was a significant law enforcement action. I applaud that action. It is a dangerous element. It is an underworld, usually criminal elements in the midst of that, oftentimes abusing the women and children who have been placed into their hands.

Clearly, the most effective way to put an immediate end to all of this is not simply conducting a law enforcement raid once every 5 years or once every 3 years or even once a week. Clearly, the most effective way to end this is to end the practice of birthright citizenship. That is what my amendment—now a second-degree amendment pending to the Portman amendment—would do.

I urge all of my colleagues to put an end to this nonsense, as Judge Posner said in his dicta, to set our policy straight, to adopt the commonsense position of the vast majority of the American people, to adopt the same policy of every advanced industrialized country now save us and Canada, and to adopt this language on the present bill.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. CAPITO). The Senator from Missouri.

Mr. BLUNT. Madam President, I want to talk about the bill we are looking at now, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. Certainly there is nothing more hideous, nothing more morally offensive than the sexual exploitation of a human being. Take that exploitation today at a level that happens over and over again with children and with adults. This is modern-day slavery. It exists right here in our country and all over the world. Slavery officially ended in the United States 150 years ago. Worldwide there may be more people involved in enslaved activity and labor or in sex trafficking than at any other time.

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, at least 100,000 American children each year are victims of commercial child prostitution, child trafficking, other children brought to this country. Certainly this is not a tragedy that is isolated in the United States. In fact, it is worse than other places, but it is unacceptable in all places.

Women and children, especially young girls, are advertised online where buyers purchase them with ease, generally with anonymity, and usually with impunity. We are told this happens in most cities in our country and in every State in our country. But this fight against sex trafficking and labor trafficking isn't just a law enforcement issue, it is a human rights issue, and we should take it as seriously as we possibly can take anything.

That is why I was pleased to join Senator CORNYN and Senator AYOTTE and others in cosponsoring and supporting the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. This act would provide law enforcement, the courts, and antitrafficking task forces with the necessary tools to help them track down traffickers; and it would also help victims restore their lives.

Last year we were able to pass the continuation of the Victims of Child Abuse Act, of which in our State we have 22 centers. We have hundreds of centers in the country where the beginning of restoration comes with that first interview, that first determination. We are putting this behind us and moving forward. That same thing needs to happen with victims of exploitation. This bill helps victims of trafficking who are often invisible, often underserved, often unknown by anybody in the community where they have been taken except a person who somehow has seized control of them and the people with whom that person deals.

This bill would create grants for State and local governments to develop comprehensive systems to address these crimes and to provide services for the victims of these crimes. This legislation would allow wiretaps obtained through State courts to be used to stop child sex trafficking. This would train Federal prosecutors and judges on the importance of requesting and ordering restitution.

In the last few days we passed a law that hopefully will wind up on the President's desk so there could be some compensation for victims of child pornography. We need to have that same kind of restitution and seizing of assets of these criminals who use people in this way, and this bill allows some of those things to happen. It trains law enforcement on the physical and mental services that are immediately necessary, and necessary in a longer term, for victims of trafficking.

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act has been endorsed by 200 advocacy groups. Those would include the NAACP, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, Rights4Girls, the National Association to Protect Children, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the National Conference of State Legislators. We need to get this done.

The elimination of sex trafficking has to be also focused on the demand side. Without the buyers and facilitators, sex trafficking wouldn't happen. Labor trafficking wouldn't happen unless there were buyers of that unwilling labor. Neither of these things should be allowed to continue. This bill deals with this topic in our country. I know the Foreign Relations Committee is looking at what we can do to encourage the elimination of this travesty and tragedy all over the world.

We have to take a stand against this modern-day slavery. This is a problem that I hope we see Senators on both sides of the aisle step up to in the next few days and hopefully this week and figure out how to serve.

REMEMBERING TOM SCHWEICH

Madam President, this is the first chance I have had to be on the floor since I attended a memorial service a week ago yesterday in our State memorializing the life of our State auditor, Tom Schweich. Tom Schweich was very smart. He was very capable. He was very good at his job. He had a wonderful family. He had established such a record as State auditor that at the end of his first term, Tom Schweich, a Republican, wasn't even opposed by a Democrat. I think it was the first time in our State since the 1880s that the Democrats had not offered a candidate for any State office.

Sometimes people with great capacity and great opportunity can face challenges that others do not see. Tom's family is missing him. His friends are missing him. Missouri will miss him but certainly benefited from his good work. I am thinking today, as I have every day since I heard the news of his death, about the service he provided, the lost opportunity of not having him with us any longer, and I am thinking about his family.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Madam President, I first want to thank my colleagues who are continuing to work on this very important issue of sex trafficking, Senator GRASSLEY, the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, and Senator LEAHY, the ranking member, who has long been working on this issue and has a very important bill of his own related to this, as well as Senator CORNYN. Senator CORNYN and I have worked together on the sex trafficking issue for the past year. We are cosponsors of each other's bills. We have worked in the past on other judiciary issues, including a successful bill on prescription drug take-backs, where we just recently were able to get the rules out and got to work on that very important issue. I thank him for his good work. We continue to work on the bill, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. We know there are some major issues that have come up, and we continue to look for a path forward on that issue.

I do want to point out that sometimes in all of the disagreements, what gets lost is the good that needs to be done and why this bill is so important. It would support victims by taking fines and criminal assets from convicted human traffickers and directing them toward services and treatment to help these victims restore their lives.

I know as a prosecutor in my former job that if people get the help they need—if they can go to a shelter and they have an alternative to a pimp—they will have a fighting chance of getting their life together again and not going back into that cycle of violence.

They also, by doing this—and we have done a lot of this in Minnesota—if we give them the support they need, then they will testify against the person who is running that sex trafficking ring, against the perpetrator. We had a 40-year sentence last year in St. Paul, MN, against someone who was running a sex trafficking ring. That was because we were able to provide the support the victims need, and that is what Senator CORNYN's bill is about. It doesn't only help victims, as I said, it also helps law enforcement and ensures that the criminals, including johns, are brought to justice under our law because a financial transaction should not mask a sexual assault or rape on a child.

I think people often think of sex trafficking as something that is just happening in another country, in another part of the world. It is, in fact, the third largest enterprise in the world. First is illegal drugs, then illegal guns, and then the illegal trafficking of people, primarily kids. That is going on in our world right now. But what people don't always expect is that in the United States, when we have sex trafficking cases, 83 percent of the victims are from our own country. Eighty-three percent of the victims are from the oil patches in North Dakota, from the streets of Minneapolis, and from the hills of West Virginia. This is happening in our country right now.

That is why this pair of bills, Senator CORNYN's bill and the bill I have—the safe harbor bill that passed through the Judiciary Committee unanimously last week—is designed to focus on domestic trafficking. It does have international implications because if we do our job and we show as a country that we take this seriously, it will help us partner with other countries.

Senator HEITKAMP, Cindy McCain, and I went down to Mexico last spring to focus on partnering with Mexico. They have been enormous help in some of the Federal prosecutions for sex trafficking rings we have had in our country—girls who have been brought across the border from Mexico. They have helped with that. We have met with the Attorney General as well as the head of their Federal Police on more work that can be done.

But just think about what is happening right now in our country. Just in the last few weeks, five St. Paul, MN, residents were charged with running a multistate sex trafficking ring. One of the alleged victims was 16 years old. Last month a man was indicted in Federal court under the leadership of our U.S. attorney in Minnesota. What was he indicted for? He was indicted for trafficking a 12-year-old girl, a young girl in Rochester, MN, who got a text that said: Come to a party. The girl shows up where she is supposed to go; it is the parking lot of a McDonald's. She gets shoved in the car, along with her friend. They are brought up to the Twin Cities. The man rapes her and takes sexually explicit pictures of her and puts them on Craigslist. The next day she is sold to two guys, and she is raped by those two men. That happened in Minnesota. The charges were just filed.

The average age of a victim of sex trafficking is 12 years old—not old enough to go to a high school prom, not old enough to drive. That is what is happening in our country right now.

What can we do? Well, I discussed Senator CORNYN's bill and the importance of that bill. I hope we can work through these issues. There is also the other bill, the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act. That would make sure victims of sex trafficking, like the 12-year-old Rochester girl, are treated as victims. This is a bill that passed through the Judiciary Committee. I thank 26 of my colleagues across the Senate for cosponsoring this bill. It has been an honor to work with them, with Senator CORNYN as the Republican lead.

I appreciate the help of the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the Fraternal Order of Police, Shared Hope International, and the National Alliance to End Sexual Violence.

This bill is different from the bill we have in front of us on the floor, but it has the same focus. What this bill does is it says: Let's look at some of these models that have worked across the country. One of them is my State, and it is called the safe harbor law. What it does is that when States do this, they basically aren't prosecuting these 12-year-old or 15-year-old girls or 16-year-old boys; they are seeing them as victims, and then they give them the kinds of services they need. A version of this bill, led by ERIK PAULSEN, one of my Republican Congressmen, passed through the House last year. I know the Presiding Officer was there at that time. So I feel good about this bill's chances in the House as well as in the Senate.

Fifteen States across the country already have these safe harbor laws, and another 12 States are making good progress in the direction that we need, so we are not starting from scratch. What the bill does is simply give incentives for States to adopt these kinds of laws.

The bill also creates a national strategy to combat human trafficking which would encourage cooperation and coordination among all the agencies that work on the problem—Federal, State, tribal, and local. Our law enforcement officers and prosecutors, as I mentioned, have to work together on this issue at all levels, but law enforcement can't do it alone. We need to make sure we are giving them the right support, and that is what this national strategy is about.

Other parts of the bill include allowing victims of sex trafficking to be eligible for the Job Corps program to help them get back on their feet.

I am also pleased to have included in this safe harbor bill, in the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act, a provision that Senators WHITEHOUSE and SESSIONS worked on that got included in our bill to clarify the authority of the U.S. Marshals Service to assist local law enforcement agencies in locating missing children.

I also know Senator LEAHY and Senator COLLINS have a very important bill that I am a cosponsor of, the Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act, which we would like to be considered either as a part of this bill, if we can work out these other issues, or on its own. It is a very important bill.

I have been very impressed by the bipartisan work we have done today. I was also very excited when all the women Senators, including the Presiding Officer, came together and asked for a hearing under Senator GRASSLEY's and Senator LEAHY's leadership. We had a very good hearing, and I think we can move from there.

This is one of those issues which people haven't talked about a lot in our country for a long time. I think one of the reasons it has come to the forefront is because of the Internet—something we love. More and more of these kinds of purchases can be made behind closed doors and out of the jurisdiction of any law enforcement officers if they don't see it happening. Well, that is what happened with that 12-year-old girl in Rochester; she just received a text.

This is not only going to take Congress getting the bills done, it will also take the work of the private sector. I have been impressed by the work by our hotels and transportation companies, places such as the Radisson hotels and our various transportation companies that have really stepped up and trained their employees because they are on the frontlines, they can look for problems, and they can report them to law enforcement. That is something which we can not legislate; that is something which is just happening.

I know there are a number of amendments—some I like and some I do not. I hope we can work through those as well.

I thank the Presiding Officer and thank all of those—especially Senator LEAHY, whose chair I am temporarily filling here on the floor, as he has spent a lot of time watching over this bill the last 2 days. I again thank Senator CORNYN for his good work.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRIBUTE TO BRIAN PHILLIPS

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I rise today to pay tribute to a gentleman from Rosebud, TX, who has helped this

Senator from Utah on occasions too numerous to count and in ways impossible to measure. For over 4 years Brian Phillips has dutifully served as my communications director. As he prepares to pursue new opportunities, I want to pause and acknowledge his service to me, to my office, to the people of Utah, and to our Nation.

The role of communications director in a Senate office is not for the faint of heart nor is it for the arrogant or overconfident. Many believe the job of a communications director is to rack up style points, political positioning, and positive spin. I have learned from Brian that a true communications director is laser-focused on substance, rock solid in his principles, and devoted to creating a space for people to hear and understand a message. He has expanded my view of what communication truly is and what it can be—what it should be.

Brian brought to my office the grittiness of his Texas roots, his passion from years on the campaign trail, the wisdom of one who has been tested in tough times, and the vision of a conservative reformer who has seen the view from higher up. I am certain there were times when Brian wondered what in the world he had gotten himself into with a freshman Senator and a ragtag team from Utah. I am also certain we are all better in what we do because he was willing to stand with us.

Brian is more than a communications director. He is a trusted counselor. I trust Brian's assessment of complex situations and count on his counsel to navigate challenging circumstances and to maximize seemingly hidden opportunities. No one has prepared me better to answer hard questions or deliver vital messages at critical moments. I would put Brian's uncanny sixth sense—his ''Spidey'' sense, as he calls it—about what lurks around corners up against anyone's communications professional anywhere. Brian is a master at leading people into strategic thinking, sometimes through heated discussions, but always to the higher ground of meaningful dialog.

Brian is comfortable with and capable of engaging people from across the professional and personal spectrum. I have watched him work with Senators and staff, with interns and individual Utahns, jaded journalists and passionate groups of grass-roots activists. He sets everyone at ease, provides an honest assessment, pushes when needed, pulls when necessary, and through pushes, pulls, nudges, and shoves, gets everyone to the best possible place. To watch him work is extraordinary.

There are many in this town who simply look out for themselves. There are many who judge their success by their own headlines, bylines, and story lines. I am most thankful that Brian Phillips put me and my staff, along with the people of Utah and the people of this Nation, ahead of his own interests. Because he put others first, he has created a legacy that will last.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. 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. MORAN. Madam President, we are here today and apparently this week to discuss legislation pending before the Senate, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

We have a serious problem in this country and around the globe in regard to human trafficking. This legislation is an issue that needs to be addressed and ought not be delayed. In fact, many from across the country are asking us to do just that, including hundreds of Kansans who are concerned about the rights of individuals, the rights of women and men across the country. Congress has legislation now pending that seems to me to be very straightforward and common sense in trying to eliminate this scourge from our country.

I want to highlight what I think is unfortunately developing in the Senate. I would refer back to the elections of November 2014, in which, I thought, at least one of the messages the American people delivered to us through their votes was a desire to see that legislation—particularly legislation such as this—be addressed, that the Senate consider it, amendments be offered, votes be taken, and ultimately legislation be approved or disapproved by the Senate. Unfortunately, we still find ourselves in a position in which we are unable to move forward on this legislation to consider amendments.

I would guess that some of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle would indicate that when the Republicans were in the minority they from time to time blocked consideration of legislation pending. I would tell you, that in my view, when I was a participant in that process, it was because of the belief that we would have no opportunity to offer amendments to legislation then pending. What I want to see is how the Senate can process legislation, and what I want is for every Member of the Senate to have the opportunity to offer amendments, to have them considered, to be voted on, and that right should exist for every Republican Senator and every Democratic Senator. We should be in a position in which we can resolve our differences not by blocking the consideration of an important piece of legislation but by taking a vote on an amendment offered by a Senator from a State here in the United States and that the Senators have an opportunity to present their case, votes be taken, and issues be resolved. Unfortunately, we are in a position where we are even unable to consider this legislation, and I would ask that this circumstance come to an end.

Again, in my view, a message from November 2014—the last time voters spoke in the United States—was, could we at least have a Congress that can function, that can consider issues, and where votes can be cast and decisions made. We find ourselves one more time in a situation in which we are unable even to get to the bill to enable that consideration to occur.

At least as stated in the press, there is an argument about a provision in the legislation. I would again say that if there is a provision in the legislation, despite the fact that it was unanimously approved by the committee—every Republican and Democrat voted for it. And now there is this claim that they are opposed to that. If you are opposed to something, the way to solve it is not to block consideration of the bill. The way to solve it is to allow the bill to be considered, and if you oppose something in the bill, offer an amendment, have a debate, and let the votes decide here on the Senate floor whether that provision should remain in or be removed.

That provision that people are indicating is causing problems is one that is related to the public funding of abortions. It is a provision that has been law since the 1970s. It was voted on many times in the Senate, and 23 Senators voted for that provision in a spending bill in 2014—just last year.

It appears we are manufacturing problems that don't really exist. This provision was in the bill when the committee considered it, when the committee approved it. Now as we bring this bipartisan bill to the Senate floor, there are those who are saying we can't consider it because this provision is included. I would indicate that the idea of public funding—the use of taxpayer dollars to support abortion—is disapproved by 7 out of 10 Americans. This is not a radical kind of issue or proposal. But my point is that we should have the opportunity to debate this and every other item within the bill, reach a conclusion, and move forward on a piece of legislation that is important in trying to protect the lives and safety of people across our country, particularly women and children.

So my plea to my colleagues is this. Could we again get to the point where the Senate functions, where we debate bills, votes are taken, and issues of importance are considered. I hope I learn later today that is the case—that we can move forward in resolution of this legislation.

I am here to indicate I oppose public funding of abortion. I support the trafficking legislation now pending. But I will never have the opportunity to demonstrate that because we are at a point in which no legislation is able to be considered.

Madam President, I thank you for the opportunity to address the Senate.

I notice the Senator from Wyoming is on the floor, and I would be happy to yield the floor for him.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I agree entirely with my friend, the Senator from Kansas, and I thank him for his leadership and thoughtful deliberation on this matter.

I would like for a moment to talk about this bill that is on the floor, S. 178, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. I have an amendment that I am offering today on human trafficking in Indian Country. I will tell you that human trafficking is widespread in Indian Country, and we have to do everything we can to stop it. Violent crime rates against women and girls in Native American communities are far higher than the national averages. This amendment delivers help to trafficking survivors and gives tribes the resources they need to battle human trafficking in their own backyards. This amendment has broad support and is a vital addition to the bill on the floor today.

My amendment would provide tribes the opportunity to access funding for recovery programs for survivors and special training for local law enforcement in order to combat human trafficking specifically in Indian Country. This amendment would allow Indian tribes to be able to compete for resources for programs to prevent human trafficking. It would provide for training for local tribal law enforcement so they would be better able to track trafficking activities. These trainings and additional resources will better equip the tribal resources to better spot human trafficking in local communities and to act quickly to respond.

This funding would also help the survivors of sex and labor trafficking in their recovery. Programs such as this assist survivors in human trafficking and enable them to begin to heal and restore their lives. The bill, S. 178, allows for more protections for victims of human trafficking in our country, and my amendment would extend those protections to the tribes in Indian Country as well.

OBAMACARE

Madam President, I noticed earlier today the minority leader as well as the minority whip on the Senate floor talking about the President's health care law.

I would like to point out that the Congressional Budget Office released a report Monday about the Obama health care law—ObamaCare. I see the White House is actually championing the report. They call it great news for America.

Let's be clear. This report contains significant amounts of bad news for people—bad news for people who signed up on the ObamaCare exchanges for getting their health insurance coverage.

In fact, the Congressional Budget Office predicts that health care premiums will increase more than 8 percent a year this coming year for ObamaCare enrollees. They also predict it will increase 8 percent next year for ObamaCare enrollees through the exchange for the benchmark plan, and they predict it will increase another 8 percent a year after that. Most Americans can't afford to pay 8 percent more a year in premiums each and every year, which is what the Congressional Budget Office is proposing, but you don't hear the Democrats on the floor talking about that.

Wasn't it the President of the United States who said that premium rates would go down for families by $2,500 a year?

Isn't it so that many Senators on the other side of the aisle came to the floor and said rates would go down. NANCY PELOSI said they would go down for everyone. Why are the Democrats not mentioning what the CBO is saying, that year after year after year the rates are going to go up 8 percent, another 8 percent, another 8 percent?

So we know the reality of what is happening to people all across the country, which is why this health care law continues to be unpopular, unaffordable, and unworkable. So I think it is time for the White House to stop celebrating and start thinking about the people who have been impacted specifically by this expensive and unworkable piece of legislation.

I found it interesting that on Monday, the Secretary of Health and Human Services held an event to celebrate the number of people who had signed up for coverage this year. Secretary Burwell said she was ''pleased with the results to date.'' She repeated the administration's sound bite about the health care law working.

Well, that is not what I am hearing from people at home in Wyoming. It is not what I am hearing from my friends, neighbors, and patients. As a doctor who has been taking care of patients in Wyoming for 25 years, I talk to lots of patients every weekend at home. It is also not what I read in the papers. Papers all across the country, from the east coast to the west coast, talk about hard working Americans who have been devastated by the impacts of this terrible health care law. It seems that every day there is more bad news about more ways that ObamaCare is hurting American families and failing to live up to the many promises made by the President and the Democrats in this body who voted for it—the promises they made.

When you take a look at the Congressional Budget Office's new estimates of how many people are going to sign up for ObamaCare this year, they had originally said there would be 14 million people who would sign up for ObamaCare plans by the end of the year. Now they have dropped that number down to 11 million people. So it is not a surprise when fewer people—3 million fewer people—sign up, that it is going to cost the taxpayers less than the very high number they were expecting to have to pay. So that number has dropped, but it is because fewer people are choosing to sign up for the Obama health care plan. Is the Obama administration pleased that the President's health care law is so much less popular with the public than the President and Democrats expected it to be?

As I talk about some of the stories that are coming out from the east to the west coast, I would like to start with a story from the Portland Press Herald newspaper in Portland, ME. On February 27, the headline was: ''Many insured under Affordable Care Act taking a hit at tax time.''

The article tells the story of Diana Newman, who lives in Southwest Harbor. She had ObamaCare insurance last year. She went to file her taxes a few weeks ago. The article says that ''she got a $400 surprise.'' That is how much she owed on her taxes specifically because of the new health care law. She told the newspaper that her tax troubles are just another stumbling block in what she said was a long, difficult year trying to figure out how to use and how to pay for her new insurance.

She said: ''At the end of all this confusion, I was hit with hundreds of dollars at tax time.'' She said: ''It's frightening.''

Frightening—that is how somebody whom the President is claiming has been helped by the law is describing the impact on her life. It is frightening. It turns out she was one of almost a million people who got bad information from the government about their tax forms.

Well, that just made things more confusing for her. She said: ''At this point, I don't know what to think. I may owe more, or less, or about the same.''

Is the Obama administration—and all the Democrats who voted for this health care law—pleased about the way it is frightening this woman in Maine? I don't hear the Senate minority leader or the whip talking about that.

Does the administration think that ObamaCare is working for Diana Newman?

The tax preparation company H&R Block says that more than half of their clients—more than half of their clients—have had their refunds reduced because of the health care law. On average H&R Block says their customers owe the IRS an extra $530. That is a lot of money for hard-working taxpayers. A lot of people count on getting that tax refund to help them pay their bills this time of year.

Is the Obama administration pleased to see the IRS take another $530 from hard-working American families? Some of these people who owe money to the IRS didn't sign up for ObamaCare insurance at all last year.

Many are now finding out for the first time that they owe a tax penalty because the health care law's mandate says they have to buy health insurance and not just necessarily insurance that works for them and their family and their family's needs. Oh, no, the mandate states they have to buy insurance President Obama says works for them, even though they know it doesn't work

for them. It may be too much insurance or insurance they don't need, don't want, can't afford, and they don't have the freedom or flexibility to even make that choice. President Obama says he knows what is best for them because they don't.

The problem is that by the time many of these people figured that out, it was already too late to sign up for ObamaCare insurance for this year so now they are getting taxed—penalized. People who didn't understand the tax penalties feel as though the Obama administration has pulled a fast one on them.

Again, as we approach the 5-year anniversary, ObamaCare continues to be unpopular with the American people. There is so much anger about the timing of the tax issues that the administration had to backtrack and allow extra time for people to sign up this year.

The President made a YouTube video saying the deadline was February 15. February 15 came and went, and then the President said: Well, we better open it up again. This President is making it up as he goes along. We have seen it time and time again with this President and this law. He is making it up as he goes along.

Is the Obama administration pleased with this confusion and anger that a lot of Americans are feeling because of the IRS penalties?

It is not just Washington that is causing trouble for people who have to sign up for the President's health care. We are seeing bad news all across America.

I talked about Maine earlier. Let's go over to the other coast. Let's go to Oregon. Oregon tried to set up its own health insurance exchange. They did such an awful job that not one single person was ever able to sign up on the State Web site—not one, no one. People had to fill out paper applications if they wanted to try to buy insurance last year.

How much did it cost the State to set up this exchange where not one person was able to buy insurance from the Web site? It cost taxpayers $248 million.

Last Friday the Governor of Oregon officially gave up. He signed a law dissolving the State exchange. Oregon will just use the Federal Government's exchange and the Federal Web site.

Does the Obama administration think that the failed Web site and the wasting of $248 million in taxpayer money is a sign that the health care law is working? Is this administration pleased with the way Oregon's ObamaCare exchange wasted nearly one-quarter of a billion dollars? That is one State alone.

Just next door in Washington State, they are having troubles of their own. There was an article in The Hill newspaper here in Washington, DC, on February 25 titled ''State's ObamaCare overcharges 13K.'' There were 13,000 people overcharged in the State's ObamaCare exchange in Washington State.

According to the article, the Washington State ObamaCare exchange said it withdrew the incorrect amount of money from the bank accounts of 13,000 people. Think about that in reference to your own checking account, where there may be an automatic withdrawal based on a cable bill, cell phone bill or whatever. Many people—13,000 in this case in Washington State—had an incorrect withdrawal from the Washington State ObamaCare exchange. It says that some of the people say that more than three times the correct amount was withdrawn for their monthly premium for health insurance.

Can you imagine if the electric company or one of the utilities—your cell phone provider or your cable company—withdrew three times the amount expected from your checking account for that monthly bill. For some people that glitch in the State system probably meant their accounts were going to end up overdrawn.

Even if the States get the problem fixed right away, that is an alarming failure by that ObamaCare exchange.

Is the Obama administration pleased with the anxiety the exchange is causing 13,000 people in Washington State? These are just a few of the ways ObamaCare is not living up to the promises that Democrats and the administration made to the American people.

Later this month, on March 23, we will hit the fifth anniversary of President Obama signing this health care bill into law. If Monday's event with Secretary Burwell was any indication, the White House is going to throw a celebration. Once again they will say they are pleased and they will say ObamaCare is working. The Obama administration should not be pleased with its health care law. The Obama administration, and every Democrat who voted for it, should be embarrassed by it.

It is not what Democrats promised, and it is not what people wanted. People wanted something very simple when it came to their health care and health care reform. People want the care they need, from a doctor they choose, at a lower cost, and that is what Republicans in the Senate are planning to give them.

We can do it without a 2,000-page law, and we can do it without all of the negative side effects of ObamaCare. That will be health care reform worth celebrating.

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

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I rise today to join Senator LEAHY, the ranking member of the Committee on the Judiciary, in explaining an amendment we have filed, amendment No. 290, to the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Senators AYOTTE, MURKOWSKI, HEITKAMP, and BALDWIN for also cosponsoring our amendment and for their strong support.

Our amendment would reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act programs which expired in 2013. These three programs—the Street Outreach Program, the Basic Center Program, and the Transitional Living Program—have helped thousands of our homeless youth meet their immediate needs and provide long-term residential services for those who, sadly, cannot be safely reunited with their families.

The Street Outreach Program helps homeless and runaway youth find stable housing and connects them with the treatment, counseling, and crisis prevention they need. A central goal of this program is to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Basic Center Program helps community-based providers meet the basic needs of shelter, food, and clothing for homeless youth.

The Transitional Living Program supports long-term housing services that help our homeless youth enter stable living environments and develop critical life skills.

The amendment Senator LEAHY and I and our cosponsors are offering complements the underlying bill by addressing prevention, intervention, and recovery services for the victims of sex trafficking—particularly among one of the most vulnerable populations, and that is our homeless youth. According to the Institute of Medicine and the National Resource Council, homelessness is one of the most common risk factors for sex trafficking. Without access to food, shelter, and social supports, homeless youth too often turn to what is termed survival sex—a way to trade sex for a place to sleep and other basic necessities. Another recent report found that one in four homeless youth are victims of sex trafficking or engaged in survival sex. Approximately 48 percent of homeless youth have done so because they did not have a safe place to stay. Our amendment strengthens the existing programs by ensuring that service providers know how to identify trafficking victims and give these youth the support they need.

In Maine, our homeless shelters are critical partners in the fight to end human trafficking. In Portland, the Preble Street Resource Center has used Runaway and Homeless Youth Act resources to connect young people who need food, safe shelter, health services, and educational support with those who can provide those services. The Preble Street Anti-Trafficking Coalition is currently helping approximately 50 trafficking victims—whose ages range from 15 to 42—start new

lives. There are more than 1.6 million homeless teens in the United States, an astonishing number. A growing number of homeless youth identify as LGBT, and it is estimated that up to 40 percent of runaway and homeless youth are LGBT. Our amendment would also ensure that those seeking services through these Federal programs are not denied assistance based on their race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. All homeless young people need access to safe beds at night and services during the day so they will never have to choose between selling their bodies and a safe place to sleep.

The stand-alone bill on which our amendment is based was reported out of the Committee on the Judiciary during the last Congress with an overwhelmingly strong bipartisan vote of 15 to 3. It has the support of nearly 270 organizations, including service providers, anti-trafficking advocates, and many faith-based organizations that serve homeless youth each and every day. Covenant House, the largest service provider for runaway and homeless youth, strongly supports our reauthorization of these programs.

Let me thank Senator LEAHY for working so hard and for working to incorporate important feedback into our amendment, such as applying the nondiscrimination clause only to the runaway and homeless youth programs and clarifying the continued ability to provide sex-specific shelters and programming, such as all-girls shelters or all-male shelters.

Let me take this opportunity to also commend Senator CORNYN and Senator KLOBUCHAR for their work on the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, a bill I have proudly cosponsored. The policies and tools included in this bill are important pieces of the Federal response to the horrific crime of human trafficking. Congress must do more to provide law enforcement with the tools it needs to pursue to end sex trafficking and to also support preventive programs such as the runaway and homeless youth programs that help those who fall victim to traffickers. In many ways our bill is the bookend for the bill that is pending on the Senate floor because it focuses on the service end in helping those who are most vulnerable, our young people.

By providing homeless young people with the support and services they need, we can help prevent them from ever being trafficked in the first place. The runaway and homeless youth programs have provided a lifeline and housing for America's homeless and for its human trafficked youth for 40 years. They are a vital tool in addressing these serious problems. I urge my colleagues to support our bipartisan amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Madam President, I want to thank the distinguished senior Senator from Maine, my New England neighbor, for her comments, speaking on Leahy-Collins amendment No. 290. She and I and others have worked on this for a very long time. In her comments, she talked about shelters for homeless teens, and I think about how much better this whole country would be if this homeless teen could turn to a shelter and not to a trafficker.

As I said earlier on the floor, traffickers often find their victims soon after they runaway or become homeless.

In a couple of States, such as mine and the Senator from Maine's, especially at this time of year, people need shelter or they die. They literally die in a relatively short period of time from the cold.

We see what happens. Listen to the stories of these trafficking survivors. Many of them began as a homeless or runaway teen. They are scared, desperate for affection, for food, for safety, and for a safe place to sleep.

Our children and our grandchildren don't have to be scared. They have a safe place to sleep. They have food. But for a lot of these runaways, that is not the case.

That is a problem we can fix. We can reauthorize the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act. We can ensure that no child is turned away, regardless of their religion or their race or whom they love. A child is a child is a child. They all deserve our protection.

We don't say: OK, you four homeless children, we will take care of you but not you because you are the wrong race or you are the wrong religion or you love the wrong person. So you have to just stay out and be prey to the traffickers.

We will recount some of the stories I told before, the traffickers I prosecuted years ago and the horrible stories. I know the distinguished Senator from Maine has heard these stories, and she has visited these shelters. She has seen and heard the stories. When you do, it tears your heart. So I hope the amendment that she, Senator MURKOWSKI, I, and others have written will be in the final bill when it is passed. I thank my friend from Maine for her hard work.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I am just going to say that I know the distinguished Senators from Vermont and Maine have been on the floor talking about an amendment they hope to offer to this anti-trafficking bill. But the sad fact is that no one is going to get to offer any amendments to this bill unless the Democratic leader, Senator REID, decides that we are going to have an open amendment process because right now there are objections to anyone setting any of the amendments for votes, much less asking to set aside the pending amendment and making your amendment the pending amendment so it could be considered and scheduled for a vote.

I wish to make sure our colleagues understand the rationale because I have had conversations with a number of members of the Judiciary Committee, which voted unanimously to support this bill. That doesn't happen very often, that we have that kind of unanimous support. Ten of our Democratic colleagues are cosponsors on the original bill.

So it might sound strange that after 10 Democrats have cosponsored the bill, after all of the Republicans and all of the Democrats on the Judiciary Committee have voted to support this bill—and the minority leader, Senator REID, has agreed to dispense with the normal procedural process to get the bill on the floor—that we would now have this unusual situation where this bill is being hijacked and being used to debate something that it really doesn't have very much to do about, and that is the subject of abortion.

Some of our colleagues raised this issue yesterday for the first time, and they said they were surprised to find some language in the bill that limited the use of the funds in this bill consistent with the Hyde amendment. The Hyde amendment is a prohibition against using taxpayer funds for abortion, and it has been the law of the land for 39 years—39 years. All our bill does is preserve the status quo when it comes to the Hyde amendment.

Then, all of a sudden, some of our colleagues woke up I guess yesterday morning and discovered this and said that they were outraged and that it was totally unacceptable. Well, when we offered them an opportunity to offer an amendment to change that, they said: No, we don't want an amendment. We don't want to change it by a vote of the Senate. We just want to block the bill. We want to kill the bill.

Unless something changes between now and the time we vote on cloture on the bill, that is what is going to happen because they don't want to amend the bill; they don't want to allow others the opportunity—such as the Senator from Maine and the Senator from Vermont—to amend the bill; they just want to kill the bill.

It really is baffling to me, on a topic we all ought to agree is an important one, where some of the most vulnerable individuals in our society—children who have been sex-trafficked—would be the beneficiaries of the bill, that we are for some reason debating a provision in the bill that was in the bill when 10 Democrats agreed to cosponsor it, when all members of the Judiciary Committee, including those same Democrats, agreed to vote for the bill, and when the Democratic leader agreed

to bring it to the floor unanimously by a vote of the Senate. All of a sudden we want to try to revisit a provision that has been the law of the land for 39 years.

I hope something happens between now and the end of the week that causes some of our friends to reconsider this idea that they are going to filibuster this bill which many of them cosponsored and for which many of them voted. It would be a real shame and a tragedy if something that was designed to help these vulnerable kids was killed in the Senate because this became a political football. That would be a shame.

I know the distinguished Senator from Utah is on the floor and ready to speak.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

Mr. HATCH. Madam President, I will speak for a few seconds on what the distinguished Senator from Texas said.

It would be absolutely pathetic if this bill were stopped—a bill this important that means so much to our families and to our children—because of the long-term language that has been, as I say, for 39 years—I can't believe this Senate has become so political that we would raise that issue at this time on this bill that almost everybody with any brains at all would be for. I would be ashamed of myself. And then not be willing to bring up an amendment if they don't like the language, go through the regular order, and act like the Senate and act like Senators—it is pathetic. What have we come to around here that we are so doggone partisan that we can't even pass a bill to protect children? I think it is pathetic, is all I can say.

UKRAINE

Madam President, in my nearly 40 years of public service, I have become very concerned with the state of our national security.

From the firestorm of terrorism that has swept Syria and Iraq, to the looming specter of a nuclear Iran, our Nation faces yet another potential catastrophe in Ukraine, where Russian separatists and soldiers continue their drive to consume as much of that nation as President Putin desires. It is particularly vexing that each of these catastrophes could have been prevented or at least greatly mitigated had the instigators of these events believed that the United States intended to use its national power to deter and, if necessary, repulse those seeking to use aggression against our national interests.

As I mentioned before, Ukraine is the latest example. Almost 1 year ago Russian forces seized and then annexed the Crimean peninsula. Ever since then, Russian separatists and Russian forces have snapped up large parts of eastern Ukraine.

Until last year, the areas controlled by Russian separatists and Russian forces could be loosely grouped into two areas along the Russian border—specifically, a northern area around the city of Luhansk and a southern area around the city of Donetsk. In between these two Russian-controlled areas lies the town called Debaltseve, which is a vital transportation hub. By seizing this strategic town, Russia can transport troops and supplies more easily between the Russian-controlled areas in the north and the South.

However, after weeks of fighting in and around Debaltseve, a ceasefire called Minsk II was brokered. Unfortunately, as many realists warned, Minsk II was not worth the paper it was written on. Predictably, 72 hours after the ceasefire was signed, Russian forces violated the protocol and Ukrainian soldiers retreated from the town under heavy fire.

Adding insult to injury, President Putin was quoted by the New York Times, after the fall of Debaltseve, saying:

> Life is life. It just goes on. No need to dwell on it.

What is the response of the United States to this aggression? Well, until today the only concrete action, as reported by ABC News, is that the administration has decided to send fewer than 10 soldiers to western Ukraine to provide combat medical training to Ukrainian forces. This would not be so laughable if I did not believe the Ukrainians will require far greater medical assistance if Russian aggression continues unabated. But now that Russian-backed forces have solidified their control over whole swathes of eastern Ukraine, what comes next? Will Mr. Putin be appeased and go home? I very much doubt it. Recent reports indicate that both sides have moved some heavy weapons away from the battlefield; nevertheless, I believe this could just be a lull in the storm.

As I mentioned earlier, Russian forces have annexed Crimea, which is a peninsula between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. To supply their forces in Crimea, Russians must fly over or cross a narrow strip of water between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov called the Kerch Strait. But if Russians controlled the land between Crimea and the Russian border, they could ship those supplies more efficiently and at lower cost. This stretch of land, of course, is Ukrainian sovereign territory. Therefore, it is very possible that the Russians will move to conquer this region to establish a land corridor between Russia and Crimea.

Many military experts believe this is Russia's objective since Russian-backed separatists have intensified their military activities around the port city of Mariupol.

The New York Times reports that the city "is a bustling port in a strategic location on the Sea of Azov, near the Russian border."

Mariupol is the only major obstacle to the Russians realizing a long-held goal of opening a land route between Russia and Crimea and taking complete control of the Sea of Azov and its rich industrial infrastructure.

In addition, the highly regarded Institute for the Study of War has noted that a village approximately 8 miles from Mariupol has "become the most actively contested area" in the region.

So what has been our response to this aggression? How is this administration preserving what is arguably one of the greatest American national security accomplishments in the past 100 years—ensuring a safe, secure and democratic Europe? Well, to be honest, not much.

Before the events of the past 12 months, this administration's Pollyanna policy toward Russia was defined by the so-called reset. It was my impression this policy was designed to convince the Russians we were not a threat and therefore we should work together for the common good. Unfortunately, the Russians exploited the former and did not give a darn about the latter.

Then, as the situation in Crimea and eastern Ukraine continued to grow more dire, we instituted a series of economic sanctions—first against Russian officials, then later against banks and businesses associated with Putin's cronies. These economic sanctions have grown against a number of key Russian energy, banking, and defense firms. To be fair, today the administration announced a modest increase in the number of individuals to which economic sanctions will be directed against.

However, one would be hard-pressed to call these sanctions robust. Individuals' assets were frozen and companies find it harder to raise capital, but they are hardly enough to make Mr. Putin think twice before proceeding to use force against his next objective.

What about our diplomatic efforts? As the Congressional Research Service has stated, "The administration has appeared to leave the leading role in negotiating such a [peace] settlement [regarding Ukraine] to France and Germany."

What about U.S. military aid? According to the Congressional Research Service, the United States has allocated $120 million in security assistance so far. Today our government announced a modest increase in aid. Of the aid previously announced, funds were used for body armor, helmets, vehicles, night and thermal vision devices, heavy engineering equipment, advanced radios, patrol boats, rations, tents, countermortar radars, uniforms, and first aid equipment and supplies. Glaringly absent from this list are the pieces of equipment that could tilt the balance of power and change Mr. Putin's calculations. Specifically, where are the intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, heavy weapons and logistics assets?

What is the administration's response? Just this week Brian McKeon, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy stated—more than 1 year after the Russian invasion of Crimea—that the Obama administration is "still working in the interagency group on reviewing a number of

options including lethal defensive weapons, but I can't give you a timetable on when we might have a decision on additional assistance.''

That is pathetic. By any measure that is pathetic. I am flabbergasted not only by Mr. McKeon's comment but the thought that the administration believes anyone would see that as a legitimate answer.

In other areas, what about the deployment of more U.S. military units to Europe to reassure our allies? While the United States has deployed some troops to the region, that is not enough to convince Moscow this administration is determined to give a resolute response to further Russian aggression.

Specifically, the initial deployment of U.S. land forces were in company-size units. A company-size unit has less than 150 soldiers, an insufficient force to amount to an effective deterrent. Then the administration announced that a single armored brigade—which consists of less than 100 tanks—would be deployed on a rotational basis. Once again, this is a relatively small force to deter what historically has been one of the great land armies.

Deterrence comes through strength. The world has changed since the fall of the Berlin Wall, but it appears this has been lost on President Putin. Indeed, it appears President Obama believes the world has changed more than it has. Regardless, the United States must take more forceful and dynamic actions. Otherwise, our policy of appeasement could result in more than just the loss of eastern Ukraine.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. 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. CORNYN. Madam President, I thought I might take just a few minutes during this lull in our schedule. If other Senators come down to talk, I will yield to them, but I would like to talk a little about what is in this piece of legislation—the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act. While I am on the Judiciary Committee and the Senator from Vermont is on the Judiciary Committee—he has worked together with me and others on this piece of legislation—I am aware of the fact there are many Senators for whom this is a relatively new topic and who have not been as immersed in it.

First, I would just say by way of major support that there are 200 victims' rights groups and law enforcement organizations that have endorsed this legislation—200 of them. I am looking forward to having a conference call with them this afternoon, where I can explain to them how we are currently stuck and to solicit their help in getting us unstuck so we can hopefully move this legislation along, have an open amendment process, and working with our colleagues in the House, send this important piece of legislation to the President.

As I said, more than 200 victims' rights and law enforcement organizations have endorsed this legislation, including Shared Hope International, Rights4Girls, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Children's Alliance, the National Criminal Justice Association, the End Child Prostitution and Trafficking organization, PROTECT, Alliance to End Slavery and Trafficking, the National Association of Police Organizations, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National District Attorneys Association.

I read that rather long list of supporting organizations to point out there is nothing political about this particular bill. This is neither a Republican bill nor a Democratic bill. This is, I think, in the best traditions of the Senate, the Congress, when Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle work together to come up with a policy solution that makes sense and that will help.

One of the key features of the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act is the creation of a special Crime Victims Compensation Fund. It is called the Domestic Trafficking Victims Fund.

When I had the honor of serving as attorney general of Texas, we had a Crime Victims Compensation Fund—much like I suspect most States have—where people who commit crimes and who pay fines and penalties pay into that fund, and those moneys are then distributed on a grant basis by the State to help organizations such as the Court Appointed Special Advocates Groups—CASA—which I worked closely with as attorney general, and a number of crime victims' groups and other survivors of crime.

What we do is use that same model here. We take the money that is paid by people convicted of human trafficking, sexual abuse, child pornography, child sexual exploitation, interstate transportation for illegal sexual activity, commercial human smuggling, and we require a special additional assessment of $5,000 upon conviction for any one of this class of crimes.

In other words, one of the things we are trying to do is move from this model of just dealing with the supply side of a problem and deal with the demand side. We are trying to focus on the people who purchase these illicit services from trafficking victims and then use that fund to do some good, to provide grants to various faith-based organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and the like that help treat the victims of child trafficking and hopefully help them begin to heal once they are rescued from their abusers and their assailants.

The other thing we do, sort of from a structural point of view, is we don't treat a young girl who has been trafficked as the criminal. In other words, in the past there has been a tendency to say we are going to arrest the 15-year-old girl and charge her for being a prostitute, when in fact she has no choice in the matter. She is being compelled by either violence or some other coercive means to do what she is doing. So it is not a voluntary act on her part.

So what we do is we don't treat them as a criminal. We treat the purchaser of these services as the criminal. We fine them. We use that money then to supply services to help that victim get rescued and get better, to heal, and to get on with their lives.

That is what is a little different here because we are not actually using tax dollars. We are using the fines and the penalties assessed against these perpetrators to help these victims heal once they are rescued. That is one of the most important parts of this bill.

We expect there would be roughly $30 million a year available for that out of this bill alone. That would be in addition to other things we are doing and other things that are being done at the local and State level.

We also make sure that we clarify the benefits and protections offered to victims of domestic human trafficking. Under current law, U.S. citizens are sometimes placed at a disadvantage when seeking services to restore them to their well-being and to offer them protection. But now we would make sure that those services are available without regard to citizenship and would make sure that people who would otherwise not get benefits will get benefits. This disparity in certification has led to some confusion, as we might imagine.

For example, under current law, a young person who has been trafficked from Central America through Mexico and into the United States would be eligible for a temporary visa while they cooperate with law enforcement because that testimony would be essential to convict the person who trafficked them. This clarifies that U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents should never be denied services due to the fact that they have not received that kind of special certification. It is a little technical, but it is an important area.

We also provide child human trafficking deterrence block grants paid entirely through the Crime Victims Compensation Fund I mentioned a moment ago. These funds would be granted to qualifying organizations based on their focus on victim rescue and restoration.

Collaboration among law enforcement, social services, emergency responders, children's advocacy centers, victims service providers, and nonprofits would be encouraged to help communities and government work together to develop a holistic approach to figure out what works best to protect these victims of trafficking and to serve victims.

It also would create a new purpose area under the Victims of Child Abuse Act for the 900 children's advocacy centers across the country that provide restorative services for victims of child pornography, and it requires that not less than $2 million a year be dedicated to this purpose.

In my experience, in Texas, the children's advocacy centers are some of the most outstanding organizations that exist for the treatment of victims of abuse and trafficking. One of the key features in the children's advocacy centers that I have visited is—imagine that a child who has been assaulted or a victim of human trafficking is not only going to be terrified by the experience, but they are also terrified by the law enforcement authorities who try to question them and to get evidence so they can make a case and conviction against the person who did harm to the child. The children's advocacy centers do an amazing job of creating a more relaxed atmosphere, where law enforcement and social service providers can work together in an environment where a child does not feel threatened and where the child can actually not only begin to get better but also cooperate with law enforcement authorities and provide more reliable testimony and evidence that can be used to convict the perpetrators.

Also in the bill, we would amend the human trafficking asset forfeiture statute to track the asset forfeiture statute for money laundering and eliminate the need for prosecutors to show direct traceability to the underlying crime and the targeted proceeds when they can show that the assets involved in the crime are used to conceal the source of criminal assets. This is basically taking another provision of current law. I realize that the whole issue of asset forfeiture, when taken to the extreme—I know Chairman GRASSLEY is interested in holding hearings on the subject. But I think the part of this which is not controversial is taking the assets used in the commission of a crime and forfeiting that by the perpetrator, again, using those funds in part to help their victims get better.

We also have a provision in the bill that would allow for the streamlining of criminal investigations of human trafficking.

Under current law, State and local law enforcement may obtain a wiretap warrant in State court upon showing that the investigation may provide evidence of murder, kidnapping, gambling, robbery, bribery, extortion or dealing with narcotic drugs, including marijuana or other dangerous drugs, or other crimes dangerous to life, limb or property and punishable by imprisonment for more than 1 year.

What we would do here is provide additional tools for law enforcement to conduct lawful wiretaps in order to get evidence important to convicting the perpetrators of these terrible crimes.

We also would require better reporting of this terrible crime of human trafficking. I remember a few years ago, when the Super Bowl was in Dallas, actually working with local law enforcement there where I learned for the first time that, unfortunately, at the same time that the Super Bowl is held in different cities around the country, there is a spike in the amount of trafficking that occurs in conjunction with these huge public events. That was quite an eye-opening experience for me.

Part of what we need to do is to get the facts, and to make sure that human trafficking is treated as the serious crime that it is for purposes of the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program. This legislation would encourage law enforcement to investigate and report human trafficking activity by classifying this as a part I violent crime and requiring it to be included in the calculation of index crime rates—again, making sure we understand what the facts are, because I think the fact is that so much of this crime and this sort of activity is hidden from public view. So most Americans probably don't know that this sort of activity goes on in their cities, in their States, and across the country. This would help us deal with that.

Under another provision of the bill, we would also make sure we use existing task forces to target offenders who exploit children, and we would, in particular, target child predators.

One of the things we learn, as we get deeper into this topic, is the sad fact that somebody who sexually abuses a child is likely to do it more than once. In other words, these twisted individuals unfortunately are going to commit crime after crime after crime until they are caught and taken out of commission.

This is one reason why I feel so strongly that we had to eliminate the rape kit backlogs around the country, and we worked closely with a courageous woman named Debbie Smith to reauthorize the Debbie Smith Act to make sure the money that Congress appropriated for the rape kit backlog was adequately funded. Due to the power of DNA testing, we can identify people who commit these serial offenses, and law enforcement can connect the dots better and at the same time exonerate people who have perhaps been falsely accused because they are excluded through a DNA test through this rape kit backlog elimination effort.

So trying to make sure we take these serial offenders off the streets is a priority under our bill.

As I said, we worked very closely with a number of colleagues, including the Senator from Vermont, the Senator FEINSTEIN of California, Senator COONS, Senator WYDEN, and Senator KLOBUCHAR on the other side. On our side, we have had a lot of great effort by Senator PORTMAN and Senator KIRK, among others. Senator COLLINS has certainly made important contributions. But I wish to particularly recognize the contributions by the Senator from California, Mrs. FEINSTEIN.

We added a second title, title II in the legislation, entitled ''Combating Human Trafficking.'' Senator FEINSTEIN was the person who made that major contribution to this effort.

My point is that this has really been a bipartisan collaborative effort—something we don't see enough of here in Washington, DC—untainted by politics and ideology, where we are actually trying to do some good for people who need our help the most.

Senator FEINSTEIN contributed much of the meat of title II, including amendments to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, response to victims of child trafficking provision, creating an interagency task force report on child trafficking primary prevention and also requiring a General Accountability Office report to Congress that includes information on Federal and State law enforcement agencies to combat trafficking in the United States and requiring that it include information on each available grant program intended to combat human trafficking or assist victims of trafficking.

On our side of the aisle, I mentioned that one of the people who has been a relentless warrior on this has been our friend the junior Senator from Illinois, Mr. KIRK, who contributed the HERO Act to this legislation. That is title III under the HERO Act.

Under that important part of the legislation that makes up this overall bill, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, the HERO Act would provide express statutory authorization for the existing ICE Cyber Crimes Center—Immigration and Customs Enforcement—recognizing that so much of what happens in terms of the marketing and the solicitation for people to engage in these crimes occurs now on the Internet.

I had the privilege of being here with the Senator from Illinois on the floor yesterday afternoon, and he talked about this one particular site that has been responsible for the trafficking of so much human flesh, mainly in the form of minor children, and his efforts to combat that. But part of what the HERO Act would do is to make sure that we have this powerful tool in the fight against sexual exploitation of children and the production, advertisement, and distribution of child pornography and child sex tourism—if you can imagine such a thing.

The HERO Act would also authorize the Cyber Crimes Center to collaborate with the Department of Defense and the National Association to Protect Children for the purpose of recruiting, training, and hiring wounded and transitioning military veterans to serve as law enforcement officials in the investigation and prosecution of these crimes. This child exploitation section uses sophisticated investigative tools to target violators who operate on the Internet, which has been one of the primary focuses of the Senator from Illinois in his efforts, targeting the use of Web sites, email chat rooms, and file-sharing applications.

Major initiatives, including Operation Predator, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement office within the Department of Homeland Security's flagship investigative initiative for targeting sexual predators, child pornographers, and child sex.

It includes the National Child Victim Identification System, which was developed to assist law enforcement agencies in identifying victims of child sexual exploitation, and the virtual global task force and international alliance of law enforcement agencies working together to fight online child exploitation and abuse.

I realize this has been rather lengthy, but I thought it was worth making sure that all of our colleagues and anybody within the sound of my voice who cared to listen understood what was in this important piece of legislation, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

To summarize, 200 organizations across the country who are focused like a laser on the bane and evil that child sex trafficking is have endorsed this legislation. The original piece of legislation had 10 Democratic cosponsors, about an equal number—perhaps; I can't remember the exact number—of Republican cosponsors, and it passed by unanimous vote of the Senate Judiciary Committee in February.

Coming to the floor, we had something that hadn't happened often enough, in my view, which was that Democrats and Republicans together agreed to bypass the usual cumbersome procedure to get a bill to the floor, known as cloture, and we all agreed we should take up this bill together. That is when things went off the rails, sadly. But I am an optimistic person and I am hopeful cooler heads will prevail.

I have had some private conversations with a number of Senators who are really very disturbed by the possibility that legislation as important as this is to the victims of human trafficking might be kicked to the curb because of some phony diversion and argument about restrictions on funding.

Again, the provisions of this bill that limit the use of the funds under the Hyde amendment has been the law of the land for 39 years. It was originally started in 1976. Basically, the Hyde amendment says that no taxpayer funds may be used for abortion services. This has been one of the rare areas in an area of great controversy—the subject of abortion—where Congress has come together on a bipartisan basis to say we are going to draw a bright line there to say no matter what your views are on abortion, we are not going to allow taxpayer funds to be used for abortion. Again, that started in 1976 and it has been the law of the land since that time.

Every appropriations bill that has passed, including the CRomnibus, the continuing resolution omnibus bill that was passed last fall in the lame-duck session of Congress, included a restriction known as the Hyde amendment restriction in it. As a matter of fact, we specifically referenced that provision in the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

So you could imagine my surprise when I think it was yesterday that I got calls, letters, and heard speeches that people were surprised—shocked—that this provision was in the legislation when it was filed in January—I think January 13—and made public to the world. If anybody thought it was hidden, it was hidden in plain sight to anybody who cared to read it. And to me, what was so surprising about some of the reaction is that this maintains the status quo. This doesn't change anything, and has been the law of the land for 39 years since the original Hyde amendment was adopted.

So my hope is we can break out of this terrible cycle of dysfunction which I think, frankly, reflects Congress in a very negative light. I certainly hear it back home in Texas. People say: Well, can't you all get along? Can't you do anything? They don't want us to compromise our principles, and we won't. I don't think we should. But there are so many areas like this where we are united together in trying to do everything we can to help law enforcement investigate and prosecute human trafficking and to help the victims of human trafficking to heal after they are rescued—to heal, get better, and to get on with their lives. That is all this legislation does.

I say that is all. That is a pretty big deal. It provides $30 million a year—not tax dollars. These are fines and penalties paid by the people who commit these terrible crimes. It provides $30 million a year as funds that can go toward grants to faith-based organizations, child advocacy centers—you name it—organizations that will spend their lives trying to help these children try to get better and get on with their lives. That money is available to them.

But if we don't pass this bill this week, that is not going to happen. How tragic it would be if somehow we let the politics of the day and this feigned outrage over a provision that has been a law of the land for 39 years derail us from doing our job.

I have every confidence that the heart of every Member of this body is in the right place when it comes to trying to help these victims of human trafficking. I just ask us to get our heads screwed on right. I know our hearts are in the right place, but frankly I am a little worried about people's heads not being screwed on right when it comes to focusing on a solution that is within our reach and one that has I think enjoyed so much support all across the country—as I mentioned, more than 200 victims rights and law enforcement organizations across the country. I am looking forward in probably the next 10 minutes or so joining a conference call with various members of these organizations, where I can update them on where they are and basically ask them for their help.

Call your Senator. Call your Congressman. Tell them we need to get this done, because in all likelihood tomorrow we are going to have a very important vote in the Senate.

I said I wasn't going to get mired down in procedure, but we do have an important vote tomorrow which is called a cloture vote. In other words, in order to get to a final passage of this bill, we need to have at least 60 Senators out of 100 vote for ending debate on the bill. That is called a cloture vote. But if we don't have 60 Senators vote to end debate on this bill, then basically we are dead in the water.

We have 54 Senators on our side of the aisle. There are 46 on the other side of the aisle. You would think on a bill that does as much as this bill does for the victims of human trafficking and that is so devoid of politics that we could get 60 votes or more. I wish we could get 100 votes to close off debate and finally pass this bill. If we did that in short order, I know we could work with our colleagues in the House of Representatives, who have already passed a similar although a little bit different bill, to try to reconcile those two pieces of legislation and get them to President Obama's desk for his signature. The sooner we do that, the sooner these victims of human trafficking will get the help they need that this bill would provide.

So I hope that Senators will think long and hard about their vote on closing off debate tomorrow and getting us to the finish line on this legislation. Again, we don't need everybody. We don't need 100 Senators to vote to close off debate tomorrow, but we do need 60. If we don't get 60, this bill is going to be dead in the water.

I would ask all of our colleagues to examine their conscience and to think about what we are doing here and how much good we could do if we come together. I know from talking to some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle, they have had some sleepless nights. Several of our colleagues have said they basically have had a hard time sleeping thinking about the human tragedy reflected in human trafficking, and they worried whether we will actually be able to get this bill over the finish line. I hope and pray we will. We will find out tomorrow.

This is something that is in our hands. We can't control a lot of things in the world, but we can control whether we produce 60 votes here in the Senate tomorrow to close off debate, to get to final passage by a majority vote in the Senate. And if we can, then we are going to be able to expedite the help these victims of human trafficking need. We are going to be able to make sure the predators who prey on innocent children and other victims of human trafficking pay the price, but that out of that bad comes some good when children are rescued and these victims begin the process of healing.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. REID. Madam President, I was stunned a few minutes ago to hear the assistant Republican leader on the floor speaking about trafficking legislation that is now before the Senate. I am glad he is speaking about the legislation. He has done that quite a bit. But as he spoke about the bill, it is very stunning what he said.

He said:

> This bill is being hijacked and being used to debate something that it really doesn't have very much to do about, and that is the subject of abortion.

I totally agree with my friend from Texas. This bill has been hijacked by an issue completely unrelated to human trafficking.

I suggest that the majority take it out. We can debate on how it is in the bill. Some said that it was by sleight of hand, and some said that the Democratic staff should have seen that it was in there. It is in there, and it has to come out.

Unless that language is taken out of the bill, there will be no bill. We cannot have this legislation hijacked by an abortion issue.

My friend the President pro tempore of the Senate and the chairman of the Finance Committee said:

> I can't believe that this Senate has become so political that we would raise that issue at this time on this bill.

''Raise the issue''—he took the words right out of my mouth. I can't believe it either.

I say to my friends the majority, take the abortion language out of the bill. It has nothing to do with abortion.

I hope my Republican friends will choose to do the right thing and eliminate this unrelated issue on an otherwise good piece of legislation.

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

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I wish to talk about a couple of amendments on the legislation that we are considering this week, which is the human trafficking legislation.

Up to this point, this has been a bipartisan exercise. In fact, Senator BLUMENTHAL, the Senator from Connecticut, and I started a caucus here in the Senate on human trafficking about 3½ years ago, understanding that there was an increasing concern and awareness about this issue around the country, and we wanted to bring colleagues together to talk about the issue. We now have many other Members of the Senate who are a part of that.

We had monthly meetings—holding up people who were doing great things around the country—describing the problem so that all of us, Members of the Senate and their staff, understand the seriousness of this issue and why we need to address it. That has always been nonpartisan—not just bipartisan but nonpartisan.

I think it is time for us to move forward with this debate and to have these amendments offered and to actually vote on this legislation that would help to deal with this problem all around the country, and unfortunately it is everywhere.

Often people think that this is an international issue, that the only human trafficking concern we should have would be in Africa or Asia or other countries. But it actually happens right here, and it happens in my home State of Ohio.

I first became involved in this issue when a school outside the city of Toledo came to me and told me their concern about it and how these young people were getting involved and engaged in it. The more we learned, the more I looked into it, and the more I realized this is something which is very real in the communities I represent in Ohio, and unfortunately I believe the same is true in every State represented in this Chamber.

We have had an interesting debate so far. Sometimes we have gotten a little sidetracked, such as the issue we saw a moment ago, but for the most part I have been pleased that over the last few days we have talked about the scope of the problem, talked about some of the solutions to it, and we talked about some of the good legislation that is in the underlying bill.

There are two pieces of legislation that I offered that are part of the underlying bill, and I am happy about that. They are both bipartisan amendments. There are also a couple of amendments that I think would be helpful for us to include in the legislation. I offered those amendments earlier this week with the hopes that they would have already been considered. They have not been considered yet, but I hope to move forward with this legislation. The longer we wait, the more difficult it becomes for us to move forward. I hope we can resolve whatever differences there are and go ahead and start voting on amendments and moving this legislation forward so we can actually help those victims of trafficking who are looking for our support. Again, if we are not going to act here in the Senate and are not going to move this forward in the House and get it to the President for signature—every day more and more people are in danger, particularly children, of falling into the hands of human traffickers.

AMENDMENT NO. 270

I have a couple of amendments I wish to talk about briefly today. The first amendment is called Ensuring a Better Response for Victims of Sex Trafficking. This amendment contains a piece of the legislation I actually offered a couple of years ago with Senator WYDEN of Oregon. Senator WYDEN's legislation and my legislation called the Child Sex Trafficking Data and Response Act was partly enacted into law last year, and that was the data part of the bill—in other words, the part of the bill that relates to how we needed to improve the information we are getting on sex trafficking so we can better address the problem. Law enforcement officials have been looking for better information around the country. They want to know what the best practices are and how to deal with it. It is important to understand the problem in order to come up with solutions.

Now we need to get to the second part of the legislation that was not enacted last year, and that is on the response portion. The amendment does just that. The response portion of the bill changes the way we treat victims of sex trafficking. Right now many of these victims are falling between the cracks. Currently children are only eligible for help through the child welfare system if they are abused by their parents. Currently, because children are only allowed to be eligible for help in that category, some kids just cannot get the help they need. This legislation ensures that all children who are trafficked are considered victims of sexual abuse and can be eligible for services as they go through what is sometimes a long and arduous process of recovery.

AMENDMENT NO. 271

The second amendment I wish to include gets at some of the underlying problems that make it more likely that a child will be trafficked. We heard a lot about this on the floor the last couple of days. I have talked about it in terms of our missing children. One of the elements of the underlying bill is a bill we put forward in the last couple of years on how to identify missing children. Why? Because those children who are runaways or go missing tend to be some of the most vulnerable to sex traffickers. So the idea is to get the best information we can on those kids as soon as possible so we can find them.

As an example, there have been about 67 kids who have gone missing in Ohio in the last month and a half. Yet we only have records for, I believe, 26 kids in terms of photographs. This legislation would require photographs for all of these kids so that the kids who are not currently able to be found because we can't find a photograph of them can be more easily found—not just by law enforcement but by citizens who are being vigilant and diligent.

There is another issue, too, and it is something that is addressed in this amendment, which is cosponsored by Senator FEINSTEIN. The first one is one from a Wyden-Portman amendment, and this is from a Feinstein-Portman amendment. These are bipartisan bills.

It currently is true that there is an over-narrow definition of ''homelessness'' by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that does not enable homeless kids to get the help they need. That is current law. We are trying to change that to ensure that we can expand that definition to include the kinds of children who unfortunately many times are vulnerable to trafficking.

I will give an example of the scope of this problem. During this last school year—2 years ago, 2012 to 2013—there were 24,236 kids in Ohio who were homeless at one point during the school year; however, the Federal Department responsible for preventing child homelessness counted only 4,700 cases. So we have over 24,000 kids who are homeless; yet this Department says only 4,700. In other words, the very program meant to help these kids undercounted by a factor of five. So the amendment simply updates the definition of ''homelessness'' to ensure that these kids are not forgotten and do not fall between the cracks.

We know this action alone will not end child homelessness, but it will help deal with this problem and will help to put a roof over their heads, for thousands of these kids and their families, and prevent some of the long-term emotional, developmental effects that are caused by homelessness, as well as keep these kids off the streets and hopefully away from these traffickers so they are not vulnerable, as I said, to being sex-trafficked.

We hope for a day when every single child in America is protected, when every child is able to follow their dreams and can live in a home with a family who is protecting and watching over them. We know that if we are going to see that hope realized, we have to fight for it. In the meantime, we have important work to do here on the floor of the Senate to ensure that we are doing everything we possibly can to protect these kids.

These two amendments will help make this underlying legislation even stronger. I hope my colleagues will support both of them. Again, I hope we can now get over whatever is holding up movement on these amendments, get the amendments enacted into law, and get the bill over to the House of Representatives. And I believe they will pass it and get it to the President for his signature so we can indeed begin to address this horrific practice of human trafficking.

I yield back my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator CORNYN for his important leadership on this issue. I thank Senator KLOBUCHAR, whom I have enjoyed working with on a related bill, the Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act, which I hope will also be considered during the course of this debate.

We must commit to eliminating all forms of modern-day slavery and human trafficking. These are horrendous crimes that undermine the most basic human right of freedom and sadly target the most vulnerable and at-risk individuals in our society.

For too long we in the United States have assumed this is a problem for others but not for ourselves. We heard heartbreaking stories of the underground trafficking of humans but believed this was a tragedy unique to places in the world where a poor economy and weak rule of law allow vulnerable women and children to fall into these unspeakable circumstances. This is no longer the case. Reports and research have brought this crime out of the dark here at home, revealing that trafficking in humans is a reality in our own States and communities. Ignorance and denial are no longer options.

I am proud to support the legislation we are considering today which would improve services and restitution available to victims of human trafficking. It would make changes to our criminal law to allow law enforcement to hold accountable those offenders who perpetrate these heinous crimes and also better protect those at risk of becoming victims.

I am proud to say that my home State of Arizona has been a leader on this issue. In April 2013 then-Governor Jan Brewer launched a task force on human trafficking which brought together local policymakers, law enforcement, nonprofits, think tanks, and universities in Arizona to examine the issue and explore ways to reduce trafficking and protect victims. The work of this task force led to these results: In 2014 the Arizona Human Trafficking Council was established to build on the efforts of the task force in the longer term by improving the State's awareness of human trafficking, promoting cooperation among law enforcement, State agencies, and the community, and improving victims' services.

The task force yielded legislative accomplishments. Based on recommendations of the task force, Arizona passed a law in April 2014 that increased penalties for traffickers, makes it easier for prosecutors to hold accountable those engaged in prostitution with a minor, and protects victims' identities in criminal proceedings.

In an effort to equip those who are in a position to intervene, the members of the task force have worked to improve training for social workers, health care providers, and probation officers, among others. These efforts provide them with the knowledge and tools needed to stop this exploitation and connect victims with resources to help.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention the hard work of my wife Cindy to bring attention to the suffering of those who are victims of human trafficking. She has dedicated herself to their cause, and through her service on both the Arizona Human Trafficking Task Force and Council as well as international efforts to combat trafficking, she has become a well-respected and persuasive voice on this vital issue, driving change both in Arizona and abroad.

America's leadership furthering human rights around the world means that we must hold ourselves to the highest standards when basic human rights are being undermined right here. I am grateful for the Senate's action. We must commit to continued efforts to restoring the freedom of those caught in the horrors of modern slavery and eliminating this crime wherever it occurs.

Finally, here in the Senate we have gridlock on numerous issues. There are differences of opinion and philosophies. How in the world have we got differences on an issue such as this? Is the issue of right to life or abortion such an overwhelming issue that we can't address an issue which is the most egregious crime against innocent women and children?

This is really not an honorable time or a laudable time for the U.S. Senate. We should be taking up amendments and passing this legislation today. We are letting partisanship over an issue that has been discussed and debated—and will be many times in the future—prevent us from moving forward with this legislation. It is not honorable. It is not honorable for us to hold up this legislation because we have a difference on the issue of abortion.

I say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, let's not let this issue prevent us from doing the right thing.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

THE BUDGET

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, as the ranking member of the Budget Committee, I wish to take a few minutes to discuss the budget situation.

My understanding is that Senator ENZI, the chairman of the committee, intends to have a Budget Committee markup on Wednesday, March 18, and Thursday, March 19. My understanding is the resolution will come to the floor the following week of March 23. Unless I am mistaken, we will engage in what is called within the Beltway a vote-arama, where there will be a very significant number of amendments that will be allowed to be offered.

Before we discuss a budget, whether it is at the Federal level, the State level, or one's family, I think it is imperative to understand the conditions that exist as one prepares a budget. A budget reflects what our country is about. It reflects our national priorities. It reflects how we attempt to address the problems we face. It attempts to address how we go forward as a people into the future.

So the first issue at hand when we discuss a budget is to, in fact, determine what is going on in America today. What are our problems? What should we be doing and what should we not be doing?

I start off with the premise that I think is shared by the vast majority of the American people, which is that the middle class of this country over the last 40 years has been disappearing; that people today, by the millions, in Vermont and throughout this Nation, are working longer hours for low wages, despite a huge increase in productivity. That is the reality that faces most people in this country. But there is another reality, and that is that the people on top and the largest corporations are doing phenomenally well.

Today, real median family income is almost $5,000 less than it was in 1999 in inflation accounted-for dollars. Why is that? How does that happen? The typical male worker—that man right in the middle of the American economy—made $783 less last year than he did 42 years ago, after adjusting for inflation. How does that happen? We have an explosion of technology, a huge increase in productivity; we have the so-called great global economy, $3 trillion all over the world; and the typical male worker—the guy in the middle of the economy—makes $783 less last year than he did 42 years ago.

The typical female worker is making $1,337 less than she did in 2007. Today, despite the modest gains of the Affordable Care Act—legislation I supported—40 million Americans continue to have no health insurance and we remain the only major country on Earth that does not guarantee health care to all people as a right.

Then we have today, because many people were driven from the middle class into poverty, more people today living in poverty than almost any time in the modern history of America. How does that happen?

Despite a very significant improvement in the economy since President Bush left office, real unemployment is not 5.5 percent, it is 11 percent. Youth unemployment, which we never talk about, is 17 percent, and African-American youth unemployment is much higher than that.

Throughout this country, a significant number of young people have given up on the dream of college. Here we are in a competitive global economy and we have bright young people from working-class families and they are looking at the cost of college and they are saying, Sorry, ain't for me. I am not going to come out of school $50,000, $60,000 in debt. What sense does that make when we are engaged in enormous economic competition with countries all over the world?

Then we have another group of young people graduating college or graduate school in debt to the tune of $50,000, $100,000. I talked to a young doctor in Burlington, VT, some months ago. She graduated medical school $300,000 in debt for the crime of wanting to be a primary care physician. Does that make any sense?

While the middle class continues to disappear, the people on top and the largest corporations have never had it so good. That is the other reality of America today. The middle class shrinks—a whole lot of people living in poverty, people have no health insurance, kids can't afford to go to college—but people on top are doing phenomenally well.

Today, the top 1 percent earns more income than the bottom 50 percent. And since the Wall Street crash of 2008, over 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent. Over 99 percent of all new income goes to the top 1 percent.

Corporate profits are soaring. The stock market is up. CEOs now earn 270 times what their average employee makes. Today, the top one-tenth of 1 percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. The top one-tenth of 1 percent owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90 percent. And the wealthiest family in this country alone—one family—owns more wealth than the bottom 42 percent of the American family. Does that sound like the America we want to see, that we believe in, where so few have so much and so many have so little?

It is an extraordinary fact that between 1985 and 2013, the bottom 90 percent of our people lost $10.7 trillion in wealth that it otherwise would have had if the distribution of wealth had remained at the same level as it was in 1985. If we had the same distribution of wealth, the bottom 90 percent would have had close to $11 trillion more wealth. Meanwhile, the top one-tenth of 1 percent experienced an $8 trillion increase in wealth as the distribution of wealth became increasingly unequal.

What a phenomenon, this huge transfer of wealth from working people to the millionaires and billionaires.

Now let me get to the budget, because when we deal with a budget, we can't ignore that reality. If the rich get much richer and the middle class declines, it makes no sense at all to say we are going to give more tax breaks to the rich and we are going to cut programs for the middle class and working families. This is the Robin Hood principle in reverse. It is taking from the middle class and working families and giving to the very rich.

I worry very much that this is exactly what will be in the Republican budget that we debate next week in committee. I expect—and I may be mistaken and I hope I am but I don't think I am—I expect the Republican budget in the Senate this year will be very close to what the so-called Ryan budget did last year which was passed by the Republican House. There may be nuances of differences, I don't know, but I think it will be very close.

Let me tell my colleagues what the Republican budget will be about. The Republican budget will oppose ending tax loopholes for the wealthy and large corporations—loopholes that allow billionaire hedge fund managers to pay a lower tax rate than electricians and schoolteachers. I expect that the Republican budget will continue to allow major profitable corporations such as General Electric, Verizon, and many others to go through a given year paying absolutely nothing in Federal income tax. I expect that the Republican budget will attempt to voucherize Medicare—end it as we know it to be—and I expect there will be massive cuts in Medicaid, education, nutrition programs, Pell grants, and the kinds of programs that working families absolutely depend upon.

We need a very different budget than what I believe the Republicans are going to propose. We need a budget that stands for the working families of this country and not just the millionaires and billionaires.

Let me tell my colleagues what that budget should include, although I don't think the Republican budget will include these ideas. When real unemployment is 11 percent, we need a budget that creates millions of decent-paying jobs. In my view, and in the view of many economists, the fastest way to create those jobs and address a real national crisis is to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure—our roads, our bridges, water systems, wastewater plants, airports, dams, levees, and expand broadband to rural America. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, we need to invest over $3 trillion to rebuild our infrastructure. We are not going to do that, but we need to make a major investment. When we do that, we make America more productive and safer, and we also create millions of jobs.

A serious budget needs to make our Tax Code fairer and to bring substantial new revenue into Federal coffers. We need a budget that ends unfair tax loopholes and asks the wealthiest people and largest corporations to pay their fair share of taxes.

Today at the hearing we had in the Committee on the Budget, a Republican witness testified that he thought that corporate taxes should be zero—zero. Well, that does not make a lot of sense to me.

We need a budget that understands when the Federal minimum wage is a starvation wage of $7.25 an hour, we need to substantially raise the minimum wage. We need to deal with the overtime scandal we currently see. We need to raise wages for low- and moderate-income families.

At a time when large numbers of our young people have given up on the dream of higher education and college is increasingly unaffordable, we need a budget that says to every kid in America that if you have the ability and you have the desire, you are going to get a higher education regardless of the income of your family. At a time when corporations have shipped millions of decent-paying jobs to China and other low-wage countries, we need a budget that rewards companies for investing in America and for creating jobs here, not abroad.

At a time when millions of people still lack health insurance, we need a budget that ensures quality, affordable health care for all Americans by supporting the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, strengthening Medicare and Medicaid, and extending funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program, community health centers, and the National Health Service Corporation.

Let me conclude by making this simple and obvious point: A budget is about priorities. A budget is about choices. And what we have to determine is whether our budget coming out

of the Senate is a budget that represents the needs of the rich and large corporations and their wealthy campaign donors, or whether we produce a budget which represents the needs of working families and the middle class and the millions and millions of families who are struggling economically to keep their heads above water.

I hope we make the right choice. I hope we stand with the working families of this country.

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

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

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise for the purpose of a unanimous consent request. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. 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. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I am on the floor to discuss the Human Trafficking Survivors Relief and Empowerment Act, which is legislation I introduced last week to aid the recovery of survivors of human trafficking.

This bill, which I have also filed as an amendment to Senator CORNYN's Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, will make important strides toward helping survivors of human trafficking free themselves from the social stigma that is associated with their victimization and help them rebuild their lives as productive members of society.

I wish to start by sharing the story of a young woman who was featured on NPR several weeks ago. She is a human trafficking survivor. Her story is far too common.

She was raped for the first time at age 11. At 13, she was lured away from her family and eventually forced into engaging in commercial sex. She talked about the physical trauma she endured at the hands of her captor—her skull was cracked, all of her ribs broken, and she endured regular beatings and black eyes.

For roughly 7 years, her entire teenage life—a life she should have been spending in school and among friends—she endured the worst kinds of physical and emotional torture. Finally, at age 20, she was rescued by a thoughtful police officer nearly 1,400 miles from her home.

Fortunately, this young woman is now in the process of rebuilding her life. She has moved home near her family, she has a young son, and she is hoping to go to school for nursing and to make a better life for herself and her family. However, she is constantly confronted by the reality of the criminal record she accumulated as the result of being a trafficking victim. Every application she fills out, every job interview she attends, she is forced to relive and explain the most painful moments of her life.

As this victim told NPR, ''I'm not ever going to forget what I've done, but at the same time, I don't want it thrown in my face every time I'm trying to seek employment.''

Human traffickers use force, fraud, and coercion to compel their victims to engage in criminal activity, particularly prostitution, yet it is often the trafficking victims who are arrested, detained, prosecuted, and convicted.

My legislation is simple. It provides an incentive for States to enact laws that allow human trafficking survivors to clear their State criminal records of prostitution and other low-level, nonviolent crimes that result from being trafficked.

Specifically, these vacatur statutes allow trafficking survivors to file a motion in court to expunge their criminal record for crimes they can reasonably demonstrate were the result of being trafficked.

My colleague Senator GILLIBRAND has filed a similar amendment that would address this issue at the Federal level or in Federal court. Her amendment would ensure that victims charged with Federal crimes have the opportunity to clear their record of the most serious types of charges associated with trafficking.

My amendment would encourage States to provide a remedy for the most common types of charges that trafficking victims face.

I urge my colleagues to support my legislation and my amendment. I hope we can get trafficking legislation done in a way that will help the victims in the future.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 5 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 4:01 p.m., recessed until 5 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. LEE).

JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of my remarks Senator ISAKSON be recognized.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, there are a lot of people—scientists, doctors and health professionals, our military and security leaders, the insurance and reinsurance industry, most of our major utilities, even faith leaders—who agree that climate change is a serious problem and an important priority.

In the private sector, many corporate leaders see climate change as both a moral challenge and a financial opportunity. Indeed, as I rise today for now the 92nd time to urge my colleagues in Congress to wake up to the urgent threat of climate change, major American companies have already begun to take action. They are not waiting around for Congress.

Ceres, for instance, is a nonprofit organization that helps to mobilize investors and business leaders to build a sustainable global economy. Ceres reports that nearly half of Fortune 500 companies now have their own clean energy targets.

Institutional investors are also committed to fighting climate change. In 2003, there were just 10 of them. Ten years later, by 2013, there were 110, holding $13 trillion in assets. Walmart uses about 25 percent renewable energy, Google is at 35 percent, and Apple nearly 75 percent. More and more companies are seeing the benefit of cleaning up their energy sources and investing in the future, and it is not just out of the goodness of their hearts. These are our most profitable corporations. They have made a successful business model of saving money by reducing their carbon footprint.

Coca-Cola, for instance, knows how disruptive climate change can be to the water supply that is the most basic need of its bottling facilities. Apparel giant VF Corporation understands the threat of changing conditions to agricultural commodities such as cotton. And, yes, these companies also know that four out of five Americans support action on climate change. In other words, climate-friendly corporate practices are a hit with consumers, particularly younger consumers.

Since consumers want climate friendliness, there are also companies that try to have it both ways. They try to look like good actors on climate change without really being good actors. It is called green washing, and the major oil and gas companies are classic green washers. Look at their public statements and their ad campaigns, and we might think they were helping to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. But what they say and what they do, do not match up. Look at the green ad campaigns that have been run by the big oil companies. Some of these multimillion dollar campaigns still run today.

Here is Chevron saying, ''We agree,'' it is time for oil companies to get behind renewable energy. This campaign started in 2010 and is still around. For years Chevron said renewable energy

was part of its business plan. It actually once built utility-scale solar and geothermal projects, and it even made money doing it. But in the end, Chevron's core business of drilling up oil and gas prevailed, and last year Chevron sold off almost all of its renewable energy business, but they still pretend they are green. They still say ''We agree,'' but in real life they don't.

Not too long ago, BP styled itself ''Beyond Petroleum'' and told us to think outside the barrel. The company made industry-leading investments in wind farms and solar power in the billions of dollars. But BP, too, has exited the solar business and has attempted to sell its U.S. wind farms in what a company spokesperson called ''part of a continuing effort to become a more focused oil and gas company.'' They were just pretending to be green. Here is their logo. Look at this ridiculous little green and flower/sunshine thing from oil extractors. It is a total phony.

The pick of the fossil fuel industry litter is actually Shell. Public pronouncements from Shell Oil have been sensational. Shell ads told us of the effort to ''broaden the world's energy mix.'' Well, in 2012, Shell reported investing about $400 million into low-carbon alternatives, which seems like a lot until we realize that was out of nearly $23 billion that year spent by Shell—less than 2 percent. Comparing that $400 million in 2012, Shell has spent at least $5 billion in recent years to expand oil and gas drilling operations in the Arctic. Shell is one of the largest holders of filthy tar sands rights in Canada.

But here is the champ when it comes to climate doublespeak. ExxonMobil excels. Since at least 2008, the oil giant has run ads such as these, with scientific formulas and Lucite molecules and all these technological-looking things. I remember one with folks in lab coats. Exxon executives and engineers tell us about the need to protect the environment and to move toward cleaner, more diverse energy sources such as wind and solar, as images behind them of wind turbines twirl in the distance.

Exxon does not report transparently enough for a solid case to be proven, but there is at least a reasonable inference that could be drawn that they spend more on advertising their green research than they spent on their green research. The Wall Street Journal wrote: ''Exxon's ads are part of a growing effort by the industry to counter a political backlash against rising oil prices and global warming worries.''

Faking it is not a solution, and this campaign is still running. The latest ads are right there on Exxon's Web site, where the public is watching. The Exxon Web site also tells us ''rising greenhouse gas emissions pose significant risks to society and ecosystems''—again, for public consumption.

But when they filed comments with the regulators, in 2009, Exxon wrote: ''Support for the effects of climate change on public health and welfare is almost nonexistent and engulfed in an extremely high degree of uncertainty.''

For years Exxon has been devoted to propping up climate denial and climate deniers. The Union of Concerned Scientists found that between 2002 and 2010 ExxonMobil contributed to and lobbied anti-climate Members of Congress over pro-climate Members at a ratio of 10 to 1. Recent disclosures show that even after vowing that it would no longer bankroll groups that deny climate change, Exxon continued for years to fund the work of climate skeptic Willie Soon, an astrophysicist whose research is under investigation for failure to divulge his oil industry backing.

Which Exxon are we supposed to believe? Remember the words of the Exxon vice president who testified before Congress in 2008 that ''the pursuit of alternative fuels must not detract from the development of oil and gas.''

ExxonMobil's ads boast that the company is ''taking on the world's toughest energy challenge.'' The toughest challenge we face is finding a way to fuel the global economy without driving the climate to the breaking point with our limitless, endless carbon pollution. ExxonMobil is committed to an oil economy that has no future. If only Exxon and the other oil giants would devote more of their advertising budget to research and to the development of renewable fuels, we might be better off.

If you don't think that the big oil companies are bad enough on their own, once they get together they are downright dirty. These companies—Chevron, BP, Shell, and ExxonMobil—are all members of the American Petroleum Institute, the oil and gas industry trade association. As we all know around here, the American Petroleum Institute is dedicated to obstructing action on climate change and even to spreading false doubt about its existence, and API in turn funds some of the worst and most irresponsible climate denial front organizations.

Chevron, BP, Shell, and ExxonMobil also support something called the American Legislative Exchange Council or ALEC. ALEC is an organization which works to undercut climate science and undermine climate progress at the State level, interfering in our State legislatures. ALEC has tried to roll back State renewable fuel standards and has handed out model State legislation to obstruct and tie up the President's Clean Power Plan.

So which way are they going to have it, the way they sell themselves in the ads with funny little sunbursts and Lucite molecules or their real presence in State legislatures and in Congress spending money to shut down the climate debate and keep pumping the oil?

Major companies such as Google, eBay, Facebook, Yahoo, and even Occidental Petroleum have disassociated themselves from ALEC because of its destructive position on climate. Google's CEO Eric Schmidt has said ''they are literally lying about climate change.'' But they keep getting funding from Chevron, BP, Shell, and ExxonMobil.

The reality is these major fossil fuel companies are dedicated to a fossil fuel future that puts basic operating systems of our planet at risk. All these ad campaigns and all these public statements to make the companies look good are just a way to paper over that basic, dirty, continuing fact. It is a sham. It is a false front. It is phony PR, and all the green washing in the world shouldn't be able to cover it up.

But I will conclude by saying it does seem to be having its effect. We have seen recently in the news in Florida that Florida Department of Environmental Protection officials have been ordered not to use the terms ''climate change'' or ''global warming'' in any official communications, emails or reports. That is according to DEP employees, DEP consultants, DEP volunteers, and State records, all dug out by the Florida Center for Investigative Reporting.

Governor Scott of Florida has repeatedly said he is ''not convinced that climate change is caused by human activity,'' despite the scientific evidence to the contrary. It is apparently a gag order about climate change that was well known and distributed verbally statewide.

I guess Governor Scott has told reporters that he had not been convinced about climate change and that he would need something more convincing than what I have read. I would be interested to know what his reading list was. So here we are in a world of fantasy in which the big oil polluters put on this pretense that they are clean, that they care about clean energy, that they are interested in a nonfossil fuel future, while they are supporting the very organizations that undercut that work here in Congress and they are able to get behind people such as the Governor, apparently, in Florida—certainly his administration—who are so paralyzed about climate change that they not only won't say the words, but they won't allow State employees to even say the words. That is a pathetic state of democracy.

I yield the floor, and I now turn to my friend from Georgia.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, I have nine grandchildren. Seven of them are 11 or under; two of them are in college. Those 7 who are 11 or under represent the joy of my life and the life of my children. But tonight when you and I go to bed and each Member of this Senate goes to bed, somewhere back in our State, young women and young children the same age as my grandchildren will be bought and sold into slavery. They will be trafficked as human beings for sex workers, for pornography workers, and for workers themselves. It is wrong for the greatest Nation on

the face of this Earth and the richest Nation on the face of this Earth to have the crime of human trafficking take place day in and day out.

I am so proud of Senator CORNYN and others from this Senate who brought forward the bill that is before us today. I want to appeal to those who are holding it up to go to cloture to ask themselves this question when they go to bed tonight: When you put your head on that pillow, some child somewhere in your State is going to be trafficked for sex purposes or pornography. Some young life, some life of innocence is going to be ruined. I think it is time for us to put aside any differences we may have on this legislation and move it forward so that we have for the first time the focus on human trafficking and the abuse of kids.

This is a serious problem in my State of Georgia. Atlanta has one of the highest rates of trafficking of any city in the United States, I am told. Our attorney general, Sam Olens, has said the following:

> Human trafficking is a modern day slavery, plain and simple. It robs children of their innocence and dignity.

We must combat this evil, and it is appropriate that the most deliberative body in the world, the U.S. Senate, begin to put together a framework where we confront child slavery, sex trafficking, and the targeting of our children in multiple ways. We need to provide them with benefits to be able to be protected. A lot of that is in terms of housing and safe havens, but it also concerns other things. We need to increase the resources for victims of trafficking, No. 1. A lot of kids who are trafficked and can get out of trafficking and get out of possession end up having serious problems with PTSD and TBI. The problem of being abused as a child is as rough as the battleground in Afghanistan or Iraq. We must provide the safe havens and the therapy and the mental health care that is necessary to help them bring back their life.

I gave a graduation speech 5 years ago to a young lady who was 22 years old and just graduating from high school. She had dropped out of high school pregnant at the age of 15. She had come under the spell of a trafficker who took her in, made her a sex worker, and she ended up having three additional children. She was almost lost for life. But finally some good person found her. They brought her into the county school system. They found her a way to go to the alternative school. She ended up graduating No. 1 in her class and going to the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. A life was saved, but it was only saved because people reached out to her. We need to encourage that and produce that.

Back in my home State of Georgia in my hometown of Roswell, GA, there is a guy by the name of Dave McCleary. Dave McCleary is a Rotarian who 2 years ago took this project on as his passion—to be a spokesman for those who are abused, those who are trafficked, and those who are thrown into prostitution and pornography. He has made a major difference in Rotary clubs in Georgia, and now they are activating themselves to pay attention to this terrible disease and this terrible affliction.

We need to recognize child pornography as a form of human trafficking so victims have access to support, and we need to require that traffickers be treated as violent criminals to protect the victims and witnesses. Most important of all, we need to help State and local governments fight human trafficking through increased shelters, law enforcement, task forces, and problem-solving cures for people with these problems.

We also need to get to the floor for another reason. Senator CORKER in the Foreign Relations Committee has a bill which would be an amendment to this bill which expands our human trafficking response. We can't get to that until we get to cloture, and we can't get to cloture until we get 60 votes.

So I appeal to Members of the Senate to find common ground to let this debate come to the floor, so that when you lay your head on the pillow tonight, instead of thinking about a child that is being abused, you think about the abuse that you are avoiding because the Senate took action on human trafficking.

COMMENDING JOHN LEWIS

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, 2 years ago, on the 48th anniversary of the crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge by a bunch of brave citizens who challenged the United States to do what was right and make voting rights equal for everybody, I walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge with Congressman JOHN LEWIS from my State.

JOHN LEWIS is 75 years old this year, and he continues to be a leader for civil rights and for passion. This past weekend in Selma, AL, he led the President of the United States, Barack Obama, the past President of the United States, George W. Bush, and over 100 Members of Congress across the Edmund Pettus Bridge for us to reflect and remember over the last 50 years what has happened in this country, where voting rights have gone from being a dream to a reality, where equality for men and women and people of all races now exists. It would not have happened were it not for a few good men and a few good women who at their time in history responded to history's call.

JOHN LEWIS was one of those people. I am proud to serve with him in the Georgia delegation to the Congress, and I am proud of all he has done to make America a better place to live.

So on this year when he celebrates his 75th birthday anniversary and on the 50th anniversary of the crossing of the Edmund Pettus Bridge, I pay tribute to a great citizen of Georgia, a great American, and a great humanitarian—JOHN LEWIS, the Congressman from the city of Atlanta and the State of Georgia.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, while the distinguished senior Senator from Georgia is on the floor, I wish to associate myself with what he had to say about Congressman JOHN LEWIS.

Congressman LEWIS has been a friend, a colleague, and a mentor to all of us on both sides of the aisle on the issues of civil rights. He is one of the true heroes. We sometimes overuse the word ''hero.'' But I think the Senator and I would both agree that this is a man who deserves the word ''hero.''

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. President, we are talking about human trafficking. We have heard horrific stories. Certainly those of us who are parents or grandparents have to think how horrible it would be if these things had happened to our children or our grandchildren.

I am usually the only person on the floor who has prosecuted child molesters—and I still have nightmares over some of the cases I have prosecuted—I wish we would never have another one of these awful cases.

So as we consider legislation about human trafficking and exploitation, we could take immediate action to show support for protecting our Nation's most vulnerable from human trafficking by confirming Loretta Lynch to be Attorney General. I say this because Ms. Lynch has a proven track record in prosecuting human trafficking and child rape cases.

Ms. Lynch's record in pursuing these cases is so well established that even prominent FOX News hosts have praised her. One host at FOX News called her a ''hero'' for the prosecution of a child rapist. Another has described Ms. Lynch as a ''straight shooter'' for her overall service as a Federal prosecutor. And a third host on FOX News has called for a vote on her nomination ''this week'', saying there should be ''no more slow walking'' by the Senate. I couldn't agree more.

As we go into this debate, I think about the fact that Ms. Lynch was recently named one of ''New York's New Abolitionists'' by the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition. Why? Because of her leadership in combatting human trafficking. She has emphasized anti-trafficking programs at the U.S. Attorney's office that she leads. Over the course of the last decade, her office has not just talked about why they oppose human trafficking, they have indicted over 55 defendants in sex trafficking cases. They have rescued over 110 victims of sex trafficking.

I will give you a couple of examples. In one case, her office obtained convictions against three brothers for sex trafficking. What did they do? These brothers were sentenced to double-digit prison terms for running a trafficking

ring that enticed victims as young as 14 and 15 years old. They had them transported illegally into the United States. Then they forced them to work as prostitutes in New York City and elsewhere. The defendants beat and sexually assaulted the victims to compel them to work and then punished them for not earning enough money.

In another case her office obtained a conviction against an owner of several New York bars for his role in sex trafficking and forced labor ring. The evidence at the trial established that the defendants recruited and harbored scores of undocumented Latin American immigrants and forced them to work as waitresses at the owner's bars.

How did they compel them to work? His accomplices used violence, beatings, and rape, as well as fraud and threats of deportation, to compel the victims to work and to prevent them from reporting the illegal activity to the police. Because of Loretta Lynch, this monster was arrested and sentenced to 60 years in prison. That is one way you stop this.

She has similarly prosecuted those who exploit children for sexual abuse to the fullest extent of the law. During her tenure, she has directed prosecutors in her office to bring 173 prosecutions for child exploitation and child pornography in coordination with the Department's Project Safe Childhood. In one case, the office prosecuted and obtained a guilty plea from a pediatrician who sexually exploited three of his patients under the guise of providing medical treatment. That predator now faces 30 years in prison.

I am saying this because no Member of this body—Republican or Democrat—no Member is in favor of sex trafficking. No Member is in favor of the exploitation of children in this fashion. Why don't we show we believe that, by confirming this highly qualified woman to be attorney general? She goes out and gets the people, she prosecutes them, she convicts them, and she sends them to prison.

I sometimes think of those exploited children I represented in the past. In the better cases, we could tell the child that he or she was safe and that we locked up the person who did this to them. But I also think of one of the very first cases I had—within weeks of becoming a 26-year-old State's attorney. I will never forget that case for as long as I live. We prosecuted the man. I convicted him. It was appealed to the Vermont Supreme Court, and I argued and won that appeal. He was convicted and went to prison for the rest of his life. But that does not help his victim. I can only go to the grave of his 2-year-old victim and say: We convicted the man who did this to you, but we can't bring you back to life.

Let's take the steps we need to stop this. We can do it. We stalled at one point on this bill. Let's find our way around that, and let's get this done. Let's give prosecutors the tools not just to prosecute criminals when we find them—let's take the steps necessary to stop this from happening in the first place.

When I think of that 2-year-old boy, if better steps had been in place to stop the abuse from happening, he would have lived. The abuser was prosecuted after the fact. There was no case in which I wanted to get a conviction more than I did in that case, but it didn't bring the 2-year-old victim back to life. Some victims in the cases I worked on were alive, and I saw how scarred the abuse left them.

We can prosecute those who commit these heinous crimes. Let's stop the crimes from happening. Let's ensure that these homeless kids, instead of going with anybody who will offer them a warm place and food—where the warm place and food turn into a hell on Earth for them—let's make sure there are shelters, people, and counselors who can help.

Mr. President, I see our distinguished chairman is here, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to discuss what I discussed earlier in the day. In fact, I think it was this morning when I spoke to the reason why this legislation is not moving along. I am not going to repeat what I said then, but since then the minority leader came to the floor and gave reasons for this bill not moving along, and so I will once again bring up some important issues about this legislation and rebut the other side on why we are not moving forward with this bill.

As we all know, this bill was unveiled in January after weeks of negotiation among our respective staff. It has been in the public domain since it was introduced in January. Since that time, we have followed regular order with respect to this legislation. We had a hearing on this bill. We scheduled a markup in February, and amendments were offered to the bill at that markup. The ranking member offered an amendment to the very same section of the bill that included this language.

Numerous committee members took the opportunity to speak about the bill during the hearing and markup. The markup offered a prime opportunity for any member—including the minority members of the Senate—to ask questions and make changes and strip out language to which they might have objected. We promised regular order during floor consideration as well, just as we have on practically every other piece of legislation that has been before the Senate since the new majority has taken over.

The language which they now object to on the floor, weeks after a committee markup took place—I remind everyone that this bill passed without a single dissenting vote in committee—is referred to as the Hyde amendment. We are talking about language that has been standard for the last 39 or 40 years. It is included virtually every time Congress appropriates taxpayer dollars for health services. The Hyde amendment has been and currently is the law of the land.

Hyde amendment language has been added to appropriations bills every year for decades. We have heard: Well, it has been added to appropriations bills, but it has not been on authorization bills. That is not true because it has been included in more than one authorization statute. I will give some examples, including laws authorizing the SCHIP program and programs in the Department of Defense. We negotiated this bill and this language in good faith.

I urge the Members of this body not to impede passage of a measure that over 200 groups have reviewed and endorsed. Yesterday I put letters from some of those groups or maybe even all of those groups in the RECORD so everyone can see the wide support this bill has not only in the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee by being voted out unanimously, but also outside groups support it as well. The 200 outside groups who participated in the hours of helping us reach a consensus on this bill have made it clear that ending human trafficking is an important priority for all of them. We need to put aside partisan politics. We need to pass this bill for their sake and the sake of trafficking survivors who are being subjected to degradation every day while we wait to act.

My asking that politics be put aside in order to get this legislation passed is not something new. Those politics were put aside in the Judiciary Committee.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I hate to see this held up over just the Hyde amendment. In somewhat similar legislation, the Republican House of Representatives was wise enough not to create this illusory ''special assessment fund.'' The House-passed bill is an authorizing bill and does not contain the Hyde amendment.

I will yield the floor in a moment, but first I wish to quote from a statement by ATEST, Alliance To End Slavery and Trafficking. They urged the Senate, as I have, to reach a bipartisan compromise on the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

> For well over a decade, the work to combat modern slavery and human trafficking has been an example of Congress's ability to put partisanship aside in the interest of tackling a difficult and seemingly intractable problem. That willingness to be thoughtful, practical, and balanced in approach has proven successful in this work, and made tremendous contributions to the fight against this heinous crime. The debate that is emerging over the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, S. 178, and the application of the Hyde amendment to funds collected from perpetrators of human trafficking jeopardize this pragmatic balance in favor of a partisan confrontation that undermines the achievement of our joint goal of ending modern slavery in the United States and around the world.
>
> For these reasons, we urge all members of the Senate to turn away from this divisive

debate and find a bipartisan approach to this new initiative to protect and serve the needs of survivors.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that their statement be printed in the RECORD.

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

ALLIANCE TO
END SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING,
Washington, DC.

ATEST URGES SENATE TO REACH BIPARTISAN COMPROMISE ON JUSTICE FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING ACT

For well over a decade, the work to combat modern slavery and human trafficking has been an example of Congress's ability to put partisanship aside in the interest of tackling a difficult and seemingly intractable problem. That willingness to be thoughtful, practical, and balanced in approach has proven successful in this work, and made tremendous contributions to the fight against this heinous crime. The debate that is emerging over the Justice of Victims of Trafficking Act, S. 178, and the application of the Hyde Amendment to funds collected from perpetrators of human trafficking jeopardize this pragmatic balance in favor of a partisan confrontation that undermines the achievement of our joint goal of ending modern slavery in the United States and around the world.

For these reasons, we urge all members of the Senate to turn away from this divisive debate and find a bipartisan approach to this new initiative to protect and serve the needs of survivors.

Mr. LEAHY. I agree that we should get away from the divisiveness the Hyde amendment has created and find a way to go to the basic legislation.

Mr. President, I see my friend from Tennessee in the Chamber, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Vermont and the Senator from Iowa.

Mr. President, I come to the floor to offer an amendment to the legislation, which I send to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am sorry, I didn't hear what the request was.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to setting aside the pending amendment?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I sent an amendment to the desk.

Mr. LEAHY. Did the Senator ask to set aside the pending amendment?

Mr. ALEXANDER. I did not.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have no objection.

Mr. President, I withhold that.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee has the floor.

Mr. LEAHY. Then I will object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, will the Senator from Tennessee yield to me for a question?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Yes.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, am I correct that the Senator from Tennessee is not asking the Senate to set aside the pending amendment but wishes to file an amendment? Is that correct?

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I say to the Senator from Vermont through the Chair that the answer is yes.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, under those circumstances, I will not object.

Mr. ALEXANDER. I thank the Senator from Vermont.

Mr. President, I have sent to the desk an amendment entitled the Stop Sexual Abuse by School Personnel Act of 2015. It is sponsored by me and Mr. KIRK, the Senator from Illinois.

In summary, what the amendment does is the following:

It requires States to have a criminal background check for all school employees.

It allows States and local school districts to use Federal funding authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act to establish, implement, or improve policies and procedures on background checks for school employees. Our amendment accomplishes this through the following: providing States with the flexibility and resources to conduct searches of State and Federal criminal registries as determined by the State; empowering States to establish, implement, or improve policies and procedures concerning the timely disclosure, notice, and appeal of background check results; supporting the development, implementation, or improvement of mechanisms for assisting in the identification of and response to incidents of child abuse, including by providing training and development for school personnel; and any other activities determined by the State to protect student safety.

In addition, the Alexander-Kirk amendment adopts the 2014 General Accountability Office report which recommended establishing the U.S. Department of Education as the lead agency to inform States of best practices. It also authorizes the U.S. Education Secretary to make reporting of student sexual abuse by school personnel a part of the annual Secretary's report card. Finally, it protects schools and school districts from being sued if they are in compliance with State regulations and requirements.

This is an enormously important subject and one of interest to every single Member of the United States Senate. There is at least one other amendment on the subject by the Senator from Pennsylvania and the Senator from West Virginia. I expect there may be more amendments on the same subject. They all have the same goal—preventing sexual abuse of the 50 million children in our 100,000 public schools by school personnel.

These amendments are all under the jurisdiction of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, of which I am the chair. As chair of that committee, I believe there is a right way and a wrong way to reach this laudable goal. The right way is for the Federal Government to enable States and local governments to do a better job. The wrong way is for the Federal Government to set itself up as a national school board or as a human resources department to override State laws and dictate how to hire and fire six million teachers or other school personnel.

We have 6 million school personnel that could be affected by background check proposals. The question is, Can the local school board or can Washington, DC, do a better job of helping make children safe in Utah, in Iowa, in Tennessee, or in Vermont?

Senators TOOMEY and MANCHIN deserve our thanks and great credit for putting the spotlight on this issue that every single Senator cares about. But, I am afraid their solution for background checks will try to accomplish this purpose the wrong way. It would override State laws in at least 46 States to dictate policies and procedures for 100,000 public schools. Their approach and their amendment, if enacted, would be the most extensive Federal takeover of local school personnel decisions in our country's history.

Let me say that once more. Their amendment, if enacted, would be the most extensive Federal takeover of local school personnel decisions in our country's history.

Now, I see on the floor the Senator from Iowa. I have spent some time in Iowa over the years and I know what a good education system they have in Iowa. In fact, Iowans are very particular about their education system. I don't know of a State that was more upset with No Child Left Behind than Iowa when it passed because it dictated education policies from Washington. Iowans asked, ''Does Washington cherish the children of Iowa more than we do in Des Moines or in any other community in Iowa? Why do the people in Washington think they can tell us what to do about how to educate our children better than we do?'' That is the issue here: whether it is Washington imposing academic standards such as Common Core or deciding whether schools and teachers are succeeding or failing, or mandating a one-size-fits-all approach to employee background checks on 6 million school personnel in 100,000 schools. I believe the American people are tired of this Washington-knows-best attitude toward local schools.

Senator KIRK and I have the Stop Sexual Abuse By School Personnel Act of 2015—which offers an approach toward this laudable goal in the correct way. Let me explain why I say it is the correct way.

First, it requires every state to have background checks for its 6 million employees who have access to children, but it doesn't dictate to them how to do the checks. Repeatedly we have found that when Congress tells the U.S. Department of Education to do something, it then proceeds to write a lot of

regulations about exactly how to do it. I will give you an example.

In No Child Left Behind, there are requirements about improving low-performing schools. The law says there are six ways you must fix them. I put in the law last year a seventh way to fix schools: allowing the Governor of the State to come up with his or her own way to do this. Then, the U.S. Department of Education Secretary can approve or disapprove that approach. The Department, in its well-intentioned activities, defined what a Governor of Tennessee or Utah or Iowa could say about his or her own idea about fixing low-performing schools. That happens all the time. It happens all the time. Over the last several years we have created, in effect, a national school board in Washington, DC, by substituting the judgment of Washington for local schools. Achieving the laudable goal of stopping sexual abuse by school personnel in the way suggested by the Senators from Pennsylvania and West Virginia would only make that national school board bigger. In the words of one teacher I spoke with, their proposal would only make the U.S. Department of Education more of a human resources department for 6 million local school personnel.

Last year, the Government Accountability Office found that 46 States require background checks for all public school employees. My amendment require all states to do them. It would also ensure background checks for contractors who have unsupervised contact or interaction with children.

It would also let schools and school districts use Federal funding to expand access to more registries since the cost of conducting the checks sometimes keep them from doing so.

My amendment takes this broader approach because the Government Accountability Office report in 2014 that background checks alone are not enough to prevent child abuse by school personnel. Background checks are only as good as the databases used to conduct them. I understand sometimes those databases can have inaccurate or incomplete information. One report estimated that 1.8 million workers a year are subject to FBI background checks that include faulty or incomplete information such as the final result of the case.

GAO's report also highlights that those charged with child abuse are only a fraction of those who abuse children. For example, a risk management company told GAO that few child abusers are caught the first time they abuse, and many abuse children multiple times before they are caught. Therefore, background checks alone are not enough to help protect children from abuse.

Experts say, according to the GAO report, that training to prevent child abuse is a key tool to help school employees recognize early warning signs of abuse and they recommend that schools integrate training into their child abuse prevention efforts. Yet, because of cost constraints, GAO found that only 18 States required training. The amendment Senator KIRK and I are offering would help more States with schools that offer training by allowing States and school districts to use Federal funding to do it.

Third, the Alexander-Kirk amendment would establish the Department of Education as a resource for States. The Department of Education is not supposed to be the school board for Utah or Tennessee or Iowa; it is supposed to be, if anything, an enabling resource. So another important way to prevent child abuse is to ensure schools are aware of information and resources that are already available to them by the Federal Government.

According to GAO, again: ''The Federal Government, through its existing resources and expertise, is well positioned to assist States and localities and to help strengthen their prevention and response efforts.''

Yet, last year, more than 30 States surveyed by GAO were not aware of Federal resources available to schools to help address sexual abuse because no single agency was leading this effort, and coordination among the Federal agencies is limited. In one baffling example, a lead official who coordinates interagency meetings to talk about child maltreatment said none of the meetings had focused on sexual abuse by school personnel.

States are looking for help. Twenty-nine States said additional guidance and technical assistance could be useful, such as guidance on developing professional standards and codes of conduct, examples of training models, and materials, and opportunities for grants. That is why the Alexander-Kirk amendment adopts GAO's recommendation to instruct the Secretary of Education to lead an effort, in coordination with other agencies, to develop and disseminate best practices that States, districts, and schools can take to prevent and respond to sexual abuse by school personnel.

Fourth, the amendment would recommend that the Secretary of Education pull together a dependable set of data on abuse by school personnel for the Secretary's report card. GAO reported that several Federal agencies collect data related to violence against children and students, but none systematically identify the extent of sexual abuse by school personnel. Therefore, my amendment also adopts the GAO recommendation that the Secretary of Education work to identify ways to better track and analyze the prevalence of child abuse by school personnel and report on it in the Secretary's report card.

This is an approach to solving the problem that respects the idea that in my hometown, and in each Senator's hometown in 100,000 schools, there are school boards, parents, and communities that cherish their children and they don't believe that Washington cherishes them more. This proposal would give those parents, communities, teachers, and principals the tools they need to prevent child abuse. It would enable them to do a better job of stopping sexual abuse of children by school personnel.

In a meeting I attended earlier today, it was said that the Senate has already passed the Toomey-Manchin amendment because we passed the child care and development block grant. Let me talk about that a minute. The child care and development block grant went through the committee I now chair. There are three things wrong with the argument that the Toomey-Manchin amendment has already passed. First, the child care development block grant is funded 100 percent by the Federal Government. It affects 1.5 million children. It affects a little more than 1 million children. The Federal Government funds about 10 percent of elementary and secondary education. So if we fund 100 percent of a program, the argument is strong that we can also write the rules for it. If we fund 10 of a program, the people who fund 90 percent might say, ''What gave you the right to tell us what to do?''

Second, the argument was made that the child care and development block grant contains basically the same set of background checks as the Toomey-Manchin. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Toomey-Manchin amendment is significantly different from the background check provisions in the child care and development block grant. It is different in terms of its scope, privacy provisions, mitigating factors in an appeals process, potential lawsuits against a school district, and materiality. Let me focus on these differences for a minute.

First, in terms of scope, the child care and development block grant applies to about 1.5 million children who receive vouchers to for childcare. The Toomey-Manchin bill applies to all elementary and secondary schools in States that receive funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. That is 100,000 public elementary and secondary schools, 14,000 local school districts, and 50 State education agencies.

Second, in terms of privacy, the child care and development block grant ensures that the only information employers receive is whether the prospective employee passed or failed the background check. The Toomey-Manchin amendment has no similar protections and allows employers to share the results of background checks with other prospective employers. That is a privacy concern.

Third, it differs in terms of what we call mitigating factors: The child care and development block grant permits States to create a review process through which disqualified employees can become eligible for employment due to mitigating factors such as the length of time since they committed a crime. The Toomey-Manchin bill

doesn't permit States to conduct such reviews. My bill allows states to do a review.

Fourth, private right of action provisions: The child care and development block grant expressly does not create a private right of action if the childcare provider is in compliance with all State regulations. The Toomey-Manchin bill does not contain similar language, potentially exposing schools to litigation. The Alexander amendment does include that.

Finally, materiality. The child care and development block grant precludes hiring an employee if they make a material false statement on a background check. The Toomey-Manchin bill has no such materiality requirement.

I ask unanimous consent to include, following my remarks, these differences between the background check requirements in the child care and development block grant bill and the Toomey-Manchin amendment.

Finally, I am glad we are discussing the topic of protecting students from sexual abuse. I congratulate the Senator from Pennsylvania and the Senator from West Virginia for putting the spotlight on this issue. I have worked with them to suggest changes to their bill.

We have fundamental differences in our approaches. I think, when it comes to local schools, the limit of Washington's responsibility is to enable communities and schools to do a better job of educating our children.

Most of the discussion we are having in the Senate education committee today is reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The discussion is about who determines whether schools and teachers are succeeding or failing, local communities or Washington? The theory is that local control of these decisions allows for more innovation. This respects the fact that parents, communities, teachers, and principals cherish their own children. It certainly would be wrong for us to say Washington cherishes their children more than they do.

I spend a lot of my time arguing with people—they are often Democrats—who want to say: I have got a good idea. Now, let's impose it on all schools. For example, Common Core—we have 42 States operating under waivers from the U.S. Department of Education. In order to get that waiver, which they need to keep their schools from being deemed as failing, states have to, in effect, adopt Common Core. This requirement has created a general uprising in Tennessee; I imagine it has in North Carolina; I suspect it has in Iowa, not so much because of what the standards are but because the very idea that Washington would be telling local school districts it knows better than their state capital and local school boards what their academic standards ought to be. The same thing with teacher evaluation.

When I was the Governor of Tennessee in the 1980s, we became the first State to pay teachers more for teaching well. I had a year-and-a-half brawl with the National Education Association. When we defeated them, and 10,000 teachers were gradually able to move up the career ladder.

When I came to Washington, people thought I would require every State do that. I said, absolutely not. That is not the way our constitutional federalism works. States have a right to be right, and have a right to be wrong on teacher evaluation and Common Core. Those are tremendously important issues, but it is hard enough to fairly evaluate a teacher without Washington trying to tell you how to do it.

Take the business of whether a school is succeeding or failing, whether a school has made adequate yearly progress, or whether a teacher is highly qualified. We have had a 12-year experiment with trying to make all these decisions at the U.S. Department of Education. One teacher said it had become a human resources department for 100,000 local schools. It hasn't worked. It does help to know how the children are doing on their tests. It does help to aggregate the results so we know whether children are falling behind. It does help for States to have the results from the national assessment of educational progress so we can compare North Carolina to Tennessee. But it does not help to have well-meaning people in Washington say: I know exactly how to make your children safe, how to tell them what to learn, how to evaluate teachers, how to tell them whether schools are succeeding or failing, and how to fix them.

One other example. What about guns? Sexual abuse of children is a terrible tragedy. That is why we have at least two amendments on it, and maybe we will have a third. So are guns in schools. We have had some terrible tragedies there.

What did the U.S. Congress do about that 20 years ago? They passed something called the Gun-Free School Zones Act. They whipped it right through Congress as if that was going to fix the problem of guns in every school in America. There were two things wrong with it. The Supreme Court of the United States struck the bill down as unconstitutional, as a Federal overreach into local affairs. But the main thing wrong with it was that is not how you make schools safe. You don't make schools safe by passing a law in Washington and pretending you have made 50 million children safe in 100,000 schools. This would suggest that if there is a problem with school safety in my hometown in Maryville, TN, it is up to the U.S. Senate to fix that problem, to make the schools safe. It is not. That is not how you do it. In my hometown, they make that school safe because the community is involved. They win the football games, they have good academic scores, and they have safe schools. Someone asked the principal when they won the football game why they did so well? The principal said, it is because we are a community school. When something happens here, the community shows up.

If we want to fix the problem of abuse of children in schools, there is a right way to do it and there is a wrong way to do it. The right way is to recognize the problem, require States to have background checks, and enable them to do a better job at using Federal funds to access data registries and provide training for employees. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education can be designated as the lead agency to provide best practices to local schools and to include data on the prevalence of child abuse by school personnel on Secretary's report card. The wrong way to do it is to take over the personnel decisions for 6 million employees in 100,000 schools and pretend that schools will be safer. There is a fundamental difference of opinion by Senators who agree on a laudable goal.

I believe it is more appropriate under our constitutional system of federalism for Congress to limit itself to enabling schools to do a better job of their essential responsibilities rather than creating, in effect, a national school board that tries to run our schools and hire and fire those personnel.

I ask unanimous consent to include following my remarks a summary of the Alexander-Kirk amendment.

I yield the floor.

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

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS IN CCDBG AND TOOMEY BILL

The Child Care and Development and Block Grant (CCDBG), as amended in 2014, and Senator Toomey's amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act both create a new requirement that states, as a condition of receiving federal funds under relevant programs, conduct comprehensive criminal background checks for all prospective and current child care or school employees. Key differences between the two approaches include:

Scope:

CCDBG applies to all child care providers that receive federal funding

Toomey's bill applies to all elementary and secondary schools in states that receive federal funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This includes:

100,000 public elementary and secondary schools

14,000 local school districts

50 state educational agencies

Privacy:

CCDBG ensures that the only information employers receive is whether the prospective employee passed or failed the background check.

Toomey's bill has no similar protections and allows employers to share the results of background checks with other prospective employers.

Mitigating factors:

CCDBG permits states to create a review process through which disqualified employees can become eligible for employment due to mitigating factors, such as the length of time since they committed a crime.

Toomey's bill does not permit states to conduct such reviews.

Private right of action:

CCDBG does not create a private right of action if the child care provider is in compliance with all state requirements.

Toomey's bill does not contain similar language, potentially opening schools to litigation.

Materiality:

CCDBG precludes hiring an employee if they make a material false statement on a background check; Toomey's bill has no such materiality requirement.

THE STOP SEXUAL ABUSE BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL ACT OF 2015

WHAT THE ALEXANDER AMENDMENT DOES

Requires states to have a criminal background check for all school employees.

Allows States or local school districts to use federal funding authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education act to establish, implement, or improve policies and procedures on background checks for school employees, including:

Providing states with the flexibility and resources to conduct searches of State and Federal criminal registries, as determined by the State;

Empowering states to establish, implement, or improve policies and procedures concerning the timely disclosure, notice, and appeal of background check results;

Supporting the development, implementation, or improvement of mechanisms for assisting in the identification of and response to incidents of child abuse, including by providing training and development for school personnel; and

Any other activities determined by the State to protect student safety.

Adopts the 2014 GAO report recommendation to establish the U.S. Department of Education as the lead agency to inform schools of best practices.

Authorizes the U.S. Education Secretary to make reporting of student sexual abuse by school personnel a part of an annual ''Secretary's Report Card.''

Protects schools and school districts from being sued if in compliance with State regulations and requirements.

REASONS TO SUPPORT THIS AMENDMENT

It requires states to have a criminal background check for all school employees, help states and local school districts do them, but does not dictate how they do it.

It will support what most states are already doing—According to GAO, 46 States already require background checks of some kind for all public school employees and 42 States have established professional standards or codes of conduct for school personnel.

Rather than mandating a one-size-fits-all approach for 14,000 local school districts and 100,000 public schools, it will provide states with flexibility to establish, implement, or improve background check policies and procedures that best meet State and local needs.

It will support State and local efforts to increase reporting of child abuse, limit the transfer of school personnel implicated in abuse, as well as provide training on how to recognize, respond to, and prevent child abuse in schools.

It will protect schools and local school districts from civil litigation resulting from background check decisions that are otherwise in compliance with State regulations and requirements.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS).

The Senator from Iowa.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

Mr. GRASSLEY. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the nomination that will be before the entire Senate next week, the nomination of Loretta Lynch to be the Attorney General of the United States of America, and to urge all of my Senate colleagues to quickly confirm United States Attorney Lynch to this position.

Loretta Lynch has dedicated much of her life—many years of her life—to public service, serving twice as the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York. In this role she earned a reputation as a tough but fair prosecutor.

I would like to take a few minutes to outline some of Loretta Lynch's record. As United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, she has kept communities safer by bringing serious, violent criminals to justice, prosecuting high-level gang members and drug traffickers. U.S. Attorney Lynch has also tirelessly fought public corruption. While she was at the U.S. Attorney's Office, she was the lead prosecutor in municipal corruption cases on Long Island and supervised the prosecution of the New York State Senate majority leader recently.

During her time in private practice, Loretta Lynch did pro bono work as special counsel to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, further evidencing her commitment to public service and to the enforcement of the law. Hers is a truly impressive record, and one that without question prepared United States Attorney Lynch to serve as Attorney General Lynch upon confirmation by the Senate.

I had the opportunity to meet with Loretta Lynch this past January. She and I discussed how the Department of Justice can do more to give law enforcement the tools it needs, also to eliminate witness intimidation—a major issue in cities such as Philadelphia and others around the country. Also, we talked about reforming the juvenile justice system, and finally reducing tensions between police, law enforcement and the communities they serve.

I was very impressed by United States Attorney Lynch. I believe she is well suited to address these and many other issues she will confront as the Attorney General of the United States. These issues, of course, are not only critical to Pennsylvania but also our whole country.

I am also confident that Loretta Lynch, when she is confirmed—and I believe she will be—will continue the important work of Attorney General Holder to fairly enforce Federal voting and civil rights laws, to support equality for LGBT Americans, to work to reduce the over-incarceration of nonviolent offenders, and also to address disparities in our criminal justice system.

Despite Loretta Lynch's record as a prosecutor, serving twice as the United States attorney in the State of New York, and despite her record and countless expressions of support from law enforcement, from civil rights advocates, and past Attorneys General, Loretta Lynch's nomination has been pending for 122 days before the Senate. This is the longest it has taken the U.S. Senate to vote on the nominee for Attorney General in 30 years.

This is especially surprising given that the Senate has already confirmed Loretta Lynch twice. In both 2000 and 2010, the Senate confirmed Loretta Lynch to be the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, as I mentioned earlier. In each case her confirmation before the Senate was unanimous.

Loretta Lynch's nomination we know is historic for many reasons, but the principal reason is she would be the first African-American woman to serve as the Nation's Attorney General. However, apart from the historic nature of her nomination, and I hope confirmation, Loretta Lynch is supremely qualified for this position for all the reasons I stated earlier. They could be summarized in a few words: integrity, intellect, and experience. I could add more words to that, but they are the qualities we want in any prosecutor and, of course, they are the qualities we want in an Attorney General. I believe we have those qualities with Attorney General Holder, and we want to have the confirmation completed for the new Attorney General nominee, Loretta Lynch.

I strongly support Loretta Lynch's nomination, and I am pleased the majority leader has committed to considering her nomination on the Senate floor. I call on all of my colleagues to confirm Loretta Lynch without delay.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Utah.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, we live in a country of unparalleled opportunity. The blessings of liberty are the birthright of every American, and the Framers ordained our Constitution to protect these rights. To deny any person these basic freedoms would seem almost unthinkable today. So the fact that even as I speak there are thousands of individuals living as slaves in our very own country is even more unthinkable. But it is undeniably true.

In this country, right now, there are thousands of human beings living as slaves, men, women, and children, stolen from their homes, stripped of their God-given rights, and robbed of their human dignity. These individuals live

among us. They live in our neighborhoods and our suburbs, our biggest cities and our smallest towns. They live in a world of silence, fear, hopelessness, and unspeakable suffering.

These individuals of whom I speak are the victims of human trafficking, a heinous and abominable crime that we should call by its real name: modern-day slavery. The State Department estimates that up to 17,500 individuals are trafficked to the United States every year. The majority of these are women and children. Some of them are forced into a life of unpaid servitude, many others into sex work. Worldwide, the International Labor Organization estimates that 4.5 million people are currently enslaved through sex trafficking. These numbers are staggering, but they illustrate the scope of the problem. The suffering of each individual victim should not be lost in a sea of statistics.

For victims of human trafficking, the surreal horror of their lives bears testimony to the gravity of the crime.

Consider the case of Holly Smith. When Holly was just 14 years old, she met a man at a local shopping mall in New Jersey. With all the innocence of youth, Holly confided in this man all the fears and anxieties of her adolescence, telling him how nervous she was to begin high school.

Holly could never have guessed that the man she had just met—the man she had just trusted with her deepest feelings—was a human trafficker trained to emotionally manipulate young girls to lure them into prostitution. This man promised Holly a life of glamor and excitement if she agreed to run away with him.

Holly took the bait. She ran away with the man who would later abuse her and intimidate her into prostitution. She was one of the many victims of child sex trafficking.

Holly eventually escaped this nightmare and even had the courage to tell her story at a Judiciary Committee hearing on human trafficking last month, but many are not so lucky. We must do more to help victims such as Holly. We must do more to combat the evils of human trafficking.

As a legislative body, we made significant progress in the year 2000 when we passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act. This legislation took critical steps in providing greater protection to victims and levying heavier penalties against traffickers. We have since reauthorized that legislation on four occasions.

In each instance, I have been passionately committed in the fight against human trafficking. My staff has also been equally devoted to this issue, and I was especially proud when President Bush asked my former Judiciary counsel, Grace Chung Becker, to head the very first human trafficking unit within the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. It is only fitting that the Justice Department established this unit as a subset of its Civil Rights Division and not its Criminal Division. Human trafficking is more than a mere crime; it is a fundamental violation of human rights.

It is not my intention to minimize the significance of the legislation we have passed thus far, but we still have so much work to do. We have recognized that human trafficking is a serious problem; now we need a serious solution.

I am grateful for Senator KLOBUCHAR's initiative in addressing that problem. Her Stop Exploitation Through Trafficking Act properly identifies children lured into prostitution as victims, not criminals. By encouraging States to adopt safe harbor laws, we are better equipped to help victims receive the care and treatment they deserve.

Senator CORNYN's Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act also aids these victims by establishing a special fund that will provide them more of the resources they need to repair their shattered lives. Senator CORNYN's bill also imposes severe penalties on traffickers, including heavier fines that the Justice Department will direct toward victim compensation.

I strongly support both of these bills, and I am grateful for my colleagues' enormous efforts in building a coalition to combat this scourge.

Human trafficking is a complex problem, and solving it requires a multi-front approach. It is a problem of both supply and demand. In addition to passing this legislation to address the problem of supply, we must also address the problem of demand.

The prevalence of human trafficking is a moral stain on our country, and we can never eradicate this evil if we are only addressing part of the problem.

Through stricter enforcement of obscenity laws, we can decrease demand for sex trafficking. There is an undeniable link between illegal adult obscenity and sex trafficking, and I have long been an outspoken voice on this issue.

Laura Lederer, former Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons at the State Department, observed that there are ''numerous links between sex trafficking and pornography'' and that pornography is even ''used in sex trafficking and the sex industry to train women and children what to do.''

In 2011, I led 41 other Senators in sending a letter to Attorney General Eric Holder calling for greater enforcement of Federal obscenity laws. In his response, even he agreed that hard-core pornography is associated with sex trafficking. This type of obscenity not only harms individuals, families, and entire communities, but also normalizes sexual harm to children.

How long will we let this culture of perversion persist? How long will we ignore the pressing problem of adult obscenity at the expense of the innocent women and children who are too often the victims of this vice?

Enough is enough. Ignoring the problem of adult obscenity is ignoring the problem of human trafficking, and ignorance will not free the innocent women and children trapped in the clutches of modern-day slavery. The First Amendment does not protect adult obscenity, so the Federal Government is acting well within its power to impose greater enforcement. I firmly believe a consistent commitment to enforcing these laws will have a significant impact in reducing the prevalence of sex trafficking.

I want to conclude by discussing this body's handling of this important bill. In my 39 years as a Member of this body, I have seen the Senate at some of its best moments and at some of its worst moments. Last year I came to the floor repeatedly to warn of how my colleagues on the other side of the aisle—who were then in the majority—had abused the legislative process for partisan political gain.

Since the beginning of the 114th Congress this January, we have made remarkable progress in restoring the Senate as an institution. By restoring this body's traditions of fulsome debate, an open amendment process, and regular order through the committee system, our new majority is putting the Senate back to work for the American people. While the sailing has not always been totally smooth—it rarely is in my experience—the progress we have seen in restoring this institution to its proper role as a productive legislative body is real and meaningful.

Given this headway, I have been extremely disappointed to see a logjam develop and impede our progress on this vital piece of bipartisan legislation, something that should pass this body 100 to 0. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle have threatened a filibuster, claiming that we somehow ambushed them with a controversial abortion rider. That claim is absolutely ridiculous. The language they are suddenly so upset about has been in the bill the entire time, as those of us on the Judiciary Committee can attest. My colleagues had no complaints about this language when the bill passed out of the committee; in fact, it passed unanimously. Moreover, not only was this language in the bill from the beginning, but it has also been the law of the land for nearly four decades.

Democrats in this body have supported countless other bills—including even ObamaCare—with similar language, knowing that such provisions are important to many people on both sides of the aisle.

This policy represents a sensible and appropriate compromise in an issue area characterized by conflicting and deeply held views. As such, the notion that this provision should provoke my colleagues on the other side of the aisle to grind the legislative process to a halt boggles the mind. It makes us wonder what in the world is going on here.

Even the most charitable interpretation of this move suggests that the minority is once again resorting to outrageous my-way-or-the-highway tactics to impose an extreme pro-abortion policy.

More disturbingly, this ploy plainly demonstrates the minority leadership's desire to pick a political fight over abortion and to muck up the majority's efforts to exercise reliable leadership. By resorting to this sort of obstruction, they have demonstrated just how desperately they want to derail our efforts to legislate responsibly and instead resort to their tired and discredited war-on-women rhetoric to win cheap political points. I am unabashedly pro-life, and I have no qualms whatsoever about debating that issue.

If my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are so desperate to debate that issue and push an extreme plan to overturn the longstanding compromise—that is the law of the land—let us debate such a measure at an appropriate time, but not on this bill. To hold this important human trafficking bill hostage is a deplorable approach.

The minority leader earlier came to the floor and tried to manipulate my words to support his shameful gambit. For all of my colleagues who are tempted by this irresponsible strategy, let me repeat my previous point.

It would be pathetic to hold up this bill. This bill is absolutely critical to families and our children. I cannot believe the Senate has become so political that my colleagues would raise this issue—this tangential, long-settled issue—at this time—after the same transparently clear language passed unanimously out of the Judiciary Committee.

For my colleagues to hold up this bill in an effort to seek to impose their extreme policy, to overturn the law of the land that has long enjoyed bipartisan support, to pick a false fight over abortion, or to try to embarrass the majority is itself embarrassing. They ought to be ashamed.

I urge my colleagues in the minority, in the strongest possible terms, to reconsider their position and allow the Senate once again to do the people's business.

Look, all of us are fed up with the delays and the problems of not legislating the way we should in the Senate. All of us are fed up with some of the tactics that have been used, but to use them on a bill such as this? Come on. This is a bill that will make a real difference, and there should not be one Senator in this body voting against it, and they certainly shouldn't vote against it because there is language in there that is the law of the land today.

Yes, many Democrats don't like it. But I don't like them holding up one of the most important bills for children and families and women just so they can make a cheap political point on abortion.

I care a great deal for my colleagues on the other side. They have special concerns just as we have special concerns. They have special challenges just as we have special challenges. But this is one we ought all to agree on. Get it out of the Senate, get it going, and start doing more to stop human trafficking in our society today.

This is something we ought to all quit playing games with. Just pass it, and get it through the Senate and the House.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BLOODY SUNDAY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, on Monday I gave a statement on the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday and the Voting Rights Act. I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD President Obama's remarks from the commemoration.

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

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AT THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SELMA TO MONTGOMERY MARCHES

EDMUND PETTUS BRIDGE

SELMA, ALABAMA

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know I love you back.

It is a rare honor in this life to follow one of your heroes. And John Lewis is one of my heroes.

Now, I have to imagine that when a younger John Lewis woke up that morning 50 years ago and made his way to Brown Chapel, heroics were not on his mind. A day like this was not on his mind. Young folks with bedrolls and backpacks were milling about. Veterans of the movement trained newcomers in the tactics of non-violence; the right way to protect yourself when attacked. A doctor described what tear gas does to the body, while marchers scribbled down instructions for contacting their loved ones. The air was thick with doubt, anticipation and fear. And they comforted themselves with the final verse of the final hymn they sung:

"No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you; Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you."

And then, his knapsack stocked with an apple, a toothbrush, and a book on government—all you need for a night behind bars—John Lewis led them out of the church on a mission to change America.

President and Mrs. Bush, Governor Bentley, Mayor Evans, Sewell, Reverend Strong, members of Congress, elected officials, foot soldiers, friends, fellow Americans:

As John noted, there are places and moments in America where this nation's destiny has been decided. Many are sites of war—Concord and Lexington, Appomattox, Gettysburg. Others are sites that symbolize the daring of America's character—Independence Hall and Seneca Falls, Kitty Hawk and Cape Canaveral.

Selma is such a place. In one afternoon 50 years ago, so much of our turbulent history—the stain of slavery and anguish of civil war; the yoke of segregation and tyranny of Jim Crow; the death of four little girls in Birmingham; and the dream of a Baptist preacher—all that history met on this bridge.

It was not a clash of armies, but a clash of wills; a contest to determine the true meaning of America. And because of men and women like John Lewis, Joseph Lowery, Hosea Williams, Amelia Boynton, Diane Nash, Ralph Abernathy, C.T. Vivian, Andrew Young, Fred Shuttlesworth, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and so many others, the idea of a just America and a fair America, an inclusive America, and a generous America—that idea ultimately triumphed.

As is true across the landscape of American history, we cannot examine this moment in isolation. The march on Selma was part of a broader campaign that spanned generations; the leaders that day part of a long line of heroes.

We gather here to celebrate them. We gather here to honor the courage of ordinary Americans willing to endure billy clubs and the chastening rod; tear gas and the trampling hoof; men and women who despite the gush of blood and splintered bone would stay true to their North Star and keep marching towards justice.

They did as Scripture instructed: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." And in the days to come, they went back again and again. When the trumpet call sounded for more to join, the people came—black and white, young and old, Christian and Jew, waving the American flag and singing the same anthems full of faith and hope. A white newsman, Bill Plante, who covered the marches then and who is with us here today, quipped that the growing number of white people lowered the quality of the singing. To those who marched, though, those old gospel songs must have never sounded so sweet.

In time, their chorus would well up and reach President Johnson. And he would send them protection, and speak to the nation, echoing their call for America and the world to hear: "We shall overcome." What enormous faith these men and women had. Faith in God, but also faith in America.

The Americans who crossed this bridge, they were not physically imposing. But they gave courage to millions. They held no elected office. But they led a nation. They marched as Americans who had endured hundreds of years of brutal violence, countless daily indignities—but they didn't seek special treatment, just the equal treatment promised to them almost a century before.

What they did here will reverberate through the ages. Not because the change they won was preordained; not because their victory was complete; but because they proved that nonviolent change is possible, that love and hope can conquer hate.

As we commemorate their achievement, we are well-served to remember that at the time of the marches, many in power condemned rather than praised them. Back then, they were called Communists, or half-breeds, or outside agitators, sexual and moral degenerates, and worse—they were called everything but the name their parents gave them. Their faith was questioned. Their lives were threatened. Their patriotism challenged.

And yet, what could be more American than what happened in this place? What could more profoundly vindicate the idea of America than plain and humble people—unsung, the downtrodden, the dreamers not of high station, not born to wealth or privilege, not of one religious tradition but many, coming together to shape their country's course?

What greater expression of faith in the American experiment than this, what greater form of patriotism is there than the belief that America is not yet finished, that we are strong enough to be self-critical, that each successive generation can look upon our imperfections and decide that it is in our power to remake this nation to more closely align with our highest ideals?

That's why Selma is not some outlier in the American experience. That's why it's not a museum or a static monument to behold from a distance. It is instead the manifestation of a creed written into our founding documents: ''We the People . . . in order to form a more perfect union.'' ''We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.''

These are not just words. They're a living thing, a call to action, a roadmap for citizenship and an insistence in the capacity of free men and women to shape our own destiny. For founders like Franklin and Jefferson, for leaders like Lincoln and FDR, the success of our experiment in self-government rested on engaging all of our citizens in this work. And that's what we celebrate here in Selma. That's what this movement was all about, one leg in our long journey toward freedom.

The American instinct that led these young men and women to pick up the torch and cross this bridge, that's the same instinct that moved patriots to choose revolution over tyranny. It's the same instinct that drew immigrants from across oceans and the Rio Grande; the same instinct that led women to reach for the ballot, workers to organize against an unjust status quo; the same instinct that led us to plant a flag at Iwo Jima and on the surface of the Moon.

It's the idea held by generations of citizens who believed that America is a constant work in progress; who believed that loving this country requires more than singing its praises or avoiding uncomfortable truths. It requires the occasional disruption, the willingness to speak out for what is right, to shake up the status quo. That's America.

That's what makes us unique. That's what cements our reputation as a beacon of opportunity. Young people behind the Iron Curtain would see Selma and eventually tear down that wall. Young people in Soweto would hear Bobby Kennedy talk about ripples of hope and eventually banish the scourge of apartheid. Young people in Burma went to prison rather than submit to military rule. They saw what John Lewis had done. From the streets of Tunis to the Maidan in Ukraine, this generation of young people can draw strength from this place, where the powerless could change the world's greatest power and push their leaders to expand the boundaries of freedom.

They saw that idea made real right here in Selma, Alabama. They saw that idea manifest itself here in America.

Because of campaigns like this, a Voting Rights Act was passed. Political and economic and social barriers came down. And the change these men and women wrought is visible here today in the presence of African Americans who run boardrooms, who sit on the bench, who serve in elected office from small towns to big cities; from the Congressional Black Caucus all the way to the Oval Office.

Because of what they did, the doors of opportunity swung open not just for black folks, but for every American. Women marched through those doors. Latinos marched through those doors. Asian Americans, gay Americans, Americans with disabilities—they all came through those doors. Their endeavors gave the entire South the chance to rise again, not by reasserting the past, but by transcending the past.

What a glorious thing, Dr. King might say. And what a solemn debt we owe. Which leads us to ask, just how might we repay that debt?

First and foremost, we have to recognize that one day's commemoration, no matter how special, is not enough. If Selma taught us anything, it's that our work is never done. The American experiment in self-government gives work and purpose to each generation.

Selma teaches us, as well, that action requires that we shed our cynicism. For when it comes to the pursuit of justice, we can afford neither complacency nor despair.

Just this week, I was asked whether I thought the Department of Justice's Ferguson report shows that, with respect to race, little has changed in this country. And I understood the question; the report's narrative was sadly familiar. It evoked the kind of abuse and disregard for citizens that spawned the Civil Rights Movement. But I rejected the notion that nothing's changed. What happened in Ferguson may not be unique, but it's no longer endemic. It's no longer sanctioned by law or by custom. And before the Civil Rights Movement, it most surely was.

We do a disservice to the cause of justice by intimating that bias and discrimination are immutable, that racial division is inherent to America. If you think nothing's changed in the past 50 years, ask somebody who lived through the Selma or Chicago or Los Angeles of the 1950s. Ask the female CEO who once might have been assigned to the secretarial pool if nothing's changed. Ask your gay friend if it's easier to be out and proud in America now than it was thirty years ago. To deny this progress, this hard-won progress—our progress—would be to rob us of our own agency, our own capacity, our responsibility to do what we can to make America better.

Of course, a more common mistake is to suggest that Ferguson is an isolated incident; that racism is banished; that the work that drew men and women to Selma is now complete, and that whatever racial tensions remain are a consequence of those seeking to play the ''race card'' for their own purposes. We don't need the Ferguson report to know that's not true. We just need to open our eyes, and our ears, and our hearts to know that this nation's racial history still casts its long shadow upon us.

We know the march is not yet over. We know the race is not yet won. We know that reaching that blessed destination where we are judged, all of us, by the content of our character requires admitting as much, facing up to the truth. ''We are capable of bearing a great burden,'' James Baldwin once wrote, ''once we discover that the burden is reality and arrive where reality is.''

There's nothing America can't handle if we actually look squarely at the problem. And this is work for all Americans, not just some. Not just whites. Not just blacks. If we want to honor the courage of those who marched that day, then all of us are called to possess their moral imagination. All of us will need to feel as they did the fierce urgency of now. All of us need to recognize as they did that change depends on our actions, on our attitudes, the things we teach our children. And if we make such an effort, no matter how hard it may sometimes seem, laws can be passed, and consciences can be stirred, and consensus can be built.

With such an effort, we can make sure our criminal justice system serves all and not just some. Together, we can raise the level of mutual trust that policing is built on—the idea that police officers are members of the community they risk their lives to protect, and citizens in Ferguson and New York and Cleveland, they just want the same thing young people here marched for 50 years ago—the protection of the law. Together, we can address unfair sentencing and overcrowded prisons, and the stunted circumstances that rob too many boys of the chance to become men, and rob the nation of too many men who could be good dads, and good workers, and good neighbors.

With effort, we can roll back poverty and the roadblocks to opportunity. Americans don't accept a free ride for anybody, nor do we believe in equality of outcomes. But we do expect equal opportunity. And if we really mean it, if we're not just giving lip service to it, but if we really mean it and are willing to sacrifice for it, then, yes, we can make sure every child gets an education suitable to this new century, one that expands imaginations and lifts sights and gives those children the skills they need. We can make sure every person willing to work has the dignity of a job, and a fair wage, and a real voice, and sturdier rungs on that ladder into the middle class.

And with effort, we can protect the foundation stone of our democracy for which so many marched across this bridge—and that is the right to vote. Right now, in 2015, 50 years after Selma, there are laws across this country designed to make it harder for people to vote. As we speak, more of such laws are being proposed. Meanwhile, the Voting Rights Act, the culmination of so much blood, so much sweat and tears, the product of so much sacrifice in the face of wanton violence, the Voting Rights Act stands weakened, its future subject to political rancor.

How can that be? The Voting Rights Act was one of the crowning achievements of our democracy, the result of Republican and Democratic efforts. President Reagan signed its renewal when he was in office. President George W. Bush signed its renewal when he was in office. One hundred members of Congress have come here today to honor people who were willing to die for the right to protect it. If we want to honor this day, let that hundred go back to Washington and gather four hundred more, and together, pledge to make it their mission to restore that law this year. That's how we honor those on this bridge.

Of course, our democracy is not the task of Congress alone, or the courts alone, or even the President alone. If every new voter-suppression law was struck down today, we would still have, here in America, one of the lowest voting rates among free peoples. Fifty years ago, registering to vote here in Selma and much of the South meant guessing the number of jellybeans in a jar, the number of bubbles on a bar of soap. It meant risking your dignity, and sometimes, your life.

What's our excuse today for not voting? How do we so casually discard the right for which so many fought? How do we so fully give away our power, our voice, in shaping America's future? Why are we pointing to somebody else when we could take the time just to go to the polling places? We give away our power.

Fellow marchers, so much has changed in 50 years. We have endured war and we've fashioned peace. We've seen technological wonders that touch every aspect of our lives. We take for granted conveniences that our parents could have scarcely imagined. But what has not changed is the imperative of citizenship; that willingness of a 26–year-old deacon, or a Unitarian minister, or a young mother of five to decide they loved this country so much that they'd risk everything to realize its promise.

That's what it means to love America. That's what it means to believe in America. That's what it means when we say America is exceptional.

For we were born of change. We broke the old aristocracies, declaring ourselves entitled not by bloodline, but endowed by our

Creator with certain inalienable rights. We secure our rights and responsibilities through a system of self-government, of and by and for the people. That's why we argue and fight with so much passion and conviction—because we know our efforts matter. We know America is what we make of it.

Look at our history. We are Lewis and Clark and Sacajawea, pioneers who braved the unfamiliar, followed by a stampede of farmers and miners, and entrepreneurs and hucksters. That's our spirit. That's who we are.

We are Sojourner Truth and Fannie Lou Hamer, women who could do as much as any man and then some. And we're Susan B. Anthony, who shook the system until the law reflected that truth. That is our character.

We're the immigrants who stowed away on ships to reach these shores, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free—Holocaust survivors, Soviet defectors, the Lost Boys of Sudan. We're the hopeful strivers who cross the Rio Grande because we want our kids to know a better life. That's how we came to be.

We're the slaves who built the White House and the economy of the South. We're the ranch hands and cowboys who opened up the West, and countless laborers who laid rail, and raised skyscrapers, and organized for workers' rights.

We're the fresh-faced GIs who fought to liberate a continent. And we're the Tuskeegee Airmen, and the Navajo codetalkers, and the Japanese Americans who fought for this country even as their own liberty had been denied.

We're the firefighters who rushed into those buildings on 9/11, the volunteers who signed up to fight in Afghanistan and Iraq. We're the gay Americans whose blood ran in the streets of San Francisco and New York, just as blood ran down this bridge.

We are storytellers, writers, poets, artists who abhor unfairness, and despise hypocrisy, and give voice to the voiceless, and tell truths that need to be told.

We're the inventors of gospel and jazz and blues, bluegrass and country, and hip-hop and rock and roll, and our very own sound with all the sweet sorrow and reckless joy of freedom.

We are Jackie Robinson, enduring scorn and spiked cleats and pitches coming straight to his head, and stealing home in the World Series anyway.

We are the people Langston Hughes wrote of who ''build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how.'' We are the people Emerson wrote of, ''who for truth and honor's sake stand fast and suffer long;'' who are ''never tired, so long as we can see far enough.''

That's what America is. Not stock photos or airbrushed history, or feeble attempts to define some of us as more American than others. We respect the past, but we don't pine for the past. We don't fear the future; we grab for it. America is not some fragile thing. We are large, in the words of Whitman, containing multitudes. We are boisterous and diverse and full of energy, perpetually young in spirit. That's why someone like John Lewis at the ripe old age of 25 could lead a mighty march.

And that's what the young people here today and listening all across the country must take away from this day. You are America. Unconstrained by habit and convention. Unencumbered by what is, because you're ready to seize what ought to be.

For everywhere in this country, there are first steps to be taken, there's new ground to cover, there are more bridges to be crossed. And it is you, the young and fearless at heart, the most diverse and educated generation in our history, who the nation is waiting to follow.

Because Selma shows us that America is not the project of any one person. Because the single-most powerful word in our democracy is the word ''We.'' ''We The People.'' ''We Shall Overcome.'' ''Yes We Can.'' That word is owned by no one. It belongs to everyone. Oh, what a glorious task we are given, to continually try to improve this great nation of ours.

Fifty years from Bloody Sunday, our march is not yet finished, but we're getting closer. Two hundred and thirty-nine years after this nation's founding our union is not yet perfect, but we are getting closer. Our job's easier because somebody already got us through that first mile. Somebody already got us over that bridge. When it feels the road is too hard, when the torch we've been passed feels too heavy, we will remember these early travelers, and draw strength from their example, and hold firmly the words of the prophet Isaiah: ''Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on [the] wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint.''

We honor those who walked so we could run. We must run so our children soar. And we will not grow weary. For we believe in the power of an awesome God, and we believe in this country's sacred promise.

May He bless those warriors of justice no longer with us, and bless the United States of America. Thank you, everybody.

TRAIN DERAILMENT IN GALENA, ILLINOIS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, hundreds of firefighters are in town this week to talk about legislative issues. I was honored to speak at the International Association of Fire Fighters conference and meet with firefighters from Illinois on Monday to thank them for keeping us safe.

Their visit is particularly timely given a couple of serious train accidents in the past few days. One accident, a derailment, happened in Galena, IL, last Thursday. Twenty-one cars carrying Bakken crude oil from North Dakota derailed there and five of them caught fire. Fortunately, the accident happened 2 miles outside the city, so no one was killed or injured. It was a potentially deadly accident, though, and we are very lucky no one was hurt. The fire burned for days.

Brave men and women from the Galena Fire Department were the first on the scene. Like many fire departments throughout the U.S., the Galena Fire Department is an entirely volunteer force. The area where the crash occurred is in a wetland where the Galena River meets the Mississippi. The first responders had to use a bike path to get to the crash site. I want to thank Galena Fire Chief Randy Beadle for his leadership in tackling this disaster. Galena Assistant Fire Chief Bob Conley also helped coordinate the first response. While most people would run away from something like this, firefighters run toward the flames. We owe a debt of gratitude to them.

I spoke with Galena Mayor Terry Renner the evening of the crash. I let him know I was ready to help in any way I could. Others on the ground whose efforts were critical to the local response include: Galena City Administrator Mark Moran, Jo Daviess County Board Chairman Ron Smith, County Administrator Dan Reimer, County Sheriff Kevin Turner, and County Emergency Management Agency Director Chuck Pedersen.

First responders were not sure if the oil from the derailed train cars might make its way to the Mississippi River—just half a mile away. To be on the safe side, BNSF erected a berm in the river to catch any runoff, either from the train cars themselves or from runoff from firefighters' hoses. Now the cleanup really begins. The EPA will vacuum up the spilled oil from the ground and test the soil below for contamination. Even if the oil did not reach the Mississippi, this was too close a call.

These types of accidents are happening more frequently and the potential for catastrophe is great. This is not the first time Illinois has seen such a derailment. In 2009, one person was killed in Cherry Valley; and in 2011, 800 residents of Tiskilway were evacuated after a massive explosion. The National Transportation Safety Board found the weakness of these cars added to the severity of both explosions.

Recently we have seen these dangerous derailments across the country and in Canada. It happened in West Virginia last month, and another yet this weekend in Ontario, Canada. Of course, the most severe incident occurred in Quebec in 2013, when a train carrying crude oil derailed and exploded, killing 47 people.

I urge the administration to act swiftly to finalize rules that increase safety standards for the train cars. We need to ensure these cars have the strongest safety measures and that the old tank cars are taken off the track. Booming oil production in the Bakken region has caused an exponential increase in crude oil shipments in recent years. Last year, railroads carried almost 650,000 carloads of oil. In 2008 they carried just 9,500 carloads. Not only are the quantities greater, but some of this crude oil is believed to be more volatile. More traffic and more volatile crude means more disasters. Improving freight rail safety is more critical than ever before.

We feel this impact in Illinois, where we have the second most railroad track in the country. Approximately 25 percent of all U.S. rail traffic passes through densely populated Chicago.

We are lucky that the fiery train derailment in Galena was not closer to homes, businesses, and schools. Trains just like the one that crashed travel through cities and suburbs on a daily basis. If a wreck like this one happens closer to a developed area, we might see thousands of people evacuated—not to mention the potential for injuries or fatalities. It is not a risk we should be willing to take.

CONGRATULATING A.B. COMBS LEADERSHIP MAGNET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. BURR. Mr. President, I wish to congratulate A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School, in Raleigh, NC, for being recognized as the top magnet school in the country. On May 16, 2014, A.B. Combs was awarded the prestigious Dr. Ronald P. Simpson School of Merit Excellence Award, which recognizes one school for innovative programming, academic achievement, and promoting diversity. A.B. Combs Leadership Magnet Elementary School prides themselves on their leadership model program, which is based on Dr. Steven Covey's book ''The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.'' It seeks to educate the whole child, not just academically but socially, emotionally, and culturally.

A.B. Combs has set the standard for magnet schools. Annually, they host an international leadership day, where educators from around the world come to learn from their success. Magnet schools such as A.B. Combs provide parents with expanded options for their child's education—options that will ensure students aren't confined to schools that might not be serving their individual needs. For that reason, I am proud of the success A.B. Combs has achieved as recognized by this award. Congratulations to the staff, parents, students, and the community at A.B. Combs for this award. It is well deserved.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

MOYNIHAN REPORT

• Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks at the Hoover Institution.

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

MOYNIHAN REPORT

I first met Pat Moynihan four years after he released his explosive report on the circumstances of African-American families in the middle of the civil rights era. I was 28 years old then, and by a stroke of providence, had found myself sitting at a desk in the West Wing of the White House next to Bryce Harlow, President Nixon's first senior staff appointment. My job was answering Mr. Harlow's mail, returning his phone calls, and absorbing his wisdom. It was a perfect PhD in politics and government for a young man.

Downstairs were two real PhD's. At one end of the Hall, Gen. Alexander Haig performed the same sort of services for Henry Kissinger. At the other end was Professor Daniel Patrick Moynihan. By another stroke of Providence, President Nixon had attracted these Harvard professors to the West Wing where they joined one of the most talented and intellectually diverse teams of White House advisers of any first term President of the United States.

I have always thought, by the way, that if the president had paid more attention to his wiser, more broad gauged advisors in the White House—Harlow, Arthur Burns, Kissinger, Moynihan, and cabinet officials George Schultz and Mel Laird—instead of the advance men who guarded access to the Oval Office that there never would have been a Watergate affair.

The White House then was brimming with talent. Jim Keogh, the former editor of TIME, shepherded a quartet of young speechwriters: Bill Safire, Pat Buchanan, Lee Heubner, Ray Price. Liddy Hanford—now Elizabeth Dole—worked in the consumer affairs office.

And Pat himself brought with him from Harvard four of his brightest students: Checker Finn, later the nation's foremost education gadfly; the Rhodes Scholar John Price; Chris DeMuth, later head of American Enterprise Institute; and Dick Blumenthal, now my colleague in the United States Senate.

Steve Hess, Pat's Deputy in 1969, has detailed in his new book, ''The Professor and the President'', how fascinated Nixon was with Moynihan who ''advised the President on what books to read, to whom he should award the Presidential Medal of Freedom and how not to redecorate the Oval Office.'' Moynihan persuaded Nixon to recommend the Family Assistance Plan, a negative income tax that was the forerunner of today's Earned Income Tax Credit.

Looking back 50 years, that the author of such a controversial report could have been hired at all by a president of the United States and then that later this author could have been elected to the U.S. Senate three times from New York suggests the wiliness and courage of this professor with the cheerful soul of an Irish immigrant. Let's just say Pat followed the advice of his favorite character, Tammany Hall boss George Washington Plunkitt, ''I seen my opportunities, and I took 'em.''

Today, 50 years after it was written, the trend Moynihan was detailing—the rise of households led by single mothers—has grown more dramatic and cuts across all racial groups. Today more than four in 10 children in the U.S. are born outside of marriage.

In 2013, the average income for households with married couples was more than double that of households led by women with no spouse present.

Today's panelists will discuss the implications of the Moynihan Report released 50 years ago as well as the proper policy responses. In my remarks, I will be less ambitious. I will focus on what this trend means for the school—the most important secular institution designed to help children reach our country's goal for them—that every child, as much as possible, have the opportunity to begin at the same starting line.

And in case you want to step out for coffee at this point, I can jump straight to my conclusion: the school can't come close to doing it all. And neither can the government. If we want our children to be at the same starting line, there must be a revival of interest in these children and their parents from traditional sources: the religious institutions, families, and communities.

To begin with, what is a school supposed to do anyway? Professor James Coleman is often quoted as having said that the purpose of the school is to help parents do what parents don't do as well. So what have our schools traditionally done that parents did not do as well?

In 1988, I attended a conference in Rochester at which the president of Notre Dame asked, ''What is the rationale for a public school?''—schools which 90 percent of our children attend. Albert Shanker offered this answer: ''A public school is for the purpose of teaching immigrant children reading, writing and arithmetic and what it means to be an American with the hope they'll go home and teach their parents.''

But obviously in today's world, Shanker's vision of the school does not come close to doing all the things that many parents are not able to do for their children. In a Washington Post story earlier this year, Sonya Romero-Smith, a veteran teacher at Lew Wallace Elementary School in Albuquerque, said this: ''When they first come in my door in the morning, the first thing I do is an inventory of immediate needs: Did you eat? Are you clean? A big part of my job is making them feel safe.''

The article was reporting that, for the first time in at least 50 years, more than half of public school students are eligible for the federal program that provides free or reduced-price school lunches. That means that their family's income is less than 185 percent of the federal poverty line, or below about $44,000 for a family of four. Many of them, of course, are far poorer than that.

Romero-Smith said she helps her students clean up with bathroom wipes and toothbrushes, and stocks a drawer with clean socks, underwear, pants and shoes. The job of teacher has expanded to ''counselor, therapist, doctor, parent, attorney,'' she said.

If parents are unable to meet the needs of these children, should the school try to meet those needs? If the school does not, who does?

Part of understanding the answer to that question may come from a study last year that was not unlike the Moynihan report in that the news it delivered was uncomfortable but important. This study came from the Equality of Opportunity Project, made up of economists from Harvard and Berkeley, who looked at intergenerational mobility across areas of the U.S.—how likely a child from a low-income family is to make more money as an adult than their parents did.

The researchers determined that we are, in fact, a collection of societies—some of us live in '''lands of opportunity' with high rates of [upward] mobility across generations,'' and others in places where few children raised in low-income homes escape poverty.

The researchers looked at the anonymous tax records of millions of Americans born between 1980 and 1982, measuring their income in 2011–2012, when they were roughly 30 years old. They found five key variables that seemed to explain why some places had more upward mobility than others:

The first was segregation: Areas that are more residentially segregated by race and income have lower levels of upward mobility. The second was income inequality. The third was the quality of the K–12 school system, as measured by factors like test scores and dropout rates. The fourth was social capital—rates of civic and religious involvement.

The fifth was the strongest correlation—they found that the strongest predictor of upward mobility is family structure, such as the fraction of single parents in the area. ''Parents'' marital status does not matter purely through its effects at the individual level. Children of married parents also have higher rates of upward mobility if they live in communities with fewer single parents,'' the researchers write. Put another way, if our goal is to help every child begin at the same starting line, many children raised in single parent families have a harder time getting there.

The Equality of Opportunity Project also did a second study. This one found that economic mobility has not changed much over time and is lower in the U.S. than in most developed countries.

They write: ''For example, the probability that a child reaches the top fifth of the income distribution given parents in the bottom fifth of the income distribution is 8.4%

for children born in 1971, compared with 9.0% for those born in 1986.'' In other words, your chances of moving up the economic ladder depend a lot upon who your parents are, how much money they make—and whether or not they're married.

These are not easy conclusions to reach or easy discussions to have.

But the evidence of these long odds is strong enough that our 100,000 public schools—as well as our private schools—should do all they reasonably can to help today's American children—and their parents—to succeed.

School policies can help low-income, single-parent families get their children to the same starting line as children from better off families.

Here are 8 ideas:

1. More parental choice of schools: The most obvious and important step the federal government can take to improve the education of children is to give their parents a choice of schools.

First, we know that one of the best ways to lift a child out of poverty is to give them a good education.

Second, we know that many low-income parents are seeking these opportunities for their children and will work to get their children into better schools if they are able.

A single mom who is busy working two jobs may have a harder time getting to a parent-teacher conference, but we see in the D.C. voucher program and elsewhere that some of the fiercest advocates for school choice are single parents of children enrolled in the program.

Researchers at the American Enterprise Institute conducted a series of focus-group sessions and personal interviews with low-income urban families enrolled in the D.C. voucher program. They found that ''parents report that they want to be respected as advocates of their child's education and will fight hard to keep their child's private-school choice program if that program's future is threatened.''

A 2007 study published in Education Next found that ''parents in high-poverty schools strongly value a teacher's ability to raise student achievement and appear indifferent to student satisfaction.'' It was parents in schools serving better-off families who seemed to place less weight on academics when requesting a particular teacher for their child.

2. More charter schools: One promising way to provide more low-income parents with school choice is by creating more charter schools. In fact, one of the most exciting developments in American education in the past two decades has been the emergence of a growing number of charter schools that have demonstrated remarkable success educating disadvantaged children. The success of these schools is attributable to many factors, from close attention to student behavior and discipline to the flexibility their leaders have to put together an excellent teaching staff. But one thing that many of them have in common is that they have expanded the amount of time students spend in school, usually with longer school days.

Low-income parents, many of them single-parents, are rushing to enroll their children in these schools. I suspect that one reason is school schedules that make it easier for parents to make ends meet while knowing that their children are well cared for.

3. Different school schedules: It shouldn't be just charters that experiment with different schedules. School schedules that follow traditional work schedules—year-round, 7 am to 6 pm—would make it easier for parents to keep full-time jobs and still have the ability to be there with their child before and after school to make sure they've had breakfast in the morning, or make sure they've done their homework in the evening.

4. Flexible workplace schedules: I intend to try putting in statute authorization for employers to negotiate schedule and overtime with employees, so they know they have the full support of federal law in enabling employees to find arrangements that suit their needs. This would help working parents have the flexibility to attend parent-teacher conferences.

5. Work-site day care: Years ago in my private life, I helped start a company with Bob Keeshan of Captain Kangaroo, and my wife and a couple of others that later merged with Bright Horizons and became the largest work-site daycare provider in the country. We recognized that the number of mothers of young children working outside the home had created a need, and we helped corporations provide worksite daycare centers that were safe and good for those moms and dads as well.

6. Work-site schools: A few dozen large U.S. corporations have partnered with their local school districts to open public schools in their corporate facilities. It's a similar idea to work-site day care—it provides working parents with choice, as well as makes it easier for them to be involved with their children's care and education.

Federal policy ought to enable and at least not discourage states and local school districts and businesses from these kinds of arrangements. Policymakers can support states and school districts to take these steps to enable low-income families to get their children the education they deserve.

7. Better Teaching, Better schools: Over the long run, improving schools so that they serve students well regardless of their circumstances may have a direct effect on the challenges of single parenthood.

For example, the Harvard economist Raj Chetty has done studies showing that a good teacher improves earnings and, for girls, reduces teenage pregnancy. A study at Promise Academy in the Harlem Children's Zone found that girls attending that school, a high-performing charter school, were 12.1 percentage points less likely to have a child as a teenager.

Results like these show how great teachers and schools can put their students on track to college and, eventually, the kinds of jobs that enable them to move out of the cycle of poverty.

8. Wraparound services: Professor Coleman's suggestion was that if parents don't do it, schools should—in which case we should look at a whole range of services schools ought to be providing. This takes us far afield from the traditional role of the school described by Albert Shanker.

There are today many social programs that are not school-based—many funded by the federal government, other by the states—that are designed to support families that need help.

For example, welfare programs, child-care vouchers, Earned-Income Tax Credit, the housing allowance. The total amount spent by the federal government on these kinds of safety net programs was $398 billion in 2013, or about 12 percent of the total federal budget.

Some suggest that these services should be ''wrapped around'' the school—that the school should become the dominant institution through which children whose families are unable to provide basic supports receive them. I am not so sure. There is a limit to what the school can do and, for that matter, what the government can do.

If the challenges single parents face are so great, at the very least the government can make sure it ''does no harm'' and does nothing to discourage marriage. Yet there is strong evidence that that is precisely what the government does.

In testimony before the Senate Budget Committee last year, Robert Doar of American Enterprise Institute said that our ''policies aimed at assisting low- and moderate-income households with children often penalize marriage.

Doar said that ''A single parent with two children who earns $15,000 enjoys an [Earned Income Tax Credit] benefit of about $4100. The credit decreases by 21.06 cents for every dollar a married couple earns above $15040. . . . [I]f the single parent marries someone earning $10,000, for a combined income of $25,000, [the tax credit] benefit will drop to about $2,200. The couple faces a marriage tax penalty of . . . $1,900.''

He continued: ''Similar penalties are embedded in Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, housing assistance, and child care—all of which apply to low-and moderate-income Americans. Efforts to mitigate marriage penalties have largely taken the form of tax cuts directed toward married couples. But . . . 81 percent of that relief flowed to couples earning above $75,000.''

Doar suggests that a ''host of reforms could alleviate this burden'' including: ''implementing a maximum marginal tax rate for low-income families would tamp marriage-induced hikes in rates. Providing a subsidy on individual earnings—not combined earnings (like the EITC)—would enable a low-wage American to marry someone with a child, but do so without sacrificing significant income or transfer payments. And mandatory individual filing, as done in Canada, Australia, Italy and Japan, would either require or allow low-income individuals to avoid income tax penalties.''

Perhaps the wisest advice comes from AEI fellow W. Bradford Wilcox, who says this: ''Government's role when it comes to strengthening marriage and family life is necessarily limited. Any successful twenty-first century effort to renew the fortunes of marriage in America will depend more on civic institutions, businesses, and ordinary Americans than upon federal and state efforts to strengthen family life.''

What would Pat Moynihan say today?

Well, surely it would be creative, entertaining, insightful and probably controversial. And since those on today's panels are among those who knew him best and know this subject the best, we'll let them answer that question.●

TRIBUTE TO DR. KENNETH DOBBINS

● Mr. BLUNT. Mr. President, I wish to honor Dr. Kenneth W. Dobbins on the occasion of his retirement. Dr. Dobbins has served as the president of Southeast Missouri State University for more than 15 years. The people of Missouri are grateful for Dr. Dobbins' contributions and commitment to Southeast Missouri State University and the Redhawk community.

Dr. Dobbins became the seventeenth president of Southeast Missouri State University in 1999 after serving as the university's vice president of finance and administration and executive vice president. Prior to his time with Southeast Missouri State University, he held several positions in the higher education administration at Kent State University in Ohio.

Growing up in Ohio, he earned his bachelor of science degree in accounting from the University of Akron in

1971. He then served his country as a commissioned officer and civilian executive in the U.S. Air Force for almost 10 years and was named the 1978 Air Force Audit Agency Outstanding Civilian Auditor of the Year. In 1979, he received his master's degree in business administration from Old Dominion University and later his Ph.D. in higher education administration from Kent State University. His commitment to leadership was recognized in the form of the 2001 Distinguished Alumni Award from Old Dominion University and the 2011 Alumni Leadership Award for the College of Education, Health and Human Services Annual Hall of Fame Awards from Kent State University.

As president at Southeast Missouri State University, academic programs have flourished and expanded, including the establishment of the College of Science, Technology, and Agriculture and the Earl and Margie Holland School of Visual and Performing Arts. In addition, Dr. Dobbins increased access to higher education in the university's 25-county service region through the development of new regional campuses in Sikeston and Kennett to serve place-bound students in rural communities. More than $400 million in capital construction and building improvement projects have enhanced the university during Dr. Dobbins' presidency.

Dr. Dobbins' knowledge and leadership have been valued by his peers in higher education. He has served on the board of directors of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities and as chairman of the Finance Committee of the American Leadership Institute.

On behalf of the grateful constituents of Missouri, I congratulate Dr. Ken Dobbins on his well-deserved retirement. We congratulate him on his remarkable career and extend a huge thank-you for all the wonderful contributions he has made to our Bootheel communities and our State. I wish the very best to Dr. Dobbins and his wife Jeanine, along with his son and daughter-in-law, Paul and Stacey Dobbins, and his two grandsons, Lincoln Kenneth Dobbins and Brady Larson Dobbins.●

ARKANSAS GAME AND FISH COMMISSION CENTENNIAL

● Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to celebrate a century of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, AGFC. Enjoying our wildlife and outdoors is a way of life for residents of the Natural State, and the efforts of AGFC help preserve this time-honored tradition through management of our State's fish and wildlife populations.

In the early 1900s, maintaining healthy wildlife populations was desperately needed in the State. Elk, bison, and swan populations in Arkansas were extinct, and deer, duck, quail, and fish species were near extinction.

Following the leadership of President Teddy Roosevelt, Gov. George Washington Hays signed Act 124 creating the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission on March 11, 1915. One of the commission's first orders of business was improving hunting, fishing, and trapping regulations. Thanks to these efforts we have seen extinct animal populations flourish, while creating an excellent environment for fishing and hunting. This has allowed tourism to become a leading sector of Arkansas's economy. Our State now has a thriving elk population with a regulated hunting season. We have also seen growth in the deer population. More than 200,000 deer are harvested annually in Arkansas, up from just over 200 checked in the 1938 hunting season. Once known as the Bear State, black bear in Arkansas neared extinction with fewer than 50 believed to be in the State in the 1930s. Today there are more than 5,000 bears in the State, making it one of the most successful reintroductions of a large carnivore in history.

The AGFC laid the foundation for Arkansas to become the ''Duck Hunting Capitol of the World'' in 1948 with the establishment of Bayou Meto Wildlife Management Area. Today Bayou Meto WMA consists of 33,832 publicly owned acres, providing world class duck hunting that attracts hunters from all over the world.

The AGFC's five fish hatcheries help stock some of finest lakes, streams, and rivers in Arkansas that attract anglers from around the world. More than 12.5 million fish are harvested from these hatcheries annually.

While the mission is the same, the agency has experienced many changes in the last century. The first nine game wardens were paid $80 a month and had to provide their own horse. Today the agency operates an $88 million annual budget and employs thousands of Arkansans.

In the past 100 years, the AGFC has created policies that maintain the natural beauty and abundance of wildlife in the Natural State so Arkansans and visitors from across America and around the world can enjoy the great outdoors. From restoring habitat, managing wildlife and protecting the public, the men and women of the AGFC help preserve the Natural State's beauty and natural resources. But this mission comes at a cost: throughout its history AGFC has lost five brave officers in the last line of duty. I thank them and all the men and women of the AGFC for their service and commitment to making sure future generations can experience the natural resources and outdoor activities that we enjoy today.●

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

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

EC–905. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Review Group, Farm Service Agency, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Biomass Crop Assistance Program'' (RIN0560–AI27) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–906. A communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Acquisition, Technology and Logistics), transmitting, pursuant to law, the National Defense Stockpile (NDS) Annual Materials Plan (AMP) for fiscal year 2016 and the succeeding 4 years, fiscal years 2017–2020; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–907. A communication from the Director, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Transportation Statistics Annual Report 2013''; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–908. A communication from the Assistant Administrator for Procurement, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule revising the NASA Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (RIN2700–AE01 and RIN2700–AE09) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–909. A communication from the Chief of the Policy and Rules Division, Office of Engineering and Technology, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Amendment of Parts 0, 1, 2, and 15 of the Commission's Rules regarding Authorization of Radiofrequency Equipment; Amendment of Part 68 regarding Approval of Terminal Equipment; Amendment of Part 68 regarding Approval of Terminal Equipment by Telecommunications Certification Bodies'' ((ET Docket No. 13–44) (FCC 14–208)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–910. A communication from the Deputy Chief, Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, Federal Communications Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Wireless E911 Location Accuracy Requirements'' ((FCC 15–9) (PS Docket No. 07–114)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–911. A communication from the Secretary of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled ''Pumped Storage and Potential Hydropower from Conduits''; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC–912. A communication from the Chief of the Aquatic Invasive Species Branch, Fish

and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Injurious Wildlife Species; Listing Three Anaconda Species and One Python Species as Injurious Reptiles'' (RIN1018–AV68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–913. A communication from the Chief of the Recovery and State Grants Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removing the Oregon Chub From the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife'' (RIN1018–BA28) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–914. A communication from the Chief of the Recovery and State Grants Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Reinstatement of Final Rules for the Gray Wolf in Wyoming and the Western Great Lakes in Compliance With Court Orders'' (RIN1018–BA64) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–915. A communication from the Wildlife Biologist, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Migratory Bird Harvest in Alaska; Harvest Regulations for Migratory Birds in Alaska During the 2015 Season'' (RIN1018–BA48) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–916. A communication from the Chief of the Listing Branch, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Adding Five Species of Sawfish to the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife'' (RIN1018–BA68) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–917. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Final Safety Evaluation for Technical Report NEI 14–05, 'Guidelines for the Use of Accreditation in Lieu of Commercial Grade Surveys for Procurement of Laboratory Calibration and Test Services,' Revision 1'' received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 9, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–918. A communication from the Director of Congressional Affairs, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Interim Staff Guidance—Reviewing and Assessing the Financial Condition of Operating Power Reactor Licensees, Including Requests for Additional Information (OL/FR–ISG–2014–01)'' received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 9, 2015; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC–919. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to section 36(c) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 14–094); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–920. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, five (5) reports relative to vacancies in the Department of Justice, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–921. A communication from the General Counsel, Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Benefits Payable in Terminated Single-Employer Plans; Interest Assumptions for Paying Benefits'' (29 CFR Part 4022) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 10, 2015; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–922. A joint communication from the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness) and the Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the activities of the Extremity Trauma and Amputation Center of Excellence during fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–923. A communication from the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Veterans Affairs Vehicle Fleet Report on Alternative Fuel Vehicles for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–924. A communication from the Chief of the Regulations Policy and Management Office of the General Counsel, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Department of Veterans Affairs Acquisition Regulation: Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned and Veteran-Owned Small Business Status Protests'' (RIN2900–AN92) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 11, 2015; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

EC–925. A message from the President of the United States, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the Russian Federation on Mutual Fisheries Relations; to the Committees on Foreign Relations; and Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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. REED (for himself and Mr. MENENDEZ):

S. 702. A bill to strengthen the prohibitions on insider trading, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. COONS (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. REED, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 703. A bill to reauthorize the weatherization and State energy programs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

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

S. 704. A bill to establish a Community-Based Institutional Special Needs Plan demonstration program to target home and community-based care to eligible Medicare beneficiaries; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COCHRAN (for himself and Mr. CARDIN):

S. 705. A bill to amend section 213 of title 23, United States Code, relating to the Transportation Alternatives Program; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 706. A bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to require institutions of higher education to have an independent advocate for campus sexual assault prevention and response; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, and Mr. KAINE):

S. 707. A bill to provide certain protections from civil liability with respect to the emergency administration of opioid overdose drugs; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. KING (for himself, Mr. BLUNT, Mrs. SHAHEEN, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 708. A bill to establish an independent advisory committee to review certain regulations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. ROBERTS (for himself, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. HATCH, Mr. BURR, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. HELLER, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. FLAKE, and Mr. KING):

S. 709. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the amendments made by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act which disqualify expenses for over-the-counter drugs under health savings accounts and health flexible spending arrangements; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BARRASSO:

S. 710. A bill to reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Indian Affairs.

By Ms. AYOTTE (for herself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. REED, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. BENNET, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. COONS, Mr. HELLER, Ms. HEITKAMP, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 711. A bill to amend section 520J of the Public Service Health Act to authorize grants for mental health first aid training programs; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. HIRONO (for herself, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 712. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to exempt certain flights from increased aviation security service fees; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. BOXER (for herself, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. KIRK, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 713. A bill to prevent international violence against women, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. BOOZMAN):

S. 714. A bill to require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to jointly conduct a pilot program to assess the feasibility and advisability of expanding the use by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs of physician assistants specializing in psychiatric medicine, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 715. A bill to improve the provision of mental health care to members of the Armed Forces and veterans from the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. NELSON, Mr. HELLER, Mr. COONS, and Mr. CARPER):

S. 716. A bill to allow seniors to file their Federal income tax on a new Form 1040SR; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DONNELLY (for himself and Mrs. ERNST):

S. 717. A bill to designate certain non-Department mental health care providers who treat members of the Armed Forces and veterans as providers who have particular knowledge relating to the provision of mental health care to members of the Armed

Forces and veterans, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. WARNER (for himself and Mr. KAINE):

S. 718. A bill to modify the boundary of Petersburg National Battlefield in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 719. A bill to rename the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Great Falls, Montana, the Captain John E. Moran and Captain William Wylie Galt Armed Forces Reserve Center; to the Committee on Armed Services.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. BENNET, Ms. CANTWELL, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. COONS, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. HOEVEN, Mr. MANCHIN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. WICKER):

S. 720. A bill to promote energy savings in residential buildings and industry, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BENNET (for himself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 721. A bill to amend the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act to facilitate the establishment of additional or expanded public target ranges in certain States; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. COONS (for himself and Mr. WICKER):

S. 722. A bill to extend the date after which interest earned on obligations held in the wildlife restoration fund may be available for apportionment; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 53

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) 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. 178

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

S. 298

At the request of Mr. BENNET, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 298, a bill to amend titles XIX and XXI of the Social Security Act to provide States with the option of providing services to children with medically complex conditions under the Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program through a care coordination program focused on improving health outcomes for children with medically complex conditions and lowering costs, and for other purposes.

S. 301

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. COTTON) were added as cosponsors of S. 301, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 330

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) were added as cosponsors of S. 330, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the special rule for contributions of qualified conservation contributions, and for other purposes.

S. 335

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) and the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 335, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to improve 529 plans.

S. 358

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 358, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to ensure that women members of the Armed Forces and their families have access to the contraception they need in order to promote the health and readiness of all members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

S. 388

At the request of Mr. BOOKER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 388, a bill to amend the Animal Welfare Act to require humane treatment of animals by Federal Government facilities.

S. 409

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. TOOMEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 409, a bill to amend the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act to require the Secretary of Defense to inform the Attorney General of persons required to register as sex offenders.

S. 423

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 423, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

S. 474

At the request of Mr. TOOMEY, the name of the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. MCCONNELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 474, a bill to require State educational agencies that receive funding under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to have in effect policies and procedures on background checks for school employees.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 488, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 498

At the request of Mr. CORNYN, the name of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 498, a bill to allow reciprocity for the carrying of certain concealed firearms.

S. 505

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 505, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend the Health Coverage Tax Credit.

S. 524

At the request of Mr. WHITEHOUSE, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

S. 559

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 559, a bill to prohibit the Secretary of Education from engaging in regulatory overreach with regard to institutional eligibility under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and for other purposes.

S. 571

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the names of the Senator from Utah (Mr. HATCH) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) were added as cosponsors of S. 571, a bill to amend the Pilot's Bill of Rights to facilitate appeals and to apply to other certificates issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, to require the revision of the third class medical certification regulations issued by the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 650

At the request of Mr. BLUNT, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 650, a bill to extend the positive train control system implementation deadline, and for other purposes.

S. 665

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) were added as cosponsors of S. 665, a bill to encourage, enhance, and integrate Blue Alert plans throughout the United States in order to disseminate information when a law enforcement officer is seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, is missing in connection with the officer's official duties, or an imminent and credible threat that an individual intends to cause the serious injury or death of a law enforcement officer is received, and for other purposes.

S. 667

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the names of the Senator from Alabama (Mr. SESSIONS) and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) were added as cosponsors

of S. 667, a bill to ensure that organizations with religious or moral convictions are allowed to continue to provide services for children.

S. 674

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 674, a bill to expand programs with respect to women's health.

S. 683

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 683, a bill to extend the principle of federalism to State drug policy, provide access to medical marijuana, and enable research into the medicinal properties of marijuana.

S. 686

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Indiana (Mr. COATS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 686, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide a limitation on certain aliens from claiming the earned income tax credit.

S. 698

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 698, a bill to restore States' sovereign rights to enforce State and local sales and use tax laws, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 271

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 271 proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

AMENDMENT NO. 279

At the request of Mr. SULLIVAN, the name of the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 279 intended to be proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

AMENDMENT NO. 281

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 281 intended to be proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

AMENDMENT NO. 284

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 284 proposed to S. 178, a bill to provide justice for the victims of trafficking.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

S. 702. A bill to strengthen the prohibitions on insider trading, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I am joined by Senator MENENDEZ in introducing the Stop Illegal Insider Trading Act to finally define the offense of insider trading. The need for this legislation is long overdue because, in the absence of a statutory definition, an inconsistent and complicated body of common law has developed as the courts have used varying interpretations of anti-fraud statutes in order to decide insider trading cases.

For illustrative purposes, consider the following example. A financial analyst receives information from an insider at XYZ Corporation, which contains XYZ's earnings before this information is publicly released. This analyst then shares this inside information with his portfolio manager who subsequently trades in XYZ stock.

Based on this hypothetical, I suspect most Americans would be skeptical about someone who learned of a company's earnings before this information was publicly released and then subsequently traded on such information. Indeed, I believe most would agree that such a person was given an unfair advantage in our securities markets.

However, on December 10, 2014, the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in United States v. Newman decided that the portfolio managers in this case were not guilty of insider trading because as the New York Times summarized it, ''prosecutors had to show that both men knew that the original source of the inside information had breached a fiduciary duty and had received a personal benefit in return.''

This decision defies common sense. It should not matter whether someone, who traded on material information that was not publicly available, knew whether the source of such information breached a fiduciary duty and additionally received a personal benefit in return for sharing this inside information. Such a decision is one of many that has caused too many of our citizens to lose faith in government and our courts. Indeed, some prosecutors have noted that the Second Circuit's decision in Newman ''might make it difficult to file charges against a parent who passes on a confidential stock tip to one of his children without receiving anything in return.'' This is plainly not right and contributes to a larger sense of injustice.

The greater irony, however, is that those who deal with insider trading law the most agree that something must be done to restore reason.

For example, Duke Law School Professor James D. Cox noted that ''all studies of significant corporate events document that a significant portion of the market movement associated with corporate events occurs before the event is announced; for example, forty to fifty percent of the price gain associated with a merger or takeover occurs before the transaction's announcement . . . One can thus surmise not only that corporate insiders are not very good about keeping secrets, but that their tippees are delighted that they do not. That is, remote tippees are likely both pervasive and truly are insidious. Newman pours gas onto this raging fire.''

Most ironically, Judge Barrington Parker of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals who delivered the Newman opinion remarked during oral arguments, ''I'm concerned the government's position on key points of the law seems to vary based depending on which judge you're talking to.''

Moreover, University of North Carolina Law School Professor Thomas Lee Hazen recently stated, ''no matter how narrow or broad people believe the definition of insider trading should be, virtually everyone is now in agreement that we'd be a lot better off if Congress would simply bite the bullet and define it . . . the situation is a mess. That's how you end up with cases like Newman.''

This is precisely what Senator MENENDEZ and I are doing in introducing this legislation today. We are seeking to finally define the offense of insider trading with a clear and simple bright line rule. Simply put, if a person trades a security on the basis of material information that the person knows or has reason to know is not publicly available, then they have engaged in unlawful insider trading.

Under our legislation, it is irrelevant whether the trader knew of the source's fiduciary duty or whether the source derived any personal benefit. What matters is whether the trader knew or has reason to know that such trader had an unfair advantage in being given material information that was not shared with the broader public. In addition, we have taken care to ensure that those who take the time to independently develop their own information from publicly available sources can trade on this independently developed information so that publicly available information can be analyzed and interpreted without fear of liability. Lastly, because there may be situations that do not necessarily rise to the level of unlawful insider trading, we have provided the Securities and Exchange Commission with the flexibility to provide exemptions from insider trading liability as long as such exemptions are necessary or appropriate in the public interest and consistent with the protection of investors.

In short, by making it an offense for those who contribute to a securities market rigged in favor of the well connected, our legislation focuses on providing everyday investors with a fair shot at seeing some returns after investing their hard-earned savings. Incidents of insider trading, and the perceived pervasiveness of the practice, have for years served to validate the public's worst assumptions about Wall Street culture. It is time we clearly define what is appropriate under the law and take this meaningful step towards improving the integrity of our securities markets for professional traders and amateur investors alike.

I would like to thank Senator MENENDEZ for working with me on this legislation. I also thank Public Citizen, Americans for Financial Reform, and the Consumer Federation of America for their support, and I urge our colleagues to join us in supporting the Stop Illegal Insider Trading Act.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 285. Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 286. Mr. WICKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 287. Mr. WICKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 288. Mr. WICKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 289. Mr. ROBERTS (for himself and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 290. Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 291. Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 292. Mr. BARRASSO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 293. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 294. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 295. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 296. Ms. KLOBUCHAR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 297. Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 285. Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

TITLE ____—SCHOOL EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKS

SEC. ____01. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act''.

SEC. __02. BACKGROUND CHECKS.

(a) BACKGROUND CHECKS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, each State educational agency, or local educational agency in the case of a local educational agency designated under State law, that receives funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) shall have in effect policies and procedures that—

(1) require that a criminal background check be conducted for each school employee that includes—

(A) a search of the State criminal registry or repository of the State in which the school employee resides;

(B) a search of State-based child abuse and neglect registries and databases of the State in which the school employee resides;

(C) a Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint check using the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System; and

(D) a search of the National Sex Offender Registry established under section 119 of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (42 U.S.C. 16919);

(2) prohibit the employment of a school employee as a school employee if such employee—

(A) refuses to consent to a criminal background check under paragraph (1);

(B) makes a false statement in connection with such criminal background check;

(C) has been convicted of a felony consisting of—

(i) murder;

(ii) child abuse or neglect;

(iii) a crime against children, including child pornography;

(iv) spousal abuse;

(v) a crime involving rape or sexual assault;

(vi) kidnapping;

(vii) arson; or

(viii) physical assault, battery, or a drug-related offense, committed on or after the date that is 5 years before the date of such employee's criminal background check under paragraph (1); or

(D) has been convicted of any other crime that is a violent or sexual crime against a minor;

(3) require that each criminal background check conducted under paragraph (1) be periodically repeated or updated in accordance with State law or the policies of local educational agencies served by the State educational agency;

(4) upon request, provide each school employee who has had a criminal background check under paragraph (1) with a copy of the results of the criminal background check;

(5) provide for a timely process, by which a school employee may appeal, but which does not permit the employee to be employed as a school employee during such appeal, the results of a criminal background check conducted under paragraph (1) which prohibit the employee from being employed as a school employee under paragraph (2) to—

(A) challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information produced by such criminal background check; and

(B) establish or reestablish eligibility to be hired or reinstated as a school employee by demonstrating that the information is materially inaccurate or incomplete, and has been corrected;

(6) ensure that such policies and procedures are published on the website of the State educational agency and the website of each local educational agency served by the State educational agency; and

(7) allow a local educational agency to share the results of a school employee's criminal background check recently conducted under paragraph (1) with another local educational agency that is considering such school employee for employment as a school employee.

(b) TRANSFER PROHIBITION.—A State educational agency, or local educational agency in the case of a local educational agency designated under State law, that receives funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) shall be subject to a State or local law (including regulations), or have a regulation or policy, that prohibits the transfer, or facilitation of the transfer, of any school employee if the agency knows, or has substantive reason to believe, that such employee engaged in sexual misconduct with an elementary school or secondary school student.

(c) FEES FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS.—

(1) CHARGING OF FEES.—The Attorney General, attorney general of a State, or other State law enforcement official may charge reasonable fees for conducting a criminal background check under subsection (a)(1), but such fees shall not exceed the actual costs for the processing and administration of the criminal background check.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS.—A local educational agency or State educational agency may use administrative funds received under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) to pay any reasonable fees charged for conducting such criminal background check.

(3) FEDERAL FUNDS TO SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT, NON-FEDERAL FUNDS.—A State educational agency or local educational agency using Federal funds in accordance with paragraph (2) shall use such Federal funds only to supplement the funds that would, in the absence of such Federal funds, be made available from non-Federal sources for the purposes of this title, and not to supplant such funds.

(d) PROHIBITION.—Nothing in this title, or any other Federal law, regulation, policy, or directive, shall authorize the Secretary, or any other employee of the Federal Government, to regulate, provide guidance, or otherwise direct the State or local policies or procedures required under this title.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this title:

(1) IN GENERAL.—The terms ''elementary school'', ''secondary school'', ''local educational agency'', ''State'', and ''State educational agency'' have the meanings given the terms in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(2) SCHOOL EMPLOYEE.—The term ''school employee'' means—

(A) a person who—

(i) is an employee of, or is seeking employment with, a local educational agency, or State educational agency, that receives Federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.); and

(ii) as a result of such employment, has (or will have) a job duty that results in unsupervised access to public elementary school or public secondary school students; or

(B)(i) any person, or an employee of any person, who has a contract or agreement to provide services with a public elementary school, public secondary school, local educational agency, or State educational agency, that receives Federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.); and

(ii) such person or employee, as a result of such contract or agreement, has a job duty that results in unsupervised access to public elementary school or public secondary school students.

SA 286. Mr. WICKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice

for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title II, add the following:

SEC. 212. EXPANDED DEFINITION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT.

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 3(2) (42 U.S.C. 5101 note), by inserting ''(including commercial sexual exploitation)'' after ''exploitation''; and

(2) in section 111(4)(A) (42 U.S.C. 5106g(4)(A)), by inserting ''for commercial purposes or'' before ''for the purpose of''.

SA 287. Mr. WICKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 118. EDUCATION AND OUTREACH TO TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS.

The Attorney General shall make available, on the website of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, a database for trafficking victim advocates, crisis hotline personnel, foster parents, law enforcement personnel, and crime survivors that contains information on—

(1) counseling and hotline resources;

(2) housing resources;

(3) legal assistance; and

(4) other services for trafficking survivors.

SA 288. Mr. WICKER submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 118. EXPANDED STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR CIVIL ACTIONS BY CHILD TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS.

Section 1595(c) of title 18, United States Code, is amended by striking ''not later than 10 years after the cause of action arose.'' and inserting ''not later than the later of—

''(1) 10 years after the cause of action arose; or

''(2) 10 years after the victim reaches 18 years of age, if the victim was a minor at the time of the alleged offense.''.

SA 289. Mr. ROBERTS (for himself and Mr. MORAN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. REQUIRED EMERGENCY DISCLOSURE OF CALL LOCATION INFORMATION.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Kelsey Smith Act''.

(b) IN GENERAL.—Title II of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 201 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 222 the following:

''SEC. 222A. REQUIRED EMERGENCY DISCLOSURE OF CALL LOCATION INFORMATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 222, at the request of a law enforcement agency, a telecommunications carrier shall provide call location information concerning the user of a commercial mobile service (as such term is defined in section 332(d)) or the telecommunications device of the user of an IP-enabled voice service (as such term is defined in section 7 of the Wireless Communications and Public Safety Act of 1999 (47 U.S.C. 615b)) to a law enforcement official, in order to respond to the user's call for emergency services or to respond to an emergency situation that involves the risk of death or serious physical harm if the telecommunications carrier believes that an emergency involving danger of death or serious physical injury to any person or response to a user's call for emergency services requires disclosure without delay of location records relating to the emergency or user request.

''(b) FORM OF REQUEST.—A request for call location information under subsection (a) shall be accompanied by a sworn written statement from the law enforcement agency stating facts that support such agency's probable cause to believe that disclosure without delay is required—

''(1) by an emergency involving risk of death or serious physical injury; or

''(2) in order to respond to the user's call for emergency services.

''(c) HOLD HARMLESS.—No cause of action shall lie in any court nor shall any civil or administrative proceeding be commenced by a governmental entity against any telecommunications carrier, or its directors, officers, employees, agents, or vendors, for providing in good faith call location information or other information, facilities, or assistance in accordance with subsection (a) and any regulations promulgated under this section.

''(d) COURT ORDER.—Not later than 48 hours after a law enforcement agency makes a request for call location information under subsection (a), the law enforcement agency shall request a court order stating whether such agency had probable cause to believe that the conditions described in subsection (b)(1) or subsection (b)(2) existed at the time of the request under subsection (a).

''(e) DEFINITION.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'emergency services' has the meaning given such term in section 222; and

''(2) the term 'law enforcement agency' means an agency of the United States, a State, or a political subdivision of a State, authorized by law or by a government agency to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.''.

SA 290. Mr. LEAHY (for himself, Ms. COLLINS, Ms. MURKOWSKI, Ms. BALDWIN, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BENNET, Mr. MURPHY, and Mr. MERKLEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. RUNAWAY AND HOMELESS YOUTH AND TRAFFICKING PREVENTION.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Runaway and Homeless Youth and Trafficking Prevention Act''.

(b) REFERENCES.—Except as otherwise specifically provided, whenever in this section an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a provision, the amendment or repeal shall be considered to be made to a provision of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.).

(c) FINDINGS.—Section 302 (42 U.S.C. 5701) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and'' before ''linguistically appropriate'';

(2) in paragraph (4), by striking ''outside the welfare system and the law enforcement system'' and inserting '', in collaboration with public assistance systems, the law enforcement system, and the child welfare system'';

(3) in paragraph (5)—

(A) by inserting ''a safe place to live and'' after ''youth need''; and

(B) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(4) in paragraph (6), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(5) by adding at the end the following:

''(7) runaway and homeless youth are at a high risk of becoming victims of sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons.''.

(d) BASIC CENTER GRANT PROGRAM.—

(1) GRANTS FOR CENTERS AND SERVICES.—Section 311(a) (42 U.S.C. 5711(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''services'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''safe shelter and services, including trauma-informed services, for runaway and homeless youth and, if appropriate, services for the families of such youth, including (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family.''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''mental health,'';

(ii) in subparagraph (B)—

(I) in clause (i), by striking ''21 days; and'' and inserting ''30 days;'';

(II) in clause (ii)—

(aa) by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' before ''individual'';

(bb) by inserting '', as appropriate,'' after ''group''; and

(cc) by striking ''as appropriate'' and inserting ''including (if appropriate) counseling for individuals identified by such youth as family''; and

(III) by adding at the end the following:

''(iii) suicide prevention services; and''; and

(iii) in subparagraph (C)—

(I) in clause (ii), by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' before ''home-based services'';

(II) in clause (iii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(III) in clause (iv), by striking ''diseases.'' and inserting ''infections;''; and

(IV) by adding at the end the following:

''(v) trauma-informed and gender-responsive services for runaway or homeless youth, including such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation; and

''(vi) an assessment of family engagement in support and reunification (if reunification is appropriate), interventions, and services for parents or legal guardians of such youth, or (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family.''.

(2) ELIGIBILITY; PLAN REQUIREMENTS.—Section 312 (42 U.S.C. 5712) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (5), by inserting '', or (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family,'' after ''parents or legal guardians'';

(ii) in paragraph (6), by striking ''cultural minority and persons with limited ability to speak English'' and inserting ''cultural minority, persons with limited ability to speak English, and runaway or homeless youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation'';

(iii) by striking paragraph (7) and inserting the following:

''(7) shall keep adequate statistical records profiling the youth and family members of such youth whom the applicant serves, including demographic information on and the number of—

''(A) such youth who are not referred to out-of-home shelter services;

''(B) such youth who are members of vulnerable or underserved populations;

''(C) such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation, disaggregated by—

''(i) such youth who have been coerced or forced into a commercial sex act, as defined in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102);

''(ii) such youth who have been coerced or forced into other forms of labor; and

''(iii) such youth who have engaged in a commercial sex act, as so defined, for any reason other than by coercion or force;

''(D) such youth who are pregnant or parenting;

''(E) such youth who have been involved in the child welfare system; and

''(F) such youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system;'';

(iv) by redesignating paragraphs (8) through (13) as paragraphs (9) through (14);

(v) by inserting after paragraph (7) the following:

''(8) shall ensure that—

''(A) the records described in paragraph (7), on an individual runaway or homeless youth, shall not be disclosed without the consent of the individual youth and of the parent or legal guardian of such youth or (if appropriate) an individual identified by such youth as family, to anyone other than another agency compiling statistical records or a government agency involved in the disposition of criminal charges against an individual runaway or homeless youth; and

''(B) reports or other documents based on the statistics described in paragraph (7) shall not disclose the identity of any individual runaway or homeless youth;'';

(vi) in paragraph (9), as so redesignated, by striking ''statistical summaries'' and inserting ''statistics'';

(vii) in paragraph (13)(C), as so redesignated—

(I) by striking clause (i) and inserting:

''(i) the number and characteristics of runaway and homeless youth, and youth at risk of family separation, who participate in the project, including such information on—

''(I) such youth (including both types of such participating youth) who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation, disaggregated by—

''(aa) such youth who have been coerced or forced into a commercial sex act, as defined in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102);

''(bb) such youth who have been coerced or forced into other forms of labor; and

''(cc) such youth who have engaged in a commercial sex act, as so defined, for any reason other than by coercion or force;

''(II) such youth who are pregnant or parenting;

''(III) such youth who have been involved in the child welfare system; and

''(IV) such youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system; and''; and

(II) in clause (ii), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(viii) in paragraph (14), as so redesignated, by striking the period and inserting ''for natural disasters, inclement weather, and mental health emergencies;''; and

(ix) by adding at the end the following:

''(15) shall provide age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the extent practicable to runaway and homeless youth; and

''(16) shall assist youth in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1090).''; and

(B) in subsection (d)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' after ''provide'';

(II) by striking ''families (including unrelated individuals in the family households) of such youth'' and inserting ''families of such youth (including unrelated individuals in the family households of such youth and, if appropriate, individuals identified by such youth as family)''; and

(III) by inserting ''suicide prevention,'' after ''physical health care,''; and

(ii) in paragraph (4), by inserting '', including training on trauma-informed and youth-centered care'' after ''home-based services''.

(3) APPROVAL OF APPLICATIONS.—Section 313(b) (42 U.S.C. 5713(b)) is amended—

(A) by striking ''priority to'' and all that follows through ''who'' and inserting ''priority to eligible applicants who'';

(B) by striking ''; and'' and inserting a period; and

(C) by striking paragraph (2).

(e) TRANSITIONAL LIVING GRANT PROGRAM.—Section 322(a) (42 U.S.C. 5714–2(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)—

(A) by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' before ''information and counseling services''; and

(B) by striking ''job attainment skills, and mental and physical health care'' and inserting ''job attainment skills, mental and physical health care, and suicide prevention services'';

(2) by redesignating paragraphs (3) through (8) and (9) through (16) as paragraphs (5) through (10) and (12) through (19), respectively;

(3) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) to provide counseling to homeless youth and to encourage, if appropriate, the involvement in such counseling of their parents or legal guardians, or (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family;

''(4) to provide aftercare services, if possible, to homeless youth who have received shelter and services from a transitional living youth project, including (to the extent practicable) such youth who, after receiving such shelter and services, relocate to a State other than the State in which such project is located;'';

(4) in paragraph (9), as so redesignated—

(A) by inserting ''age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate to the extent practicable'' after ''referral of homeless youth to'';

(B) by striking ''and health care programs'' and inserting ''mental health service and health care programs, including programs providing wrap-around services to victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation,''; and

(C) by striking ''such services for youths;'' and inserting ''such programs described in this paragraph;'';

(5) by inserting after paragraph (10), as so redesignated, the following:

''(11) to develop a plan to provide age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the extent practicable that address the needs of homeless and street youth;'';

(6) in paragraph (12), as so redesignated, by striking ''the applicant and statistical'' through ''who participate in such project,'' and inserting ''the applicant, statistical summaries describing the number, the characteristics, and the demographic information of the homeless youth who participate in such project, including the prevalence of trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation of such youth,''; and

(7) in paragraph (19), as so redesignated, by inserting ''regarding responses to natural disasters, inclement weather, and mental health emergencies'' after ''management plan''.

(f) COORDINATING, TRAINING, RESEARCH, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.—

(1) COORDINATION.—Section 341 (42 U.S.C. 5714–21) is amended—

(A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting ''safety, well-being,'' after ''health,''; and

(B) in paragraph (2), by striking ''other Federal entities'' and inserting ''the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Justice''.

(2) GRANTS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING.—Section 342 (42 U.S.C. 5714–22) is amended by inserting '', including onsite and web-based techniques, such as on-demand and online learning,'' before ''to public and private entities''.

(3) GRANTS FOR RESEARCH, EVALUATION, DEMONSTRATION, AND SERVICE PROJECTS.—Section 343 (42 U.S.C. 5714–23) is amended—

(A) in subsection (b)—

(i) in paragraph (5)—

(I) in subparagraph (A), by inserting ''violence, trauma, and'' before ''sexual abuse and assault'';

(II) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''sexual abuse and assault; and'' and inserting ''sexual abuse or assault, trafficking in persons, or sexual exploitation;'';

(III) in subparagraph (C), by striking ''who have been sexually victimized'' and inserting ''who are victims of sexual abuse or assault, trafficking in persons, or sexual exploitation''; and

(IV) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) best practices for identifying and providing age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the extent practicable to—

''(i) vulnerable and underserved youth populations; and

''(ii) youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation; and

''(E) verifying youth as runaway or homeless to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid described in section 483 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1090);'';

(ii) in paragraph (9), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iii) in paragraph (10), by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(iv) by adding at the end the following:

''(11) examining the intersection between the runaway and homeless youth populations and trafficking in persons, including noting whether such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons were previously involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems.''; and

(B) in subsection (c)(2)(B), by inserting '', including such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation'' after ''runaway or homeless youth''.

(4) PERIODIC ESTIMATE OF INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE OF YOUTH HOMELESSNESS.—Section 345 (42 U.S.C. 5714–25) is amended—

(A) in subsection (a)—

(i) in paragraph (1)—

(I) by striking ''13'' and inserting ''12''; and

(II) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in paragraph (2), by striking the period and inserting a semicolon; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(3) that includes demographic information about and characteristics of runaway or homeless youth, including such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation; and

''(4) that does not disclose the identity of any runaway or homeless youth.''; and

(B) in subsection (b)(1)—

(i) in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by striking ''13'' and inserting ''12'';

(ii) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iii) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as subparagraph (C);

(iv) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) incidences, if any, of—

''(i) such individuals who are victims of trafficking in persons; or

''(ii) such individuals who are victims of sexual exploitation; and''; and

(v) in subparagraph (C), as so redesignated—

(I) in clause (ii), by striking ''; and'' and inserting '', including mental health services;''; and

(II) by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) access to education and job training; and''.

(g) SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION PROGRAM.—Section 351 (42 U.S.C. 5714–41) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by inserting ''public and'' before ''nonprofit''; and

(B) by striking ''prostitution, or sexual exploitation.'' and inserting ''violence, trafficking in persons, or sexual exploitation.''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(c) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.—To be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a), an applicant shall certify to the Secretary that such applicant has systems in place to ensure that such applicant can provide age, gender, and culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the extent practicable to all youth described in subsection (a).''.

(h) GENERAL PROVISIONS.—

(1) REPORTS.—Section 382(a) (42 U.S.C. 5715(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1)—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (D) as subparagraphs (C) through (E), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) collecting data on trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation of runaway and homeless youth;''; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking subparagraph (A) and inserting the following:

''(A) the number and characteristics of homeless youth served by such projects, including—

''(i) such youth who are victims of trafficking in persons or sexual exploitation;

''(ii) such youth who are pregnant or parenting;

''(iii) such youth who have been involved in the child welfare system; and

''(iv) such youth who have been involved in the juvenile justice system;''; and

(ii) in subparagraph (F), by striking ''intrafamily problems'' and inserting ''problems within the family, including (if appropriate) individuals identified by such youth as family,''.

(2) NONDISCRIMINATION.—Part F is amended by inserting after section 386A (42 U.S.C. 5732–1) the following:

''SEC. 386B. NONDISCRIMINATION.

''(a) IN GENERAL.—No person in the United States shall, on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, gender identity (as defined in section 249(c)(4) of title 18, United States Code), sexual orientation, or disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity funded in whole or in part with funds made available under this title, or any other program or activity funded in whole or in part with amounts appropriated for grants, cooperative agreements, or other assistance administered under this title.

''(b) EXCEPTION.—If sex segregation or sex-specific programming is necessary to the essential operation of a program, nothing in this section shall prevent any such program or activity from consideration of an individual's sex. In such circumstances, grantees may meet the requirements of this section by providing comparable services to individuals who cannot be provided with the sex-segregated or sex-specific programming.

''(c) DISQUALIFICATION.—The authority of the Secretary to enforce this section shall be the same as that provided for with respect to section 654 of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9849).

''(d) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed, interpreted, or applied to supplant, displace, preempt, or otherwise limit the responsibilities and liabilities under other Federal or State civil rights laws.''.

(3) DEFINITIONS.—Section 387 (42 U.S.C. 5732a) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (6), and paragraphs (7) and (8), as paragraphs (2) through (7), and paragraphs (9) and (10), respectively;

(B) by inserting before paragraph (2), as so redesignated, the following:

''(1) CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE.—The term 'culturally and linguistically appropriate', with respect to services, has the meaning given the term 'culturally and linguistically appropriate services' in the 'National Standards for Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services in Health and Health Care', issued in April 2013, by the Office of Minority Health of the Department of Health and Human Services.'';

(C) in paragraph (6)(B)(v), as so redesignated—

(i) by redesignating subclauses (II) through (IV) as subclauses (III) through (V), respectively;

(ii) by inserting after subclause (I), the following:

''(II) trafficking in persons;'';

(iii) in subclause (IV), as so redesignated—

(I) by striking ''diseases'' and inserting ''infections''; and

(II) by striking ''and'' at the end;

(iv) in subclause (V), as so redesignated, by striking the period and inserting ''; and''; and

(v) by adding at the end the following:

''(VI) suicide.'';

(D) in paragraph (7)(B), as so redesignated, by striking ''prostitution,'' and inserting ''trafficking in persons,'';

(E) by inserting after paragraph (7), as so redesignated, the following:

''(8) TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.—The term 'trafficking in persons' has the meaning given the term 'severe forms of trafficking in persons' in section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).'';

(F) in paragraph (9), as so redesignated—

(i) by inserting ''to homeless youth'' after ''provides''; and

(ii) by inserting '', to establish a stable family or community supports,'' after ''self-sufficient living''; and

(G) in paragraph (10)(B), as so redesignated—

(i) in clause (ii)—

(I) by inserting ''or able'' after ''willing''; and

(II) by striking ''or'' at the end;

(ii) in clause (iii), by striking the period and inserting ''; or''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) who is involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice system, but who is not receiving government-funded housing.''.

(4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 388(a) (42 U.S.C. 5751(a)) is amended—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking ''for fiscal year 2009,'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.'';

(B) in paragraph (3)(B), by striking ''such sums as may be necessary for fiscal years 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013.'' and inserting ''$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.''; and

(C) in paragraph (4), by striking ''for fiscal year 2009'' and all that follows through the period and inserting ''for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.''.

SEC. ____. RESPONSE TO MISSING CHILDREN AND VICTIMS OF CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING.

(a) MISSING CHILDREN'S ASSISTANCE ACT.—Section 404(b)(1)(P)(iii) of the Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5773(b)(1)(P)(iii)) is amended by striking ''child prostitution'' and inserting ''child sex trafficking''.

(b) CRIME CONTROL ACT OF 1990.—Section 3702 of the Crime Control Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 5780) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) and (C) as subparagraphs (C) and (D), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) a recent photograph of the child, if available;''; and

(3) in paragraph (4)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by striking ''60 days'' and inserting ''30 days'';

(B) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (C)—

(i) by inserting ''State and local child welfare systems and'' before ''the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children''; and

(ii) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

''(D) grant permission to the National Crime Information Center Terminal Contractor for the State to update the missing person record in the National Crime Information Center computer networks with additional information learned during the investigation relating to the missing person.''.

SA 291. Mr. TOOMEY (for himself and Mr. MANCHIN) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

TITLE ____—SCHOOL EMPLOYEE BACKGROUND CHECKS

SEC. ____01. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Protecting Students from Sexual and Violent Predators Act''.

SEC. __02. BACKGROUND CHECKS.

(a) BACKGROUND CHECKS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, each State educational agency, or local educational agency in the case of a local educational agency designated under State law, that receives funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) shall have in effect policies and procedures that—

(1) require that a criminal background check be conducted for each school employee that includes—

(A) a search of the State criminal registry or repository of the State in which the school employee resides;

(B) a search of State-based child abuse and neglect registries and databases of the State in which the school employee resides;

(C) a Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint check using the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System; and

(D) a search of the National Sex Offender Registry established under section 119 of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (42 U.S.C. 16919);

(2) prohibit the employment of a school employee as a school employee if such employee—

(A) refuses to consent to a criminal background check under paragraph (1);

(B) makes a false statement in connection with such criminal background check;

(C) has been convicted of a felony consisting of—

(i) murder;

(ii) child abuse or neglect;

(iii) a crime against children, including child pornography;

(iv) spousal abuse;

(v) a crime involving rape or sexual assault;

(vi) kidnapping;

(vii) arson; or

(viii) physical assault, battery, or a drug-related offense, committed on or after the date that is 5 years before the date of such employee's criminal background check under paragraph (1); or

(D) has been convicted of any other crime that is a violent or sexual crime against a minor;

(3) require that each criminal background check conducted under paragraph (1) be periodically repeated or updated in accordance with State law or the policies of local educational agencies served by the State educational agency;

(4) upon request, provide each school employee who has had a criminal background check under paragraph (1) with a copy of the results of the criminal background check;

(5) provide for a timely process, by which a school employee may appeal, but which does not permit the employee to be employed as a school employee during such appeal, the results of a criminal background check conducted under paragraph (1) which prohibit the employee from being employed as a school employee under paragraph (2) to—

(A) challenge the accuracy or completeness of the information produced by such criminal background check; and

(B) establish or reestablish eligibility to be hired or reinstated as a school employee by demonstrating that the information is materially inaccurate or incomplete, and has been corrected;

(6) ensure that such policies and procedures are published on the website of the State educational agency and the website of each local educational agency served by the State educational agency; and

(7) allow a local educational agency to share the results of a school employee's criminal background check recently conducted under paragraph (1) with another local educational agency that is considering such school employee for employment as a school employee.

(b) TRANSFER PROHIBITION.—A State educational agency, or local educational agency in the case of a local educational agency designated under State law, that receives funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) shall be subject to a State or local law (including regulations), or have a regulation or policy, that prohibits the transfer, or facilitation of the transfer, of any school employee if the agency knows, or has substantive reason to believe, that such employee engaged in sexual misconduct with an elementary school or secondary school student.

(c) FEES FOR BACKGROUND CHECKS.—

(1) CHARGING OF FEES.—The Attorney General, attorney general of a State, or other State law enforcement official may charge reasonable fees for conducting a criminal background check under subsection (a)(1), but such fees shall not exceed the actual costs for the processing and administration of the criminal background check.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE FUNDS.—A local educational agency or State educational agency may use administrative funds received under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) to pay any reasonable fees charged for conducting such criminal background check.

(3) FEDERAL FUNDS TO SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT, NON-FEDERAL FUNDS.—A State educational agency or local educational agency using Federal funds in accordance with paragraph (2) shall use such Federal funds only to supplement the funds that would, in the absence of such Federal funds, be made available from non-Federal sources for the purposes of this title, and not to supplant such funds.

(d) PROHIBITION.—Nothing in this title, or any other Federal law, regulation, policy, or directive, shall authorize the Secretary, or any other employee of the Federal Government, to regulate, provide guidance, or otherwise direct the State or local policies or procedures required under this title.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this title:

(1) IN GENERAL.—The terms ''elementary school'', ''secondary school'', ''local educational agency'', ''State'', and ''State educational agency'' have the meanings given the terms in section 9101 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

(2) SCHOOL EMPLOYEE.—The term ''school employee'' means—

(A) a person who—

(i) is an employee of, or is seeking employment with, a local educational agency, or State educational agency, that receives Federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.); and

(ii) as a result of such employment, has (or will have) a job duty that results in unsupervised access to public elementary school or public secondary school students; or

(B)(i) any person, or an employee of any person, who has a contract or agreement to provide services with a public elementary school, public secondary school, local educational agency, or State educational agency, that receives Federal funds under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.); and

(ii) such person or employee, as a result of such contract or agreement, has a job duty that results in unsupervised access to public elementary school or public secondary school students.

SA 292. Mr. BARRASSO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 63, line 15, insert ''or a tribal organization (as defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b))'' after ''government''.

On page 76, line 9, insert '', tribal,'' after ''State''.

On page 81, between lines 8 and 9, insert the following:

(7) TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER.—The term ''tribal law enforcement officer'' means any officer, agent, or employee of an Indian tribe (as that term is defined in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b)) authorized by law or by the Indian tribe to engage in or supervise the prevention, detection, investigation, or prosecution of any violation of criminal law.

On page 81, line 17, insert ''tribal,'' after ''State,''.

On page 89, line 8, insert '', tribal,'' after ''State''.

SA 293. Ms. HIRONO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of title I, add the following:

SEC. 118. PROTECTING CHILD TRAFFICKING VICTIMS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the ''Child Trafficking Victims Protection Act''.

(b) DEFINED TERM.—In this section, the term ''unaccompanied alien children'' has the meaning given such term in section 462 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 279).

(c) MANDATORY TRAINING.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and independent child welfare experts, shall mandate live training of all personnel who come into contact with unaccompanied alien children in all relevant legal authorities, policies, practices, and procedures pertaining to this vulnerable population.

(d) CARE AND TRANSPORTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure that all unaccompanied children who will undergo any immigration proceedings before the Department of Homeland Security or the Executive Office for Immigration Review are duly transported and placed in the care and legal and physical custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement not later than 72 hours after their apprehension absent narrowly defined exceptional circumstances, including a natural disaster or comparable emergency beyond the control of the Secretary of Homeland Security or the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

(2) PRESENCE OF FEMALE OFFICERS.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure that female officers are continuously present during the transfer and transport of female detainees who are in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security.

(e) QUALIFIED RESOURCES.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall provide adequately trained and qualified staff resources at each major port of entry (as defined by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection station assigned to that port having in its custody during the past 2 fiscal years an yearly average of 50 or more unaccompanied alien children), including the accommodation of child welfare professionals in accordance with subsection (f).

(f) CHILD WELFARE PROFESSIONALS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families shall ensure that qualified child welfare professionals with expertise in culturally competent, trauma-centered, and developmentally appropriate interviewing skills are available at each major port of entry described in subsection (e).

(2) DUTIES.—Child welfare professionals described in paragraph (1) shall—

(A) in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Assistant Secretary for the Administration for Children and Families, develop guidelines for treatment of unaccompanied alien children in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security;

(B) conduct screening, on behalf of the Department of Homeland Security, of all unaccompanied alien children in accordance with section 235(a)(4) of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1232(a)(4));

(C) notify the Department of Homeland Security and the Office of Refugee Resettlement of children that meet the notification and transfer requirements set forth in subsections (a) and (b) of section 235 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1232); and

(D) interview adult relatives accompanying unaccompanied alien children; and

(E) provide an initial family relationship and trafficking assessment and recommendations regarding unaccompanied alien children's initial placements to the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which shall be conducted in accordance with the time frame set forth in subsections (a)(4) and (b)(3) of section 235 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1232); and

(F) ensure that each unaccompanied alien child in the custody of U.S. Customs and Border Protection—

(i) receives emergency medical care when necessary;

(ii) receives emergency medical and mental health care that complies with the standards adopted pursuant to section 8(c) of the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 (42 U.S.C. 15607(c)) whenever necessary, including in cases in which a child is at risk to harm himself, herself, or others;

(iii) is provided with climate appropriate clothing, shoes, basic personal hygiene and sanitary products, a pillow, linens, and sufficient blankets to rest at a comfortable temperature;

(iv) receives adequate nutrition;

(v) enjoys a safe and sanitary living environment;

(vi) has access to daily recreational programs and activities if held for a period longer than 12 hours;

(vii) has access to legal services and consular officials; and

(viii) is permitted to make supervised phone calls to family members.

(3) FINAL DETERMINATIONS.—The Office of Refugee Resettlement, in consultation with the Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons, in accordance with applicable policies and procedures for sponsors, shall submit final determinations on family relationships to the Secretary of Homeland Security, who shall consider such adult relatives for community-based support alternatives to detention.

(4) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Senior Advisor on Trafficking in Persons shall submit a report to Congress that—

(A) describes the screening procedures used by the child welfare professionals to screen unaccompanied alien children;

(B) assesses the effectiveness of such screenings; and

(C) includes data on all unaccompanied alien children who were screened by child welfare professionals;

(g) IMMEDIATE NOTIFICATION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall immediately notify the Office of Refugee Resettlement of an unaccompanied alien child in the custody of the Department of Homeland Security to effectively and efficiently coordinate the child's transfer to and placement with the Office of Refugee Resettlement.

(h) NOTICE OF RIGHTS AND RIGHT TO ACCESS TO COUNSEL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure that all unaccompanied alien children, upon apprehension, are provided—

(A) an interview and screening with a child welfare professional described in subsection (f)(1); and

(B) a video orientation and oral and written notice of their rights under the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq.), including—

(i) their right to relief from removal;

(ii) their right to confer with counsel (as guaranteed under section 292 of such Act (8 U.S.C. 1362)), family, or friends while in the temporary custody of the Department of Homeland Security; and

(iii) relevant complaint mechanisms to report any abuse or misconduct they may have experienced.

(2) LANGUAGES.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall ensure that—

(A) the video orientation and written notice of rights described in paragraph (1) is available in English and in the 5 most common native languages spoken by the unaccompanied children held in custody at that location during the preceding fiscal year; and

(B) the oral notice of rights is available in English and in the most common native language spoken by the unaccompanied children held in custody at that location during the preceding fiscal year.

(i) CONFIDENTIALITY.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services shall maintain the privacy and confidentiality of all information gathered in the course of providing care, custody, placement and follow-up services to unaccompanied alien children, consistent with the best interest of the unaccompanied alien child, by not disclosing such information to other government agencies or nonparental third parties unless such disclosure is—

(1) recorded in writing and placed in the child's file;

(2) in the child's best interest; and

(3)(A) authorized by the child or by an approved sponsor in accordance with section 235 of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 (8 U.S.C. 1232) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (Public Law 104–191); or

(B) provided to a duly recognized law enforcement entity to prevent imminent and serious harm to another individual.

(j) OTHER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.—The Secretary of Homeland Security shall adopt fundamental child protection policies and procedures—

(1) for reliable age determinations of children, developed in consultation with medical and child welfare experts, which exclude the use of fallible forensic testing of children's bone and teeth;

(2) to ensure the safe and secure repatriation and reintegration of unaccompanied alien children to their home countries through specialized programs developed in close consultation with the Secretary of State, the Office of the Refugee Resettlement, and reputable independent child welfare experts, including placement of children with their families or nongovernmental agencies to provide food, shelter, and vocational training and microfinance opportunities;

(3) to utilize all legal authorities to defer the child's removal if the child faces a risk of life-threatening harm upon return including due to the child's mental health or medical condition; and

(4) to ensure, in accordance with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5601 et seq.), that unaccompanied alien children, while in detention, are—

(A) physically separated from any adult who is not an immediate family member; and

(B) separated by sight and sound from—

(i) immigration detainees and inmates with criminal convictions;

(ii) pretrial inmates facing criminal prosecution; and

(iii) inmates exhibiting violent behavior.

(k) TRANSFER OF FUNDS.—

(1) AUTHORIZATION.—The Secretary of Homeland Security, in accordance with a written agreement between the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall transfer such amounts as may be necessary to carry out the duties described in subsection (f)(2) from amounts appropriated for U.S. Customs and Border Protection to the Department of Health and Human Services.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 15 days before any proposed transfer under paragraph (1), the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of Homeland Security, shall submit a detailed expenditure plan that describes the actions proposed to be taken with amounts transferred under such paragraph to—

(A) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(l) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section may be construed to preempt or alter any other rights or remedies, including any causes of action, available under any Federal or State law.

SA 294. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____. GAO STUDY AND REPORT.

(a) STUDY.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on each program or initiative authorized under this Act and the following statutes and evaluate whether any program or initiative is duplicative:

(1) Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (Public Law 109–164; 119 Stat. 3558).

(2) Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.).

(3) Victims of Child Abuse Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13001 et seq.).

(4) Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (42 U.S.C. 5701 et seq.).

(5) Missing Children's Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5771 et seq.).

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on the Judiciary of the Senate and the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives a report on the study conducted under subsection (a), which shall include—

(1) a description of the cost of any duplicative program or initiative studied under subsection (a); and

(2) recommendations on how to achieve cost savings with respect to each duplicative program or initiative studied under subsection (a).

SA 295. Mr. FLAKE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which

was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ___. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.

Except as provided in section 890A(e) of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as added by section 302 of this Act, no funds are authorized to be appropriated by this Act to carry out this Act or the amendments made by this Act.

SA 296. Ms. KLOBUCHAR submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by her to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

TITLE IV—STOPPING EXPLOITATION THROUGH TRAFFICKING

SEC. 401. SAFE HARBOR INCENTIVES.

Part Q of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796dd et seq.) is amended—

(1) in section 1701(c), by striking ''where feasible'' and all that follows, and inserting the following: ''where feasible, to an application—

''(1) for hiring and rehiring additional career law enforcement officers that involves a non-Federal contribution exceeding the 25 percent minimum under subsection (g); or

''(2) from an applicant in a State that has in effect a law that—

''(A) treats a minor who has engaged in, or has attempted to engage in, a commercial sex act as a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons;

''(B) discourages or prohibits the charging or prosecution of an individual described in subparagraph (A) for a prostitution or sex trafficking offense, based on the conduct described in subparagraph (A); and

''(C) encourages the diversion of an individual described in subparagraph (A) to appropriate service providers, including child welfare services, victim treatment programs, child advocacy centers, rape crisis centers, or other social services.''; and

(2) in section 1709, by inserting at the end the following:

''(5) 'commercial sex act' has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).

''(6) 'minor' means an individual who has not attained the age of 18 years.

''(7) 'severe form of trafficking in persons' has the meaning given the term in section 103 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102).''.

SEC. 402. REPORT ON RESTITUTION PAID IN CONNECTION WITH CERTAIN TRAFFICKING OFFENSES.

Section 105(d)(7)(Q) of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7103(d)(7)(Q)) is amended—

(1) by inserting after ''1590,'' the following: ''1591,'';

(2) by striking ''and 1594'' and inserting ''1594, 2251, 2251A, 2421, 2422, and 2423'';

(3) in clause (iv), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(4) in clause (v), by striking ''and'' at the end; and

(5) by inserting after clause (v) the following:

''(vi) the number of individuals required by a court order to pay restitution in connection with a violation of each offense under title 18, United States Code, the amount of restitution required to be paid under each such order, and the amount of restitution actually paid pursuant to each such order; and

''(vii) the age, gender, race, country of origin, country of citizenship, and description of the role in the offense of individuals convicted under each offense; and''.

SEC. 403. NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE.

Section 107(b)(1)(B) of the Victims of Crime Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7105(b)(1)(B)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''Subject'' and inserting the following:

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject''; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) NATIONAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING HOTLINE.—Beginning in fiscal year 2017, and in each fiscal year thereafter, of amounts made available for grants under paragraph (2), the Secretary of Health and Human Services shall make grants for a national communication system to assist victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons in communicating with service providers. The Secretary shall give priority to grant applicants that have experience in providing telephone services to victims of severe forms of trafficking in persons.''.

SEC. 404. JOB CORPS ELIGIBILITY.

Section 144(a)(3) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3194(a)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(F) A victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons (as defined in section 103 of the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7102)). Notwithstanding paragraph (2), an individual described in this subparagraph shall not be required to demonstrate eligibility under such paragraph.''.

SEC. 405. CLARIFICATION OF AUTHORITY OF THE UNITED STATES MARSHALS SERVICE.

Section 566(e)(1) of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

''(D) assist State, local, and other Federal law enforcement agencies, upon the request of such an agency, in locating and recovering missing children.''.

SEC. 406. ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General shall implement and maintain a National Strategy for Combating Human Trafficking (referred to in this section as the ''National Strategy'') in accordance with this section.

(b) REQUIRED CONTENTS OF NATIONAL STRATEGY.—The National Strategy shall include the following:

(1) Integrated Federal, State, local, and tribal efforts to investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases, including—

(A) the development by each United States attorney, in consultation with State, local, and tribal government agencies, of a district-specific strategic plan to coordinate the identification of victims and the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking crimes;

(B) the appointment of not fewer than 1 assistant United States attorney in each district dedicated to the prosecution of human trafficking cases or responsible for implementing the National Strategy;

(C) the participation in any Federal, State, local, or tribal human trafficking task force operating in the district of the United States attorney; and

(D) any other efforts intended to enhance the level of coordination and cooperation, as determined by the Attorney General.

(2) Case coordination within the Department of Justice, including specific integration, coordination, and collaboration, as appropriate, on human trafficking investigations between and among the United States attorneys, the Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

(3) Annual budget priorities and Federal efforts dedicated to preventing and combating human trafficking, including resources dedicated to the Human Trafficking Prosecution Unit, the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and all other entities that receive Federal support that have a goal or mission to combat the exploitation of adults and children.

(4) An ongoing assessment of the future trends, challenges, and opportunities, including new investigative strategies, techniques, and technologies, that will enhance Federal, State, local, and tribal efforts to combat human trafficking.

(5) Encouragement of cooperation, coordination, and mutual support between private sector and other entities and organizations and Federal agencies to combat human trafficking, including the involvement of State, local, and tribal government agencies to the extent Federal programs are involved.

SA 297. Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of the bill, add the following:

TITLE IV—STOP SEXUAL ABUSE BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL ACT OF 2015

SEC. 401. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the ''Stop Sexual Abuse by School Personnel Act of 2015''.

SEC. 402. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subpart 2 of part E of title IX of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7901 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''SEC. 9537. CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR SCHOOL EMPLOYEES.

''(a) CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Each State educational agency and local educational agency that receives funds under this Act shall have in effect policies and procedures that require a criminal background check for each school employee in each covered school served by such State educational agency and local educational agency.

''(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A background check required under paragraph (1) shall be conducted and administered by—

''(A) the State;

''(B) the State educational agency; or

''(C) the local educational agency.

''(b) STATE AND LOCAL USES OF FUNDS.—A State educational agency or local educational agency that receives funds under this Act may use such funds to establish, implement, or improve policies and procedures on background checks for school employees required under subsection (a) to—

''(1) expand the registries or repositories searched when conducting background checks, such as—

''(A) the State criminal registry or repository of the State in which the school employee resides;

''(B) the State-based child abuse and neglect registries and databases of the State in which the school employee resides;

''(C) the Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint check using the Integrated Automated Fingerprint Identification System; and

''(D) the National Sex Offender Registry established under section 119 of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (42 U.S.C. 16919);

''(2) provide school employees with training and professional development on how to recognize, respond to, and prevent child abuse;

''(3) develop, implement, or improve mechanisms to assist covered local educational agencies and covered schools in effectively recognizing and quickly responding to incidents of child abuse by school employees;

''(4) develop and disseminate information on best practices and Federal, State, and local resources available to assist local educational agencies and schools in preventing and responding to incidents of child abuse by school employees;

''(5) develop professional standards and codes of conduct for the appropriate behavior of school employees;

''(6) establish, implement, or improve policies and procedures for covered State educational agencies, covered local educational agencies, or covered schools to provide the results of background checks to—

''(A) individuals subject to the background checks in a statement that indicates whether the individual is ineligible for such employment due to the background check and includes information related to each disqualifying crime;

''(B) the employer in a statement that indicates whether a school employee is eligible or ineligible for employment, without revealing any disqualifying crime or other related information regarding the individual;

''(C) another employer in the same State or another State, as permitted under State law, without revealing any disqualifying crime or other related information regarding the individual; and

''(D) another local educational agency in the same State or another State that is considering such school employee for employment, as permitted under State law, without revealing any disqualifying crime or other related information regarding the individual;

''(7) establish, implement, or improve procedures that include periodic background checks, which also allows for an appeals process as described in paragraph (8), for school employees in accordance with State policies or the policies of covered local educational agencies served by the covered State educational agency;

''(8) establish, implement, or improve a process by which a school employee may appeal the results of a background check, which process is completed in a timely manner, gives each school employee notice of an opportunity to appeal, and instructions on how to complete the appeals process;

''(9) establish, implement, or improve a review process through which the covered State educational agency or covered local educational agency may determine that a school employee disqualified due to a crime is eligible for employment due to mitigating circumstances as determined by a covered local educational agency or a covered State educational agency;

''(10) establish, implement, or improve policies and procedures intended to ensure a covered State educational agency or covered local educational agency does not knowingly transfer or facilitate the transfer of a school employee if the agency knows that employee has engaged in sexual misconduct, as defined by State law, with an elementary school or secondary school student;

''(11) provide that policies and procedures are published on the website of the covered State educational agency and the website of each covered local educational agency served by the covered State educational agency;

''(12) provide school employees with training regarding the appropriate reporting of incidents of child abuse under section 106(b)(2)(B)(i) of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)(2)(B)(i)); and

''(13) support any other activities determined by the State to protect student safety or improve the comprehensiveness, coordination, and transparency of policies and procedures on criminal background checks for school employees in the State.

''(c) NO PRIVATE RIGHT OF ACTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to create a private right of action if a State, covered State educational agency, covered local educational agency, or covered school is in compliance with State regulations and requirements concerning background checks.

''(d) BACKGROUND CHECK FEES.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as prohibiting States or local educational agencies from charging school employees for the costs of processing applications and administering a background check as required by State law, provided that the fees charged to school employees do not exceed the actual costs to the State or local educational agency for the processing and administration of the background check.

''(e) STATE AND LOCAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS.—Each plan submitted by a State or local educational agency under title I shall include—

''(1) an assurance that the State and local educational agency has in effect policies and procedures that meet the requirements of this section; and

''(2) a description of laws, regulations, or policies and procedures in effect in the State for conducting background checks for school employees designed to—

''(A) terminate individuals in violation of State background check requirements;

''(B) improve the reporting of violations of the background check requirements in the State;

''(C) reduce the instance of school employee transfers following a substantiated violation of the State background check requirements by a school employee;

''(D) provide for a timely process by which a school employee may appeal the results of a criminal background check;

''(E) provide each school employee, upon request, with a copy of the results of the criminal background check, including a description of the disqualifying item or items, if applicable;

''(F) provide the results of the criminal background check to the employer in a statement that indicates whether a school employee is eligible or ineligible for employment, without revealing any disqualifying crime or other related information regarding the individual; and

''(G) provide for the public availability of the policies and procedures for conducting background checks.

''(f) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO STATES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND SCHOOLS.—The Secretary, in collaboration with the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Attorney General, shall provide technical assistance and support to States, local educational agencies, and schools, which shall include, at a minimum—

''(1) developing and disseminating a comprehensive package of materials for States, State educational agencies, local educational agencies, and schools that outlines steps that can be taken to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse by school personnel;

''(2) determining the most cost-effective way to disseminate Federal information so that relevant State educational agencies and local educational agencies, child welfare agencies, and criminal justice entities are aware of such information and have access to it; and

''(3) identifying mechanisms to better track and analyze the prevalence of child sexual abuse by school personnel through existing Federal data collection systems, such as the School Survey on Crime and Safety, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, and the National Crime Victimization Survey.

''(g) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

''(1) REPORTS TO THE SECRETARY.—A covered State educational agency or covered local educational agency that uses funds pursuant to this section shall report annually to the Secretary on—

''(A) the amount of funds used; and

''(B) the purpose for which the funds were used under this section.

''(2) SECRETARY'S REPORT CARD.—Not later than July 1, 2017, and annually thereafter, the Secretary, acting through the Director of the Institute of Education Sciences, shall transmit to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives a national report card that includes—

''(A) actions taken pursuant to subsection (f), including any best practices identified under such subsection; and

''(B) incidents of reported child sexual abuse by school personnel, as reported through existing Federal data collection systems, such as the School Survey on Crime and Safety, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System, and the National Crime Victimization Survey.

''(h) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION REGARDING BACKGROUND CHECKS.—

''(1) NO FEDERAL CONTROL.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize an officer or employee of the Federal Government to—

''(A) mandate, direct, or control the background check policies or procedures that a State or local educational agency develops or implements under this section;

''(B) establish any criterion that specifies, defines, or prescribes the background check policies or procedures that a State or local educational agency develops or implements under this section; or

''(C) require a State or local educational agency to submit such background check policies or procedures for approval.

''(2) PROHIBITION ON REGULATION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to permit the Secretary to establish any criterion that—

''(A) prescribes, or specifies requirements regarding, background checks for school employees;

''(B) defines the term 'background checks', as such term is used in this section; or

''(C) requires a State or local educational agency to report additional data elements or information to the Secretary not otherwise explicitly authorized under this section or any other Federal law.

''(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

''(1) the term 'covered local educational agency' means a local educational agency that receives funds under this Act;

''(2) the term 'covered school' means a public elementary school or public secondary school, including a public elementary or secondary charter school, that receives funds under this Act;

''(3) the term 'covered State educational agency' means a State educational agency that receives funds under this Act; and

''(4) the term 'school employee' includes, at a minimum—

''(A) an employee of, or a person seeking employment with, a covered school, covered local educational agency, or covered State

educational agency and who, as a result of such employment, has (or, in the case of a person seeking employment, will have) a job duty that includes unsupervised contact or interaction with elementary school or secondary school students; or

''(B) any person, or any employee of any person, who has a contract or agreement to provide services with a covered school, covered local educational agency, or covered State educational agency, and such person or employee, as a result of such contract or agreement, has a job duty that includes unsupervised contact or unsupervised interaction with elementary school or secondary school students.''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents in section 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 9536 the following:

''Sec. 9537. Criminal background checks for school employees.''.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Three Years Later: Are We Any Closer to a Nationwide Public Safety Wireless Broadband Network.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''State Regulators' Perspectives on the Clean Power Plan.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''The President's Request for Authorization to Use Force against ISIS: Military and Diplomatic Efforts.''

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate, on March 11, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUPPORT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Seapower of the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on March 11, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Thursday, March 12, at 1:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations: Calendar No. 20 and Calendar No. 16; that there be 30 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate vote without intervening action or debate on the nominations in the order listed; that following disposition of the nominations, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate; that no further motions be in order; that any statements related to the nominations be printed in the RECORD, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's actions, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 12; 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 leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, and that the time be equally divided, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half; finally, that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of S. 178.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. MCCONNELL. Senators should expect a vote on the Hart nomination at approximately 2 p.m. tomorrow. The other nomination at that time is expected to go by voice vote.

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 7:03 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, March 12, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY

ERIC MARTIN SATZ, OF TENNESSEE, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY FOR A TERM EXPIRING MAY 18, 2018, VICE NEIL G. MCBRIDE, TERM EXPIRED.

CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD

VANESSA LORRAINE ALLEN SUTHERLAND, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE RAFAEL MOURE–ERASO, TERM EXPIRING.

VANESSA LORRAINE ALLEN SUTHERLAND, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE CHAIRPERSON OF THE CHEMICAL SAFETY AND HAZARD INVESTIGATION BOARD FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS, VICE RAFAEL MOURE–ERASO, TERM EXPIRING.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DAVID HALE, OF NEW JERSEY, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF MINISTER–COUNSELOR, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION ON THE ARTS AND THE HUMANITIES

EDWARD L. AYERS, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE HUMANITIES FOR A TERM EXPIRING JANUARY 26, 2020, VICE DAVID HERTZ, TERM EXPIRED.

KATHRYN K. MATTHEW, OF SOUTH CAROLINA, TO BE DIRECTOR OF THE INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES FOR A TERM OF FOUR YEARS, VICE SUSAN H. HILDRETH.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

STEPHEN CRAWFORD, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2015, VICE ALAN C. KESSLER, RESIGNED.

STEPHEN CRAWFORD, OF MARYLAND, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2022. (REAPPOINTMENT)

JAMES C. MILLER, III, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE A GOVERNOR OF THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE FOR A TERM EXPIRING DECEMBER 8, 2017. (REAPPOINTMENT)

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

CAROL FORTINE OCHOA, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION, VICE BRIAN DAVID MILLER, RESIGNED.

IN THE AIR FORCE

THE FOLLOWING AIR NATIONAL GUARD OF THE UNITED STATES OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE AIR FORCE TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 12203 AND 12212:

To be brigadier general

COL. DENNIS HUNSICKER

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, March 12, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

MARCH 16

4 p.m.
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine Federal improper payments and errors in the Death Master File.
SD–342

MARCH 17

9 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To receive a closed briefing on cyber, space and strategic competition with China and Russia in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SVC–217

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Agriculture.
SD–192

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine the state of technological innovation related to the electric grid.
SD–366

Committee on Environment and Public Works
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife
To hold hearings to examine S. 659, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting.
SD–406

Committee on Finance
To hold hearings to examine building a competitive United States international tax system.
SD–215

Committee on Foreign Relations
Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere, Transnational Crime, Civilian Security, Democracy, Human Rights, and Global Women's Issues
To hold hearings to examine the deepening political and economic crisis in Venezuela, focusing on implications for United States interests and the Western Hemisphere.
SD–419

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
To hold hearings to examine America's health information technology (IT) transformation, focusing on translating the promise of electronic health records into better care.
SD–430

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
To hold hearings to examine securing the Southwest border, focusing on perspectives from beyond the beltway.
SD–342

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine immigration reform, focusing on the American worker.
SD–226

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the military services.
SD–124

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Aviation Operations, Safety, and Security
To hold an oversight hearing to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2016 for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).
SR–253

MARCH 18

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on SeaPower
To hold hearings to examine Navy shipbuilding programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

Committee on Environment and Public Works
To hold hearings to examine S. 697, to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reauthorize and modernize that Act.
SD–406

10 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Forest Service.
SD–124

Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Transportation.
SD–562

Committee on the Judiciary
To hold hearings to examine the impact of patent litigation practices on the American economy.
SD–226

Committee on Veterans' Affairs
To hold a joint hearing with the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to examine the legislative presentation from multiple veterans service organizations.
SD–G50

10:30 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Defense
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Missile Defense Agency.
SD–192

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine the postures of the Department of the Army and the Department of the Air Force in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SD–106

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
To hold an oversight hearing to examine the Federal Communications Commission.
SR–253

Committee on Indian Affairs
Business meeting to consider S. 35, to extend the Federal recognition to the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, S. 438, to provide for the repair, replacement, and maintenance of certain Indian irrigation projects, S. 465, to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the Chickahominy Indian Tribe–Eastern Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe, and the nomination of Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri, of Arizona, to be Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission; to be immediately followed by a hearing to examine an original bill, entitled ''the Reauthorization of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act of 2015''.
SD–628

Joint Economic Committee
To hold hearings to examine the Economic Report of the President 2015.
SD–562

MARCH 19

9:30 a.m.
Committee on Armed Services
To hold hearings to examine U.S. Strategic Command, U.S. Transportation Command, and U.S. Cyber Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SD–G50

10 a.m.
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine U.S. crude oil export policy.
SD–366
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management
To hold hearings to examine Federal rulemaking challenges and areas of improvement within the existing regulatory process.
SD–342

2 p.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Homeland Security
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the United States Secret Service.
SD–138

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Airland
To hold hearings to examine Air Force force structure and modernization in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

MARCH 24

10 a.m.
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine management reforms to improve forest health and socioeconomic opportunities on the nation's forest system.
SD–366

MARCH 25

9 a.m.
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Department of Defense
To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Defense Health Program.
SD–192

2:30 p.m.
Committee on Armed Services
Subcommittee on Strategic Forces
To hold hearings to examine ballistic missile defense programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program.
SR–222

MARCH 26

10 a.m.
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
To hold hearings to examine the Administration's Quadrennial Energy Review.
SD–366

POSTPONEMENTS

MARCH 17

10 a.m.
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
To hold hearings to examine opportunities and challenges for agriculture trade with Cuba.
SR–328A

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S1397–S1449.

Measures Introduced: Twenty-one bills were introduced, as follows: S. 702–722. **Pages S1438–39**

Measures Considered:

Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of S. 178, to provide justice for the victims of trafficking, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S1403–23, S1423–30**

Pending:

Portman Amendment No. 270, to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to enable State child protective services systems to improve the identification and assessment of child victims of sex trafficking. **Pages S1403–23, S1423–30**

Portman Amendment No. 271, to amend the definition of ''homeless person'' under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act to include certain homeless children and youth. **Pages S1403–23, S1423–30**

Vitter Amendment No. 284 (to Amendment No. 271), to amend section 301 of the Immigration and Nationality Act to clarify those classes of individuals born in the United States who are nationals and citizens of the United States at birth.

Pages S1408–23, S1423–30

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing for further consideration of the bill at approximately 10:30 a.m., on Thursday, March 12, 2015. **Page S1449**

Hart and Dinh-Zarr Nominations—Agreement: A unanimous-consent-time agreement was reached providing that at 1:30 p.m., on Thursday, March 12, 2015, Senate begin consideration of the following nominations: Christopher A. Hart, of Colorado, to be Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term of two years, and Tho Dinh-Zarr, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2018; that there be 30 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, Senate vote, without intervening action or debate, on confirmation of the nominations in the order listed; that no further motions be in order. **Page S1449**

Nominations Received: Senate received the following nominations:

Eric Martin Satz, of Tennessee, to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority for a term expiring May 18, 2018.

Vanessa Lorraine Allen Sutherland, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for a term of five years.

Vanessa Lorraine Allen Sutherland, of Virginia, to be Chairperson of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board for a term of five years.

David Hale, of New Jersey, to be Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Edward L. Ayers, of Virginia, to be a Member of the National Council on the Humanities for a term expiring January 26, 2020.

Kathryn K. Matthew, of South Carolina, to be Director of the Institute of Museum and Library Services for a term of four years.

Stephen Crawford, of Maryland, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for the remainder of the term expiring December 8, 2015.

Stephen Crawford, of Maryland, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2022.

James C. Miller, III, of Virginia, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2017.

Carol Fortine Ochoa, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, General Services Administration.

1 Air Force nomination in the rank of general.

Page S1449

Executive Communications: **Pages S1437–38**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages S1439–40**

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: **Pages S1440–41**

Additional Statements: **Pages S1435–37**

Amendments Submitted: **Pages S1441–49**

Authorities for Committees to Meet: **Page S1449**

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 7:03 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, March 12, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Majority Leader in today's Record on page S1449.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

APPROPRIATIONS: NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the National Nuclear Security Administration, after receiving testimony from Lieutenant General Frank G. Klotz, USAF (Ret.), Under Secretary for Nuclear Security, and Administrator, Donald Cook, Deputy Administrator for Defense Programs, Anne Harrington, Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation, and Admiral John Richardson, United States Navy, Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion, and Deputy Administrator for Office of Naval Reactors, all of the National Nuclear Security Administration, Department of Energy.

APPROPRIATIONS: INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for Indian Health Service, after receiving testimony from Yvette Roubideaux, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for American Indians and Alaska Natives, and Robert G. McSwain, Acting Director, Indian Health Service, both of the Department of Health and Human Services.

APPROPRIATIONS: DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Department of Housing and Urban Development, after receiving testimony from Julian Castro, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

APPROPRIATIONS: ARMY

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Department of Defense concluded a hearing to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Army, after receiving testimony from John McHugh, Secretary of the Army, and General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff of the Army, both of the Department of Defense.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ABROAD

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs concluded a hearing to examine protecting religious freedom abroad, after receiving testimony from David N. Saperstein, Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Department of State; Bishop Oscar Cantu, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Las Cruces, New Mexico; and Tony Perkins, Family Research Council, and Jay Sekulow, American Center for Law and Justice, both of Washington, D.C.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on SeaPower concluded a hearing to examine Marine Corps ground modernization in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from Thomas P. Dee, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Expeditionary Programs and Logistics Management), Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Research, Development, and Acquisition), and Lieutenant General Kenneth J. Glueck, Jr., USMC, Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration, and Commanding General, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, both of the Department of Defense.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST AND FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Readiness and Management Support concluded a hearing to examine military construction, environmental, energy, and base closure programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, after receiving testimony from John C. Conger, Performing the Duties of Assistant Secretary for Energy, Installations and Environment, Katherine G. Hammack, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, Dennis V. McGinn, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment, and Miranda A. A. Ballentine, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Installations, Environment and Energy, all of the Department of Defense.

BENEFITS OF A BALANCED BUDGET

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine benefits of a balanced budget, after receiving testimony from former Michigan Governor John Engler, Business Roundtable, and Maya MacGuineas, Committee for a Responsible Federal

Budget, both of Washington, D.C.; and Mark Blyth, Brown University Watson Institute for International Studies, Providence, Rhode Island.

NATIONWIDE PUBLIC SAFETY WIRELESS BROADBAND NETWORK

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Committee concluded a hearing to examine a nationwide public safety wireless broadband network, including preliminary information on FirstNet's efforts to establish a nationwide broadband network, after receiving testimony from Bruce H. Andrews, Deputy Secretary, and Todd J. Zinser, Inspector General, both of the Department of Commerce; Mark L. Goldstein, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, Government Accountability Office; G. Keith Bryant, Oklahoma City Fire Department Chief, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on behalf of the International Association of Fire Chiefs; and Sue Swenson, First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet), Reston, Virginia.

CLEAN POWER PLANT

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded a hearing to examine state regulators' perspectives on the clean power plan, after receiving testimony from Ellen Nowak, Wisconsin Public Service Commission Chairperson, Madison; Todd Parfitt, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality Director, Cheyenne; Thomas Easterly, Indiana Department of Environmental Management Commissioner, Indianapolis; Mary Nichols, California Air Resources Board Chairman, Sacramento; and Michael J. Myers, Office of New York State Attorney General Environmental Protection Bureau Assistant Attorney General, Albany.

USE OF FORCE AGAINST ISIS

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the President's request for authorization to use force against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), focusing on military and diplomatic efforts, after receiving testimony from John Kerry, Secretary of State; and Ash Carter, Secretary, and General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, both of the Department of Defense.

NOMINATION

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Jonodev Osceola Chaudhuri, of Arizona, to be Chairman of the National Indian Gaming Commission, after the nominee testified and answered questions in his own behalf.

NOMINATIONS

Committee on the Judiciary: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nominations of Kara Farnandez Stoll, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit, and Roseann A. Ketchmark, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri, who was introduced by Senators Blunt and McCaskill, after the nominees testified and answered questions in their own behalf.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

The House was not in session today. The House is scheduled to meet in Pro Forma session at 11 a.m. on Friday, March 13, 2015.

Committee Meetings

No hearings were held.

Joint Meetings

No joint committee meetings were held.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Secretary of the Senate, the Senate Sergeant at Arms, and the Capitol Police, 9:45 a.m., SD–124.

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates and justification for fiscal year 2016 for the Food and Drug Administration, 10 a.m., SD–138.

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies, to hold hearings to examine proposed

budget estimates for fiscal year 2016 for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Marshals Service, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; to be followed by a closed session in SVC–217 at approximately 12 p.m, 10 a.m., SD–192.

Committee on Armed Services: to hold hearings to examine U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Southern Command in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program; with the possibility of a closed session in SVC–217 following the open session, 9:30 a.m., SD–G50.

Subcommittee on Strategic Forces, to receive a closed briefing on missile defense programs in review of the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2016 and the Future Years Defense Program, 2:30 p.m., SVC–217.

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Space, Science, and Competitiveness, to hold hearings to examine the President's proposed budget request for fiscal year 2016 for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 9:30 a.m., SR–253.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: to hold hearings to examine S. 556, to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, 10 a.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine protecting taxpayers from schemes and scams during the 2015 tax filing season, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: to hold hearings to examine the Visa Waiver Program, focusing on implications for United States national security, 10 a.m., SD–342.

Select Committee on Intelligence: business meeting to consider pending calendar business, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

Special Committee on Aging: to hold hearings to examine how prepared Americans are for retirement, 10:30 a.m., SD–562.

House

No hearings are scheduled.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, March 12

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond one hour), Senate will continue consideration of S. 178, Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act.

At 1:30 p.m., Senate will begin consideration of the nominations of Christopher A. Hart, of Colorado, to be Chairman of the National Transportation Safety Board for a term of two years, and Tho Dinh-Zarr, of Texas, to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 31, 2018, with a vote on confirmation of the nominations at approximately 2 p.m.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

11 a.m., Friday, March 13

House Chamber

Program for Friday: House will meet in Pro Forma session at 11 a.m.

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