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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Our visiting Chaplain this day is the Reverend Ralph E. Williamson, senior pastor of First African Methodist Episcopal Church in Las Vegas, NV. He will lead us in prayer.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Most gracious Master and our God, who has safely brought us to another day, grant these elected men and women in the United States Senate wisdom and Your divine guidance as they seek to take care of the business of this Nation. May Your invisible presence watch over and refresh their minds, encourage their thoughts, and invigorate their spirits to find the peaceful solutions and excellence for which they were elected. Allow every moment to serve as an opportunity to resolve their differences and move our great Nation forward.

We pray in the Name of God, the Creator and Sustainer of us all. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

LYNCH NOMINATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today we will be considering the President's nominee for Attorney General, Loretta Lynch. Last month I said the Senate would consider this nominee as soon as we passed an all-important antislavery bill, and today we will consider the nominee. We could not have been more pleased to see the legislation, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act pass by an overwhelming majority of 99 to 0, yesterday.

Senator CORNYN and the entire Republican conference made this antislavery bill a priority because the suffering of these victims is simply unconscionable. As the new majority, we decided these victims had waited long enough. We wanted to make it an early legislative priority. It was time to act and finally to give the victims of modern slavery the help and hope they have long waited for.

Now, we can finally say that help is on the way. Victims, advocates, and all the Members of this body who negotiated in good faith, and Senator CORNYN in particular, who never gave up, should take heart in yesterday's outcome. I would urge the House and the President to enact this bill quickly.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, last night we saw the latest example of committees getting back to work in a new Congress—getting back to work for the American people. The Finance Committee passed an important bipartisan bill, trade promotion authority, with broad support from both parties, 20 to 6—20 to 6. The chairman and ranking member of that committee, Senator HATCH and Senator WYDEN, worked hard to achieve the result we saw last night.

Along with Chairman RYAN in the House, they put together an agreement that reflects the kind of honest compromise they can take pride in. It protects and enhances the role of Congress in the trade negotiating process, while ensuring that Presidents of either party—and I would remind our colleagues that this is a 6-year trade promotion authority bill. It will give to the next President the opportunity to negotiate additional trade agreements and send them to Congress for approval.

These agreements can boost our economy and support more high-quality American jobs. Now, this bipartisan bill will move to the Senate floor. It is my hope to pass it during the current work period.

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on the topic of committees getting back to work in the new Congress, we witnessed more evidence of that last week when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously approved the bipartisan Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. It is a bipartisan bill with many Republican and Democratic cosponsors. It will ensure the American people are given a voice on one of the most important issues of our time.

Chairman CORKER worked closely with Members of both parties both to craft a compromise bill and to advance it. Many have admired not just his hard work on this issue but his determination as well. After all, who would have imagined that the White House, after trying to kill this bipartisan bill for months, would find itself forced to pull a near-total about-face. It is no wonder, though, because the core principle that has always underlined the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act—that Congress and the American people deserve a say in any nuclear deal that the President tries to cut with Iran—is more than just common sense. It is really a no-brainer.

After all, preventing the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism from gaining access to nuclear weapons should be the goal of every Senator and every American, regardless of party. It

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

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is not a partisan issue. It is one of the greatest challenges to regional stability, and the stakes are very high.

Iran's support of Hezbollah, the Assad regime, Shia militias in Iraq, and the Houthi insurgents in Yemen, coupled with its determination to expand not just its nuclear capabilities but also its ballistic missile and conventional military capabilities, represents an aggressive effort to expand the Iranian sphere of influence throughout the greater Middle East.

Iran's belligerent quest for nuclear weapons capabilities, its fierce determination to undermine America's standing in the region, and its violent pursuit of regional hegemony represent a grave, grave threat—not just to nearby nations in the Middle East, not just to our own country, but for that matter to the entire world. So the stakes are indeed high. As we know, President Obama has been engaged in negotiations with the Iranians for some time now. Initially, we were led to believe that the point of these negotiations was to prevent—prevent—Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons.

But the administration's focus appears to have shifted from reaching an agreement that would end Iran's nuclear program to reaching an agreement for agreement's sake. That is the only way to interpret the interim agreement we saw recently. It would effectively bestow an international blessing for Iran to become a nuclear threshold state forever—forever on the edge of obtaining a nuclear weapon.

The direction these negotiations have taken should be very worrying for Americans of every political stripe. What that simply underlines is the need for a measure such as the bipartisan Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act.

Here is what it would do. First, it would require that any final agreement reached with Iran be submitted to Congress for review. Second, it would require that Congress be given time to hold hearings and, ultimately, take a vote to approve or disapprove any Iran agreement before congressional sanctions are lifted.

Third, if a final deal ultimately does go forward, it would require the President to certify back to Congress every 90 days that Iran remains in compliance with the agreement. And if the President is unable to do so, it would empower Congress to rapidly reimpose sanctions. In short, passing this bipartisan bill would give Congress and the American people important tools to assess any agreement reached by the administration before congressional sanctions can be lifted.

Remember, it was due in no small measure to the congressional sanctions offered by Senator MARK KIRK, which passed this Chamber 100 to 0, 4 years ago, that Iran was forced to the negotiating table in the first place. The Obama administration fiercely opposed those bipartisan sanctions back then, just as it opposed the bipartisan bill before us soon until very recently. But those sanctions have been so effective that even the administration has had to embrace them. Congress was right then, and Congress is right now.

We should not be negotiating away the leverage previous sanctions have given our country for a bad deal especially agreed to for agreement's sake. Look, no piece of legislation is perfect. Senators who would like to see this bill strengthened, as I would, will have that chance during a robust amendment process that we will soon have right here on this floor. This bill will be open for amendment. Those who seek to improve it will have an opportunity to do that. But what we do know is that this bipartisan bill is underlined by a very solid principle and a lot of hard work. It represents a real opportunity to give the American people more of a say on this important issue. We look forward to a vigorous debate on it next week.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HELLER). The Democratic leader is recognized.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Reverend Dr. Ralph Williamson, of Las Vegas, NV, who opened the Senate today with such a beautiful prayer. For a dozen years, Dr. Williamson has served as senior pastor at the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in North Las Vegas.

During that time, Reverend Williamson has helped shepherd the First African American Episcopal Church through an expansion that includes a beautiful new sanctuary. It is brand new. He is a devoted pastor, and he is beloved by a growing congregation, which includes Senator CORY BOOKER's mother.

CORY's mom and aunt live in Las Vegas. It was there that his good dad died. I had the opportunity to meet his father before he passed away. They are so proud of their son, CORY—as well they should be—as they are proud of having worshiped in this church.

The Apostle Paul wrote: ''As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.''

Reverend Williamson has heeded this admonition, doing good for the members of his flock and the people of all southern Nevada. Through Reverend Williamson's leadership, the First African American Episcopal Church has become a source of faith and vital support for the community. Reverend Williamson's tireless efforts have produced programs for youth, seniors, and the underprivileged. He has pioneered food banks, summer lunch programs, tutoring programs, and health ministries. Just about everything that deals with helping people, he has done it.

I appreciate his joining us today. I did not have the chance to tell him. We met earlier today. We had a ''Welcome to Washington'' with 60 or 70 people today. He gave the presentation to them and offered a prayer for those assembled. It was very warm and nice. But what I did not get a chance to tell him is that I believe the first leader of the flock, of this church in southern Nevada, was a man by the name of Albert Dunn. He was responsible for starting this first congregation. He was my friend, Reverend Dunn. He was a very, very devoutly religious man. To show you how far he went to help people in the community, this was a conversation with his wife one day. She said: ''You know, I wish you had talked to Reverend Dunn, because, oftentimes, we would get up in the morning and he had given away all the food to people who needed it.''

So I have a warm remembrance of this church and Reverend Dunn.

Dr. Williamson, thank you very much for your leadership. I appreciate it very much.

IRAN LEGISLATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I look forward to returning to the debate on the situation dealing with Iran. It is a very difficult issue. It is so important for the country and the world.

I hope there can be some further negotiations when they finish these negotiations in June, at least something that will be received with popularity in the Senate. Democrats and Republicans will say: That is great. We are finally able to get something done. Iran now can no longer use nuclear weapons because we have stopped them from doing so. I hope we arrive at that point, but we are not there yet. I wish so fervently that the negotiators can arrive at some agreement in the next couple of months.

We are going to move to this bill as soon as we can. I hope we can do it sooner rather than later.

The debate on these amendments that the Republican leader talked about are very significant. As the Republican leader said, there should be amendments offered. If people think they can improve the bill, there can be amendments offered. If people think there is stuff in the bill they simply don't like and they don't like all of this process, let them offer an amendment. We need robust debate. We have to make sure that attention is focused on this issue and nothing else.

I look forward to seeing what I can work out with my friend, the senior Senator from Kentucky, the majority leader of the Senate, to see when we can move to this bill.

LYNCH NOMINATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Wall Street Journal had a great editorial

today. To show you how senseless it was, I will read the headline: ''The GOP uses its advice and consent power to beat HARRY REID.''

Think about that, a major newspaper in this country has the audacity to say: ''The GOP [Republicans] uses its advice and consent power to beat HARRY REID.''

Reading the editorial, what they are talking about is that the Republicans were very smart in delaying Loretta Lynch to be confirmed. The reason she was delayed is because a very vital issue came up with the trafficking bill. It dealt with women's reproductive rights, and it took a long time to work that out. In fact, it took a long enough time to work it out until the Republicans capitulated to what we wanted.

We protected the women's right to choose. The Hyde language no longer allows, as was in the underlying legislation, the Hyde language to apply to nontaxpayer money. So for them to say they beat HARRY REID, they didn't beat HARRY REID. What they did was beat up on themselves.

To think that they beat HARRY REID, I repeat, all they did was beat up on themselves.

Later today, the Senate will do something it should have done months ago, confirm Loretta Lynch as the 83rd Attorney General of the United States.

She is as qualified a candidate as I have ever seen in this Senate, which is more than three decades—so qualified, in fact, today will mark the third time she has been confirmed by the Senate.

Twice before, Loretta Lynch was unanimously confirmed as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York. By all accounts, Loretta Lynch's confirmation this time around should have sailed through the Senate. For a while, it seemed it would. We had Senators, Republican Senators, saying what a wonderful woman she is. She is great. They were very vocal in their support. The senior Senator from Utah, the senior Senator from South Carolina, the junior Senator from Arizona—but it soon became apparent the Republican leadership pressed these people a little bit, and suddenly they weren't as interested in moving the Lynch confirmation along, even though that is what they said they should do. Her nomination has dragged on for months.

In fact, I repeat, she has waited longer to be confirmed than the first 54 Attorneys General combined, longer than Attorneys General nominated by every President from George Washington to Woodrow Wilson.

What should have been a quick confirmation would be anything but that. Instead, Ms. Lynch became the first Attorney General nominee in history to be filibustered.

The editorial from the newspaper is very insulting. They said: ''Mr. REID accused Republicans of racism and sexism.''

I dare—I dare anyone to find a single word that I said dealing with race or sex. I didn't do that, but maybe that is something the Republicans hoped I would do, but I didn't do that.

There was even a hunger strike. Now, listen to this, the depth of this editorial from the Wall Street Journal:

> Al Sharpton's activist group vowed a hunger strike until Ms. Lynch received a vote. (Al, please go through with it.)

I guess I was naive in thinking my Republican colleagues would treat Loretta Lynch with the dignity she and her office deserved. Perhaps my mistake was forgetting that for Republicans, this isn't about Loretta Lynch, it is about President Obama because Republicans will do everything, anything they can to make President Obama's life more difficult. They said they would do that when he was elected, and they have stuck with it.

President Obama's Cabinet officials have been treated worse than any President in history. Today's vote on Loretta Lynch marks the seventh cloture vote the Republicans have forced on a Cabinet official during the Obama administration.

Forcing cloture, that is terminating the filibuster, was something that was rare in the entire history of this country. It used to be Cabinet officials were filibustered only in the most extreme circumstances, but once Ms. Lynch is confirmed, five sitting members of the President's Cabinet will have been filibustered by Senate Republicans.

To put that in contrast, it rarely happened before, rarely. Unlike today's Senate Republicans, Democrats showed restraint in our disagreements with the President's appointments. We showed great deference to his choices for the President, and by that I am talking about the last President, George W. Bush.

Some may say that is water under the bridge. There will be those Republicans who, after confirming Loretta Lynch today, will say all's well that ends well. They are wrong.

While I am pleased she will be confirmed as Attorney General, her nomination process is proof of all that is wrong with Republican Senate leadership. Senate Republicans made Loretta Lynch's nomination linger more than 10 times longer than the average Attorney General—and you have heard what I said before about that—just to spite Barack Obama.

The viciousness with which the majority leader's party has treated the President is unconscionable and is bad for our country. Republicans have become so blinded by their nastiness that they have even made filibusters of Cabinet officials the norm around here. The first time we had a Defense Secretary filibustered, they did it. The first time for an Attorney General, they did it.

How sad that in the future we can expect delayed and filibustered nominations such as Loretta Lynch to no longer be the exception but the rule. This is so unfortunate that this is how Republicans portend to govern.

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

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF LORETTA E. LYNCH TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Loretta E. Lynch, of New York, to be Attorney General.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, there will be 2 hours of debate equally divided in the usual form.

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

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

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I didn't realize the time in the quorum call would be equally divided, so I ask unanimous consent that the time be equally charged to both sides.

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, we will be voting soon on confirmation of Ms. Lynch to be the Attorney General of the United States of America. That office is a part of the President's Cabinet, but it also is the office of the chief law officer for America. The Attorney General is the top official in our government who is required to adhere to the law, even to the point of telling the President 'no' if he gets it in his head, as Presidents sometimes do, to do something that violates the law—just as corporate lawyers sometimes do for the CEO of corporations. 'Mr. President, you can't do this. This is wrong. Don't do this.'

Some Attorneys General have been known to resign before they would carry out policies that violate the law.

We are deeply concerned in this country about the President's Executive amnesty—the unlawfulness of it, the breadth of it, and the arrogance of it to the point that it is a direct assault on congressional power and legitimacy, a direct attack on laws passed by the People's representatives; we have a big problem. Ms. Lynch has said flat-out that she supports those policies and is committed to defending them in court against any complaint about them.

I think Congress has a real role here. We do not have to confirm someone to the highest law enforcement position in America if that person is publicly committed to denigrating Congress, violating the laws of Congress, or violating even the wishes of Congress and the American people. We do not have to confirm anybody. It is a power Congress is given. The President is asserting powers he has never been given anywhere in the Constitution or by the American people, but if we don't confirm Ms. Lynch, we will be doing what we have a right to do, and what I think we should do.

I am pleased that Mr. Andrew McCarthy, who prosecuted some of the top terrorist cases in America as a former U.S. attorney or as an assistant U.S. attorney, is very critical and is very strongly of the belief that Ms. Lynch should not be confirmed. He says this:

> A vote against Ms. Lynch's confirmation is not an assessment that she has performed incompetently or unethically in her prior government positions. It is a vote against the President's blatantly unconstitutional policy and against Ms. Lynch's support of that policy. Senators are bound by oath to uphold the Constitution; Ms. Lynch's prior, laudable record as a federal prosecutor cannot overcome her commitment to violating the Constitution.

We have a right to assert that. We are paid to make decisions about that. I think that Mr. McCarthy is correct. Congress was given certain powers as a coequal branch of government, not only to protect the Congress as an institution but to restrain other government branches from overreaching. One of those powers is the Senate's power to confirm or not confirm, and this check on Executive powers can be used as Congress sees fit. But it should not be abused, just as the President should not use his nominees to abuse the Constitution or to advance an unlawful agenda. The Attorney General is the top law enforcement officer in the country. This is not traditionally a political position. It is a law position. Anyone who occupies the office must serve the American people under the laws and the Constitution of the United States. They are not above the law.

The Supreme Court has clearly held that the President is subjected to the laws. It has always been the case and always has been a part of the law of the land. The Senate must never confirm an individual to an office such as this who will support and advance a scheme that violates our Constitution and eviscerates established law and Congressional authority. No person who would do that should be confirmed. We do not need to be apologetic about it.

Ms. Lynch has announced that she supports and, if confirmed, would advance the President's unlawful Executive amnesty scheme—a scheme that would provide work permits, trillions in Social Security and Medicare benefits, tax credits of up to $35,000 a year—according to the Congressional Research Service—and even the possibility of chain migration and citizenship to those who have entered our country illegally or overstayed their lawful period of admission. The President has done this even though Congress has repeatedly rejected legislation he supports that would allow this scheme to be implemented. He asked for it, Congress considered it, and Congress said 'no.'

President Obama's unlawful and unconstitutional Executive action nullifies current immigration law to a degree most people have not fully grasped. The Immigration and Nationality Act is the law of the land, and his actions replace it with the very measures Congress refused to adopt. Even King George III didn't have the power to legislate without Parliament.

During her confirmation hearing in the Judiciary Committee, I asked Ms. Lynch plainly whether she supported the President's unilateral decision to make his own immigration laws.

Here is the relevant portion of the transcript:

> Mr. SESSIONS: I have to have a clear answer to this question—Ms. Lynch, do you believe the executive action announced by President Obama on November 20 is legal and Constitutional? Yes or no?
>
> Ms. Lynch: As I've read the opinion,—

That is, the opinion of the Department of Justice, which would be under her supervision—

> I do believe it is, Senator.

Of course, the lawful duty of the Attorney General is to enforce the law that exists, not one that she or the President wish existed. One of the most stunning elements of the President's scheme is the grant of work permits to up to 5 million illegal immigrants—taking jobs directly from citizens and legal immigrants in our country at a time of high unemployment and low wages.

Peter Kirsanow, Commissioner on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, has written at length about how this undermines the rights of U.S. workers, especially African-American workers, and other minorities suffering from high unemployment. He says: Those citizens who are suffering from high unemployment and low wages have their rights undermined when the President ignores plain law that protects them from an excessive surge of illegal workers.

So at her confirmation hearing, I asked Ms. Lynch about what she might do to protect the rights of U.S. workers. By the way, Attorney General Holder, our current Attorney General, astoundingly, in comments he made some months ago, declared that there is a civil right to citizenship in America for people who enter the country unlawfully. How can this possibly be, that the Attorney General can get so removed from his responsibility to enforce the law that he says that if someone comes into the country unlawfully, they have a civil right to citizenship?

That was part of the reason I asked her this question:

> Mr. SESSIONS: Who has more right to a job in this country? A lawful immigrant who's here or a citizen—or a person who entered the country unlawfully?
>
> Ms. Lynch: I believe that the right and the obligation to work is one that's shared by everyone in this country regardless of how they came here. And certainly, if someone is here, regardless of status, I would prefer that they would be participating in the workplace than not participating in the workplace.

So this individual would be the chief law enforcement of our country, and I believe that is a fundamentally flawed statement and comment. It is unprecedented for someone who is seeking the highest law enforcement office in America to declare that someone in the country illegally has a right to a job when the law says if you are here illegally, you cannot work.

This Nation is—as George Washington University law Professor Jonathan Turley, who has testified a number of times here, often called by a number of our Democratic colleagues, put it—at ''a constitutional tipping point.'' Professor Turley, who is a nationally recognized constitutional scholar and self-described supporter of President Obama, testified before the House of Representatives in February 2014, nine months before the President announced his unprecedented executive action, and said:

> The current passivity of Congress represents a crisis of faith for members willing to see a president assume legislative powers in exchange for insular policy gains. The short-term, insular victories achieved by this President will come at a prohibitive cost if the current imbalance is not corrected. Constitutional authority is easy to lose in the transient shift of politics. It is far more difficult to regain. If a passion for the Constitution does not motivate members, perhaps a sense of self-preservation will be enough to unify members. President Obama will not be our last president. However, these acquired powers will be passed to his successors. When that occurs, members may loathe the day that they remained silent as the power of government shifted so radically to the Chief Executive. The powerful personality that engendered this loyalty will be gone, but the powers will remain. We are now at the constitutional tipping point of our system. If balance is to be reestablished, it must begin before this President leaves office and that will likely require every possible means to reassert legislative authority.

One of those means is the advice and consent power to approve or disapprove nominees for high office. It was created for just such a time as this. It is a legitimate constitutional power of Congress. It is not only appropriate but necessary that the Senate refuse to confirm a President's nominee when

that President has overreached and assumed the legislative powers of Congress. It is particularly necessary when the President's nominee is being appointed specifically for the improper purpose of advancing the President's unconstitutional overreach—all through powers of the office to which they have been nominated.

Mr. President, we have a number of problems with regard to executive branch overreach and executive branch failure to be responsive to Congress. When Members of Congress ask legitimate questions, we often don't get answers from the people who are paid by the taxpayers and who are authorized by us. I believe that is another matter we need to consider before we confirm people. The Department of Justice has been recalcitrant too often in producing information it should produce.

I wish to go a little bit further because some of this goes to the core of the issues before us. Is this just a policy dispute between Congress and the President? No, it goes much deeper than that. The actions of the President are stunning—beginning with his so-called Morton memos. He had an underling carry out orders to achieve what he wanted done, which is often how he has proceeded with these unlawful activities. I will point out some of them.

Beginning with the Morton memos in 2011—under the guise of prosecutorial discretion based on limited resources—the Administration began to flaunt clearly written provisions of the Immigration and Nationality Act, such as section 235, which requires the Secretary of Homeland Security to place illegal aliens into removal proceedings to be deported once they are found. Section 235 requires DHS to do that, they do not have any discretion there.

In direct contradiction of clearly written law, the Morton memos generally directed U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel to refuse to initiate removal proceedings against certain aliens, and to administratively close or terminate such proceedings if they had been initiated. Thus began the opening salvo in the Administration's assault on our immigration laws. This is huge. Officers respond to the President's leadership.

The following year, June 2012, the Administration created, through Executive fiat, a program that Congress consistently refused to enact into law—the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals or DACA. This program not only shielded certain illegal aliens from the threat of removal, but it also provided them with work authorization, the ability to travel outside of the United States without fear of being refused reentry through grants of advanced parole. It gave them a Social Security number and a photo ID.

By the way, colleagues, this resulted in the Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers being so concerned at this radical reversal of the laws of the United States that they filed a lawsuit against their supervisors asserting that they were being required to violate the law of the United States rather than being allowed to carry out their sworn duty, which was to enforce the laws of the United States.

The judge was sympathetic to the matter, but for technical and legal reasons, concluded that the case would not go forward, but I believe it is still on appeal now.

This is remarkable. There are law officers—many of them have been in law enforcement for 10, 20, 30 years—who sued their supervisors because they were being ordered to violate the law instead of enforce the law. We ought to listen to them. They have repeatedly told us that what is happening is outrageous and they pleaded with Congress to stop it.

But then in November of last year, after Congress refused to pass the Administration's preferred legislation providing amnesty to illegal aliens, the Administration created, through Executive fiat, a number of other programs that further eroded enforcement of our immigration laws. Notably, the two most visible programs are the Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents, the so-called DAPA Program, and an expanded version of DACA, both of which were blessed by the Department of Justice, the Office of Legal Counsel, and the Attorney General—wrong, unlawful actions blessed by the chief law enforcement officer in the country.

Less visible are policies that prevent the enforcement of immigration laws against certain criminal aliens, such as the November 20, 2014 memorandum from Jeh Johnson, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, entitled ''Policies for the Apprehension, Detention, and Removal of Undocumented Immigrants.'' That memo excludes from enforcement priority categories whole categories of criminal offenses defined in sections 2(a)(2) and 237(a)(2) of the INA.

We have observed a decimation of law enforcement in this country involving immigration as a direct result of the President's determination to create an immigration system that he believes is right, but the People, through their elected Congress, have refused to make law. This is a direct threat to who we are.

Professor Turley is so insightful about this issue. This is not some rightwing extremist. In testimony before the House committee, he said:

> I believe the President has exceeded his brief. The President is required to faithfully execute the laws.

He goes on to say:

> This goes to the very heart of what is the Madisonian system. If a president can unilaterally change the meaning of laws in substantial ways or refuse to enforce them, it takes offline that very thing that stabilizes our system. I believe the members will loathe the day that they allow that to happen. There will be more presidents who will claim the same authority.
>
> When I teach constitutional law, I often ask my students, what is the limiting principle of your argument? When that question is presented to this White House, too often it's answered in the first person, that the President is the limiting principle or at least the limiting person. We can't rely on that type of assurance in our system.

Madison knew no one can be given total power without limits.

Professor Turley goes on to say:

> The problem of what the President is doing is that he is not simply posing a danger to the constitutional system; he is becoming the very danger the Constitution was designed to avoid: that is, the concentration of power in any single branch. This Newtonian orbit that the three branches exist in is a delicate one, but it is designed to prevent this type of concentration.

When asked explicitly if he believed the President violated the Constitution, he said, as I quoted before, ''The center of gravity is shifting, and that makes it unstable. And within that system you have the rise of an uber presidency. There could be no greater danger for individual liberty, and I really think that the framers would be horrified by that shift because everything they've dedicated themselves to was creating this orbital balance, and we've lost it. . . . ''

He goes on to say to Congress as a challenge to us:

> I believe that [Congress] is facing a critical crossroads in terms of continued relevance in this process. What this body cannot become is a debating society where it can issue rules and laws that are either complied with or not complied with by the president. I think that's where we are . . . [A] president cannot ignore an express statement on policy grounds . . . [In] terms of the institutional issue . . . look around you. Is this truly the body that existed when it was formed?

So he was sitting there in the House of Representatives and he was talking to Members of Congress and said:

> . . . look around you. Is this truly the body that existed when it was formed? Does it have the same gravitational pull and authority that was given to it by its framers? You're the keepers of this authority. You took an oath to uphold it. And the framers assumed that you would have the institutional wherewithal and, frankly, ambition to defend the turf that is the legislative branch.

I think we need to—without apology—defend the law, and I think this is in the Congress' interest. Congress should not confirm someone to lead the U.S. Department of Justice who will advance this unconstitutional policy. Congress has a limited number of powers to defend the rule of law and itself as an institution and to stop the executive branch from overreaching. It is unthinkable that we would ignore one of those powers in the face of such a direct threat to our constitutional order—an escalating pattern of overreach by the President.

Every day that we allow the President to erode the powers of the Congress, we are allowing the President to erode the sacred constitutional rights of the citizens we serve. We have a duty to this institution and to the American people not to confirm someone who is not committed to those principles but rather who will continue to violate them.

I will oppose this nomination and urge my colleagues to do so. I think we should see a bipartisan vote rejecting this nomination, and in doing so, Congress will send a clear message that we expect the President to abide by the law passed by Congress, not to violate it.

Mr. President, I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. For almost 2 months, I have been returning to the Senate floor to urge the majority leader to schedule the confirmation vote for our next Attorney General. Yesterday afternoon, we were finally able to get an agreement that was long overdue. But even now, this morning, we are not voting to confirm Loretta Lynch to be the next Attorney General of the United States; we are going to vote on whether to invoke cloture in regard to this top law enforcement position.

For those not familiar with the rules of the Senate, cloture is a rule that allows the Senate to end a filibuster.

The fact that Senate Republicans are requiring a cloture vote on her nomination acknowledges what we have known all along: Republicans have been engaged in an unprecedented filibuster of this nomination.

When we do vote to confirm Loretta Lynch this afternoon, she will be the first African-American woman to serve as Attorney General. She is a historic nominee, but it is Senate Republicans who are making history—and I would say for the wrong reasons. We have had 82 Attorneys General in our Nation's history. Until now, not one of those 82 has had to overcome a cloture vote. But this one, Loretta Lynch, as I said, the first African-American woman to serve as Attorney General, became the first and only to have to overcome a cloture vote.

I would have opposed any filibuster on any President. I have been here with President Ford, President Carter, President Reagan, President Bush, President Clinton, another President Bush, and President Obama. Neither Republicans nor Democrats have seen this.

President Obama first announced Ms. Lynch's nomination more than 5 months ago. At the time, Senate Democrats acceded to the request of Senate Republicans not to move her nomination during the lame duck period. Republicans promised that she would be treated fairly.

In fact, last fall, the now-majority leader promised that ''Ms. Lynch will receive fair consideration by the Senate. And her nomination should be considered in the new Congress through regular order.'' But she hasn't been treated fairly. There hasn't been regular order.

The nomination of Ms. Lynch has been pending in the Senate awaiting confirmation for 56 days. I went back over the last seven Attorneys General. I added up the number of days they waited for confirmation on the floor. She has waited longer than all seven of them put together twice over, so twice as long as the seven preceding Republican and Democratic Attorneys General combined: Richard Thornburgh, 1 day; William Barr, 5 days; Janet Reno, 1 day; John Ashcroft, 2 days, Alberto Gonzales, 8 days; Michael Mukasey, 2 days; and Eric Holder, 5 days. I have said it repeatedly, but it bears repeating again: this historic delay is an embarrassment for the United States Senate.

As the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York, Ms. Lynch brought terrorists and cyber criminals to justice. She obtained convictions against corrupt public officials from both political parties. She fought tirelessly against violent crime and financial fraud. Ms. Lynch has protected the rights of victims. She has a proven record prosecuting human traffickers and protecting children.

I am glad that yesterday the Senate was finally able to overcome an impasse on trafficking legislation which, unfortunately, those on the other side of the aisle caused by injecting partisan politics into the debate. That Republican leaders tied a vote on the confirmation of Ms. Lynch to human trafficking legislation never made sense at all, especially given her strong record of prosecuting human traffickers.

In a recent article, the Guardian rightly pointed out that the Republican leaderships' use of her nomination as a negotiating chip was ''painfully wrongheaded—tantamount to holding the sheriff back until crime goes away.'' I could not agree more. I ask unanimous consent that the Guardian article be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

We all know that Loretta Lynch is eminently qualified to be our next Attorney General. She should not have been delayed for so many months by the Senate majority. And we should not be forced to vote to cut off debate on this nomination, especially when no other Attorney General nominee has ever needed such a vote. This is the complete opposite of the fair treatment that Senate Republicans promised last November. After this extended delay on the Lynch nomination, I can only hope Senate Republicans will show her more respect as Attorney General of the United States than she has received as a nominee. She deserves our respect and gratitude for being willing to continue to serve our Nation. She has earned this respect.

Ms. Lynch's story is one of perseverance, grace, and grit and I believe this process will only make her stronger. She was born and raised in North Carolina. She is the daughter of a fourth-generation Baptist preacher and a school librarian. Her proud mother and father instilled in her the American values of fairness and equality, even though as a child those around them were not living up to these values.

I must say that meeting Reverend Lynch at these hearings and then meeting him at the time of the markup—I was so impressed with the strength that man showed and his sense of faith in goodness. This is a pastor and a preacher we can all look up to. In fact, Ms. Lynch recalls riding on Reverend Lynch's shoulders to their church, where students organized peaceful protests against racial segregation. The freedom songs and the church music that went hand in hand with those protests undoubtedly made up the sound track of her childhood. As Attorney General, I am sure she will draw upon those childhood experiences and the struggles of her parents, her grandparents, and her great-grandparents when addressing the current protests over too many young lives lost on our streets.

As I said, the Judiciary Committee was honored to have her father, the Reverend Lorenzo Lynch, with us on both days of her hearing in January, as well as at the committee markup when her nomination was favorably reported with bipartisan support. He is here to watch these proceedings today. It is clear this undoubtedly proud father instilled in his daughter the great resilience she has shown over the past 6 months.

As a Senator, as have other Senators, I have gotten to meet wonderful people from all walks of life, up to and including Presidents, but I have said many times before and I will say again that meeting Reverend Lynch was really a very special moment in this Senator's life.

Throughout Loretta Lynch's life, those who encountered her intelligence and her tenacity have not all been prepared to accept her and her impressive accomplishments. But at every point, the content of her character has shone through and led her to even greater heights.

In elementary school, administrators did not believe that Loretta Lynch could score as high as she did on a standardized test. They demanded that she retake the test. How could this young African-American girl score so high? She took the test again and her second score was even higher.

In high school, she rose to the very top of her class but had to share the title of valedictorian with two other students, one of whom was White, because school administrators feared an African-American valedictorian was too controversial. But that didn't hold her back, either. She kept going forward. She went on to graduate with honors from Harvard College, and then she went on and earned her law degree from Harvard Law School.

This has been the story of Loretta Lynch's life. While some are not ready to embrace her distinction, she marches forward with grace to prove she is even stronger and more qualified than her detractors can imagine. She has dedicated the majority of her remarkable career to public service, and

we are fortunate as a nation that she wants to continue to serve.

Ms. Lynch's record of accomplishments makes me confident she will be able to lead the Justice Department through the complex challenges it faces today.

One issue the outgoing Attorney General prioritized was the protection of Americans' right to vote. After the Supreme Court's disastrous ruling in Shelby County v. Holder, Republican governors and State legislatures exploited the decision and implemented sweeping voter suppression laws that disproportionately affect African Americans and other minorities. Ms. Lynch will have to continue the commitment to fighting voting rights for all Americans.

At a time of severe budget cuts for too many vital programs that help victims and support public safety, something must be done about the massive financial burden that is the Bureau of Prisons. One-third of DOJ's budget goes to BOP. This imbalance has largely been driven by our reliance on drug mandatory minimum sentences, which do not make us safer but are costing us plenty. These sentences explain why the United States has the largest prison population in the world. We must work together on more thoughtful solutions to address our mass incarceration problem.

Few issues affect communities and families as intimately as addiction. Vermont, like many parts of the country, has seen a recent surge in the abuse of heroin and other opioids. The Department must work with States to find solutions to support communities struggling with heroin and other opioids, and help them break the cycle of addiction.

The Attorney General will also be called upon to build on the sometimes strained relationship between law enforcement and communities of color, which has been exacerbated by the recent tragic events in Ferguson, New York, and South Carolina. Restoring that trust will be as great a responsibility as she will have while in office.

Nor are these issues of trust limited to local law enforcement. Just the other day, a Washington Post article detailed the fact that the Justice Department and the FBI acknowledged numerous instances of flawed testimony by FBI examiners over a two-decade period in connection with hair analysis evidence. This included dozens of cases involving defendants who were sentenced to death row. This troubling revelation means that the FBI must conduct a comprehensive analysis to prevent future breakdowns such as this.

The Justice Department must also keep up with the rapid development of technology. We must stay ahead of the curve to prevent and fight threats to cybersecurity and data privacy. The growing threat of cyber crime is very real but so is the specter of unchecked government intrusion into our private lives—particularly dragnet surveillance programs directed at American citizens. The intelligence community faces a critical deadline this June when three sections of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act are set to expire. We must protect our national security and our civil liberties. We must work together to reform our Nation's surveillance laws so we can achieve both goals and restore the public's trust.

When President Obama announced his intention to nominate Ms. Lynch last November, I had the privilege of attending the White House ceremony. At that event, Ms. Lynch noted with admiration that ''the Department of Justice is the only cabinet department named for an ideal.'' Just think of that. The Department of Justice is named for an ideal—the ideal of justice. And having served as a State prosecutor, although not with the complexity she has encountered, I always felt that was an ideal to uphold, and she has. I believe that when Loretta Lynch is sworn in as our next Attorney General, she will work tirelessly to make that ideal a reality for all Americans.

As I said, I am sorry that for the first time, after 82 Attorneys General, we have to have a cloture vote. I have great respect for my friends in the Republican leadership, but I must say they sent an awful signal to America in saying that for the first time in 82 Attorneys General, we require a cloture vote for this highly qualified woman.

I yield the floor.

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

[From the Guardian, Apr. 21, 2015]

LORETTA LYNCH 'LED THE NATION' ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING DESPITE REPUBLICAN STANDOFF

(By Tom McCarthy)

Republican leaders say they'll hold up Lynch's confirmation until trafficking bill passes—and yet Lynch has been one of America's boldest pursuers of sex traffickers, Guardian review reveals.

After almost six months, the Republican blockade on the confirmation of Loretta Lynch as the next US attorney general—once a grand fight over immigration, then banking prosecutions, then abortion—appears headed for a final legislative showdown over protecting victims of sex trafficking.

But the biggest Congressional headache of the year—a single cabinet nomination effectively hijacking the legislative calendar—has culminated in ''a very sad irony'': Lynch has been one of the country's premier guardians of victims of sex trafficking, and a tireless scourge of sex traffickers, a review of her record and conversations with current and former colleagues reveal.

Lynch—according to prosecutors, officials and victims' advocates familiar with her tenure as US attorney for the eastern district of New York—has a prodigious history of throwing sex traffickers in prison, breaking up prostitution rings, rescuing underage victims forced to work as prostitutes and reuniting mothers held captive by the rings with their long-lost children.

Heading into what could be the final day of protracted negotiations over her job as the nation's highest law enforcement officer, Lynch's supporters spoke at length with the Guardian about what they say is one of the most powerful legacies of her tenure.

Republicans have not challenged Lynch's record as a prosecutor of sex trafficking—or any other part of her record. But Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell has clung to an announcement that he would hold up her nomination until the Senate completed work on the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which would create a compensation fund for victims. Republican and Democratic senators are squabbling over abortion language in the bill.

''I had hoped to turn to her next week, but if we can't finish the trafficking bill, she will be put off again,'' McConnell said. More than a month later, that hold is still in place, although Republicans aides on Friday signaled potential new movement on the nomination, after President Obama called the delay ''embarrassing''.

To those with close knowledge of Lynch's record on human trafficking, the hold-up has not been embarrassing, so much as painfully wrong-headed—tantamount to holding the sheriff back until crime goes away.

Carol Robles-Román, who in 12 years as deputy mayor of New York City worked closely with Lynch's office to stop young girls from falling victim to sex traffickers, said Lynch had made ''protecting the most vulnerable members of our society a hallmark of her tenure''.

''The irony that it's a trafficking bill that's holding everything up is just . . . it's a very sad irony,'' said Robles-Román, who now runs the nonprofit Legal Momentum. ''The fact of the matter is, with this record, she has been one of the top leaders in the country around the fight against human trafficking.

''This is such a difficult area for prosecutors to wrap their hands around. And her office, the eastern district, has really distinguished itself in the cases that they have brought, and the fearlessness that they have shown in prosecuting these cases.''

'HEINOUS' CASES WITH REAL RESOLUTIONS

Lori Cohen, director of the anti-trafficking initiative at New York-based Sanctuary for Families, has worked closely with Lynch's office, including to reunite victims of sex trafficking with their children, who in multiple cases have been held in Mexico by members of the trafficking organization.

''The eastern district prosecutors have been exceptional in terms of their willingness to listen to the clients,'' Cohen said. ''And I think that, frankly, that came from the top, that came from the attorney general nominee. I think she has always had a very high degree of professionalism, but also a very strong sense of compassion for victims. And a strong sense of justice, that people who are exploiting these vulnerable immigrant women and children in the commercial sex industry need to be held accountable.''

In the typical sex trafficking case prosecuted under Lynch, a community services organization might tip off law enforcement to the presence of a prostitution ring based in Brooklyn or Queens, New York. Investigators would discover many girls and young women living under the control of men who forced them to work in brothels or who drove them around the city, sometimes to as many as 20 assignments a day.

Anne Milgram, a former prosecutor on human trafficking cases in the eastern district, who went on to serve as attorney general of New Jersey and is now a senior fellow at the New York University school of law, said one after another of the trafficking cases were prosecuted because Lynch made them a ''personal priority''.

''Under her leadership, the eastern district has really led the nation in this area,''

Milgram said. ''I really couldn't say enough good things about both the office and Loretta Lynch's record on human trafficking. If you look nationally to find a US attorney who was as thoughtful and progressive in prosecuting human trafficking cases, I don't think you could find one.''

Lynch's office has specialized in breaking up rings that share a remarkable similarity. Members of family-based crime syndicates in Mexico, in a repeated pattern, would seek out young girls in poor, rural areas and make them promises of love and a better life in the United States. Sometimes a marriage would follow. And then the girls would be introduced to a new life, in which they were coerced to work as prostitutes. Obedience was enforced with rape, beatings, imprisonment, and, in some cases, by threatening the lives of children born of the corrupt ''love'' affairs.

''Any trafficking victim is going to be suffering in a tremendous physical and emotional harm, and pretty extensive sexual abuse,'' Cohen said. ''But these particular Mexican trafficking cases are so difficult for our victims because usually the trafficker is an intimate partner. So it could be a man who held himself out to be a boyfriend, or a fiancé, and in at least one case it's been a husband. Who courted a client, who won her trust, and her love, and in a number of cases had children with her.''

''You just pull the facts of one of these cases, and they're heinous,'' Robles-Román said. ''They almost don't sound real.''

THE MOST ACTIVE RECORD IN THE COUNTRY

Lynch's office has specialized in breaking up these rings. The eastern district of New York has delivered more than 55 indictments in human trafficking cases and rescued more than 110 victims, including at least 20 minors, in the past 10 years.

Under Lynch, the eastern district is currently prosecuting at least five cases relating to the prostitution of US minors or sex trafficking—more active prosecutions than any other US attorney's office in the country, according to knowledgeable observers.

In 2012, Lynch's office reunited a child and mother who had been separated for more than 10 years when the woman was taken from Mexico to New York and forced to work as a prostitute. It was one of 18 such mother-and-child reunions completed by the eastern district.

Cohen worked with a client who was reunited with her child after a conviction by Lynch's office.

''It was really very moving,'' Cohen said. ''My client had been separated from her child for a number of years and was really frantic about her child's safety. Frankly it's terrifying for a victim to come forward and report the abuse, when she is afraid that if word of her cooperation gets back to her traffickers, there's very little protection available for her child back in Mexico.

''These clients, when they have children, they are mothers first. And they'll do anything to protect their children. In fact some of them continue to be trafficked because they were afraid that if they stopped or refused, that their children would be harmed.''

In December 2012, Lynch announced the extradition and arraignment of four suspects from Mexico in two separate sex trafficking cases. In 2013, Lynch sent a New York bar owner and two co-defendants to prison for dozens of years each for running a sex-trafficking ring between Central America, Mexico and two bars on Long Island. In 2014, three brothers convicted of sex trafficking were sentenced to double-digit prison terms for enticing victims as young as 14 to be transported illegally into the United States and forced to work as prostitutes in New York City and elsewhere.

''It's horrible to think that children in the United States are being exploited sexually,'' said Robles-Román. ''They are. [But Lynch's] office has shown that they have the courage, the know-how, and the expertise to prosecute these people—some of them involving international criminal enterprises.

''From my perspective, somebody who has that vision, and that eye, to protect our most vulnerable, can protect us all. It is a fearlessness that we need in our attorney general.''

As of Monday, after what minority leader Harry Reid called ''164 very long days'', there was still no Senate deal over the abortion language in the trafficking legislation, although signs emerged that a deal may be close.

If Republicans stick to their promise, it will then be Lynch's turn. And if she is confirmed, to hear Lynch's former colleagues tell it, the Senate will have made a difference on behalf of society's most vulnerable.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. RUBIO). The Senator from Texas.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, today I rise to talk about what has come to define the Obama administration, which is a consistent pattern of lawlessness that disrespects the Constitution, that disrespects the Congress, and that disrespects the people of the United States.

In any administration, under any President, the person charged with being the chief law enforcement officer is the Attorney General. I have been blessed to work in the U.S. Department of Justice, and there is a long, bipartisan tradition of Attorneys General remaining faithful to the law and to the Constitution and setting aside partisan considerations and politics. Unfortunately, that tradition has not been honored during the Obama Presidency.

Attorney General Eric Holder has been the most partisan Attorney General the United States has ever seen. The Attorney General has systematically refused to do anything to seriously investigate or prosecute the IRS for targeting citizens for expressing their First Amendment rights. Indeed, he has assigned the investigation to a major Democratic donor and partisan Democrat who has given over $6,000 to President Obama and the Democrats. Eric Holder has abused the office and has turned it, in many respects, into a partisan arm of the Democratic Party. He is the only Attorney General in the history of the United States to be held in contempt of Congress.

So there are many, including me, who would very much like to see Eric Holder replaced. There are many, including me, who would very much like to see an Attorney General who will return to the bipartisan traditions of the Department of Justice of fidelity to law, and that includes most importantly the willingness to stand up to the President who appointed you even if he or she is from the same political party as are you.

During the confirmation hearings, I very much wanted to support Loretta Lynch's nomination. Bringing in a new Attorney General should be turning a positive page in this country. But, unfortunately, the answers Ms. Lynch gave in the confirmation hearing, in my opinion, rendered her unsuitable for confirmation as Attorney General of the United States. That was a shame.

Ms. Lynch's record as the U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York had earned her a reputation as a relatively no-nonsense prosecutor, so it was my hope that we would see a similar approach and similar answers from Ms. Lynch at the confirmation hearing. Instead, she chose to embrace the lawlessness of the Holder Justice Department.

When she was asked whether she would defend President Obama's illegal Executive amnesty, which President Obama has acknowledged no fewer than 22 times that he had no constitutional authority to undertake and which a Federal court has now enjoined as unlawful, she responded affirmatively, saying she thought the administration's contrived legal justification was ''reasonable.''

The nominee went on to say that she sees nothing wrong with the President's decision to unilaterally grant lawful status and work authorizations that are explicitly barred by Federal law to nearly 5 million people who are here in this country illegally.

When asked further who has ''more a right to a job, a United States citizen or a person who came to this country illegally?'' she responded, ''I believe that the right and obligation to work is one that is shared by everyone in this country, regardless of how they came here.'' Well, a very large majority of American citizens would beg to differ. Rule of law matters.

When she was asked about the limits of prosecutorial discretion—the dubious theory President Obama has put forth to justify his illegal executive amnesty—she could give no limits to that theory.

When asked if a subsequent President could use prosecutorial discretion to order the Treasury Secretary not to enforce the tax laws and to collect no more income taxes in excess of 25 percent, she refused to answer.

When asked if a subsequent President could use that same theory to exempt the State of Texas—all 27 million people—from every single Federal labor law and environmental law, she refused to answer.

When asked if she agreed with the Holder Justice Department that the government could place a GPS sensor on the car of every single American without probable cause, she refused to answer. That extreme view was rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously.

When asked if she agreed with the Holder Justice Department that the First Amendment gives no religious liberty protection whatsoever to a church's or synagogue's choice of their own pastor or their own rabbi, she

again refused to answer. Likewise, that extreme view was rejected unanimously by the U.S. Supreme Court. Indeed, Justice Elena Kagan—appointed by President Obama—said at the oral argument that the Holder Justice Department's position that the First Amendment says nothing about the religious liberty of a church or a synagogue—Justice Kagan said, ''I find your position amazing.'' Well, I am sorry to say that Ms. Lynch was unwilling to answer whether she holds that same amazing position, that the First Amendment does not protect the religious liberty of people of faith in this country.

When asked in her hearing if she believes the Federal Government could employ a drone to kill a U.S. citizen on U.S. soil if that individual posed no imminent threat, she refused to answer.

When asked if she would be willing to appoint a special prosecutor to investigate the IRS's targeting of citizens and citizen groups for their political views—something which President Obama said he was ''angry about and the American people had a right to be angry about''—and when asked if she would appoint a prosecutor who was at a minimum not a major Obama donor, she refused to answer.

This nominee has given every indication that she will continue the Holder Justice Department's lawlessness. That was her testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

I wanted to support this nomination. I wanted to see a new Attorney General who would be faithful to law. But her answers made that impossible.

I would note that there is a difference. Eric Holder began disregarding the Constitution and laws after he was confirmed as Attorney General. Ms. Lynch has told the Senate that is what she is going to do. That means each and every one of us bears responsibility. In my view, no Senator can vote for this confirmation consistent with her or her oath given the answers that were given.

I would note that a particular onus falls on the new Republican majority. For several months, I have called on the Republican majority to block the confirmation of President Obama's executive and judicial nominees other than vital national security positions unless and until the President rescinds his lawless amnesty. I am sorry to say the majority leadership has been unwilling to do so.

The Republican majority, if it so chose, could defeat this nomination, but the Republican majority has chosen to go forward and allow Loretta Lynch to be confirmed.

I would note that there are more than a few voters back home who are asking: What exactly is the difference between a Democratic and Republican majority when the exact same individual gets confirmed as Attorney General promising the exact same lawlessness? What is the difference? That is a question each of us will have to answer to our constituents when we go home.

In my view, the obligation of every Senator to defend the Constitution is front and center why we are here. We have a nominee who has told the Senate she is unwilling to impose any limits whatsoever on the authority of the President of the United States for the next 20 months. We are sadly going to see more and more lawlessness, more regulatory abuse, more abuse of power, more Executive lawlessness.

Now more than ever, we need an Attorney General with the integrity and faithfulness of law to stand up to the President. Attorneys General in both parties, Republican and Democratic, have done so. When credible allegations of wrongdoing by Richard Nixon were raised, his Attorney General, Elliot Richardson, appointed a special prosecutor, Archibald Cox, to investigate regardless of partisan politics. Likewise, when credible allegations by Bill Clinton arose, his Attorney General, Janet Reno—a Democrat—appointed Robert Fisk as the independent counsel to investigate those allegations. Eric Holder has been unwilling to demonstrate that same faithfulness to law, and unfortunately Ms. Lynch has told us that she, too, is unwilling to do so. For that reason, I urge all of my colleagues to vote no on cloture and to insist on an Attorney General who will uphold her oath to the Constitution and to the people of the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I come before the Senate today to vote and to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of confirming Loretta Lynch as Attorney General.

I disagree with my colleague from Texas. I serve on the Judiciary Committee, as does the Senator from Texas. I listened to her questions. I asked her questions. I listened to her answers. In my view, she passed her senatorial interview. She has picked up support from several Republicans. She answered questions for 8 hours during her confirmation hearing and submitted detailed responses to 900 written questions.

What I would like to focus on today are the claims I just heard from the Senator from Texas that she is somehow lawless.

Let's look through the facts. She has earned the support of Members of both parties. Do the Republicans who support her for this position think she is lawless? I don't think so. She has earned the support of top law enforcement groups and 25 former U.S. attorneys from both Republican and Democratic administrations.

Now let's start with the obvious. She is supremely qualified for Attorney General. She has a world-class legal mind, an unwavering commitment to justice, an unimpeachable character, and an extraordinary record of achievement.

During her time as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York, she tackled some of our Nation's hardest cases, from public corruption, to civil rights violations, to massive crime rings. She currently leads the U.S. attorney's office that has been charged with prosecuting more terrorism cases since 9/11 than any other office in the country, including trying the Al Qaeda operative who plotted to attack New York City's subway system. Would you hand this over to a lawless person? No. You would hand this over—this important job of going after terrorists—to someone who respects the law, who enforces the law, not, as my colleague from Texas said, to someone who is lawless.

This is a concern in my State. Just this week, our U.S. attorney, Andy Luger, indicted six people—six people—in the Twin Cities area who were plotting to go back to assist ISIS, to assist a terrorist group. So I care a lot about having an Attorney General in place who actually knows how to handle these terrorism cases, who is going to lead the Justice Department and understands the importance of going after these cases. Loretta Lynch is exactly the type of tough and tested leader we need at the Justice Department to lead the effort.

She has been endorsed by leaders ranging from the New York police commissioner—I don't know if my colleague from Texas considers him lawless—to the president of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, to the president of the National Association of Chiefs of Police. Alberto Gonzales says it is time to vote on Ms. Lynch. Rudy Giuliani says it is time to confirm her. These are not people my colleagues on the other side of the aisle normally say are lawless.

This is the story of Loretta Lynch and why I think she has been able to wait out this long process. Loretta Lynch has a lot of patience. When she was a little girl, she took a test and did incredibly well on that test. She did so well that they didn't believe she took that test. They asked her to take that test again, and she scored even higher. When she was valedictorian of the class, the principal came up to her and said: You know, this is a little awkward. You are African American, and we might want another White student to share the honor. That is what happened to her. She said: All right. That is a woman who has been through something and can wait this out. She will wait no longer after today.

The other thing I heard from our friends on the other side of the aisle—from Senator CRUZ—was that somehow she is lawless because she supported something that every President since Dwight Eisenhower has supported, has asked their Attorney General to do. The Attorney General has looked at the legal issues surrounding the issuance of an Executive order regarding immigration. Every Attorney General since Eisenhower's administration has advised their President on these issues. The first George Bush, the second George Bush, Ronald Reagan—with

every single one of these Presidents, there was some kind of Executive order issued involving immigrants.

I know because we have Liberians in Minnesota who, because of unrest in their country, have been there for decades under an Executive order, something that sometimes Congress gets involved and sometimes the President reissues. But that is one example of a group of people who have been able to stay in our country legally, work in our hospitals, work in our industries, and raise their families in this country because of Executive orders.

So to say that it is sometimes lawless—how lawless for her to support this simple idea that a President can issue an Executive order. Of course, we can debate the merits of that. We can talk about the fact that of course we would rather have comprehensive immigration reform. That is why I voted it. Of course that would be better, so the President could just tear up his Executive action. He said he would be glad to do that.

But the point of this is that every Attorney General in the Republican administrations since Dwight Eisenhower has supported their President when they issued an Executive order. So this idea that by somehow saying that is legal makes this nominee lawless is just plain wrong.

We look forward to another robust debate on immigration policy. Comprehensive immigration reform should be debated and passed by Congress. But Ms. Lynch should be judged on her record and her record alone. When we look at her record, we should be proud to have her as our next Attorney General of the United States of America.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I would like to make a few remarks about Loretta Lynch. While she should have been confirmed as Attorney General months ago, I want to make the following points: Her qualifications are sterling. Her education, her experience as a U.S. attorney under two Presidents, as well as her accomplishments are unassailable.

I have never seen a nominee in my 22 years handle a confirmation hearing with such poise and answer questions with such command. During her hearing, I said Loretta Lynch was a combination of steel and velvet, and that, to me, sums her up perfectly.

I met with her prior to her hearing and was deeply impressed. I reviewed her stellar record and found her to be a firm yet fair prosecutor—as a matter of fact, probably the prosecutor in one of the toughest districts—the Eastern District of New York—that exists in America.

Having led this very large and important U.S. Attorney's Office under two Presidents, she is a proven leader and she also knows how to bring people together to get the job done. I think that is important.

Let me just talk about national security. The Eastern District of New York, where Ms. Lynch served as U.S. attorney, has led the Nation in terrorism convictions among all U.S. Attorney Offices since 2001. She has overseen these cases. The six individuals connected to Najibullah Zazi, who was part of an Al Qaeda plot and planned to set off bombs on the New York subway system; Rezwanul Nafis, who attempted to use a weapon of mass destruction against the New York Federal Reserve Bank; four individuals, including Russell Defreitas, who plotted to attack JFK Airport; an individual who tried to go to Yemen to join Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula; and two individuals who allegedly were members of Al Qaeda and attacked U.S. military forces overseas.

In February, her office announced that three individuals had been charged with attempting and conspiring to provide material support to ISIL. Two were planning to fly to Syria to join ISIL. The third was arrested while boarding a flight to Turkey at JFK. Her office has also charged 11 individuals, alleging that they illegally worked to secure more than $50 million in high-tech equipment for Russian military and intelligence agencies.

At her confirmation hearing, Lynch emphasized the importance of the government having the ''full panoply of investigative tools and techniques to deal with the ever-evolving threat of terrorism.'' In sum, I am confident she is going to be a very strong voice leading the Justice Department on issues of national security. I can only say I think, as those of us on the Intelligence Committee see—and the Presiding Officer is one of them—this becomes more important every day.

Her experience is just as deep on domestic issues. As U.S. attorney for a major urban district, she clearly understands the importance of protecting us from gangs and organized crime, issues that are front and center in my home State of California.

Her work in this area shows she understands local and international criminal organizations.

In the last year, under her leadership, three individuals connected to a major organized crime family pleaded guilty to a racketeering conspiracy.

A gang leader was found responsible, after a five-week trial, ''for six murders, two attempted murder[s], armed robberies, murder-for-hire, narcotics, distribution, and gambling on dog fighting.''

Another gang leader was convicted and sentenced to 37 years in prison for ordering the murder of two individuals, one of whom was believed to be associated with a rival gang.

Three individuals in a New York cell of an international cybercrime organization were also convicted on charges stemming from cyberattacks that resulted in $45 million in losses.

She has also made combatting human trafficking a priority. Over the last decade, her office's anti-trafficking program has indicted more than 55 defendants in sex trafficking cases and rescued more than 110 victims of sex trafficking, including more than 20 minors.

Simply put, Loretta Lynch has been on the frontlines in investigating and prosecuting a range of perpetrators, and I believe she will continue that work as Attorney General.

I would be remiss if I did not express my extreme disappointment in the delay over Ms. Lynch's confirmation. We have before us a nominee with impeccable credentials to serve as the Nation's chief law enforcement officer. During her confirmation, Senator LEAHY asked a panel of witnesses who were pro and supposedly con to raise their hands if they opposed her. Not a single witness raised their hand. To me, that spoke volumes.

Even Republicans who will vote against her because they disagree with the President praise her credentials and personal qualifications. But despite all of that, the Senate subjected her to, I think, an inexcusable delay. It is particularly sensitive because this would be the first African-American woman as Attorney General in the history of the United States.

If you look at race relations today and the impartial and important role that the Department of Justice plays, it seems to me that her appointment may well be the most important possible appointment at this particular point in time. Her nomination has been pending for 56 days on the floor. That is more than twice as long as the seven most recent Attorneys General combined.

So, hopefully, it is done now. I recognize the other side will say they could not move the nomination because of the trafficking bill or for some other reason. But the fact remains that, historically, we customarily move back and forth between executive and legislative business. We could have done that here as well. We have confirmed district judges, we have confirmed individuals who serve in various other executive capacities, including subcabinet positions. So we could have easily considered the nominee for one of the most important posts in this government.

Let me conclude with this. I regret that a vote on her nomination cannot be unanimous. I hope it will be close to that. I do not think that will be possible. She is that good. She deserves a unanimous vote. She is as fine as I have seen in my time in the Senate.

Senator DURBIN remarked in committee that her confirmation will be a truly momentous occasion for the Senate and for our Nation. He said this should be a ''solemn, important, and historic moment for America.'' I truly believe he was right. I truly believe this is an uncommon nominee at an uncommon time who can display a tremendous will, drive, motivation, and sense of justice as our U.S. Attorney

General. I am very honored to cast my vote in favor of her nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri.

Mrs. MCCASKILL. Mr. President, briefly, this should be a happy day for America. This should be a day that is circled on the calendar as another day, as the Presiding Officer of this Senate knows, that this is about the American dream. This woman is the embodiment of the American dream in action. We should be celebrating her confirmation to the most important law enforcement position in the United States of America.

So why am I not happy? I am sad. I am depressed, because what we are going to witness in a few minutes is base politics at its ugliest. It does not get any uglier than this because what we are saying today—what my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are saying today is that it does not matter if you are qualified. It does not matter if you are one of the most qualified nominees for Attorney General in the history of our country. That makes no difference. We have a new test: You must disagree with the President who nominates you. Let me say that again because we love common sense in Missouri. This defies common sense. You must vote against a nominee for the Cabinet of the duly elected President of the United States because she agrees with the duly elected President of the United States. Think of the consequences of that vote. Think what that means to the future of advise and consent in this Senate.

If we all adopt this base politics ''place in the cheap seats,'' I can't get elected President unless I am against Loretta Lynch, if we all adopt that in the future, how is any President elected in this country going to assemble a Cabinet? Because it will be incumbent on all of us to be against Cabinet members who have the nerve to agree with the President who has selected them for their team.

It is beyond depressing. It is disgusting. She is so qualified. She has worked so hard all of her life. She is a prosecutor's prosecutor. She has prosecuted more terrorists than almost anybody on the face of the planet. The notion that this has occurred because she agrees with the man who selected her—I think everyone needs to understand what that means to the future if all of us embrace that kind of base politics in this decision. It is not a happy day. It is a very sad day.

I am proud of who Loretta Lynch is. I am proud she will be Attorney General of this country. I am sad it will be such a close vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Loretta Lynch is an historic nominee. What I worry about is this body is making history for the wrong reasons. Senate Republicans have filibustered her. She becomes the first out of 82 Attorneys General in our Nation's history to face a filibuster.

On one hand she is an historic nominee for the right reason; the first African-American woman for Attorney General, a woman who is highly, highly qualified. Everybody agrees with that. But what a shame that we have the second part of history, to have her be the first out of 82 Attorneys General to be filibustered—to be held to this very disturbing double standard. This woman has had to face double standards all her life—why one more? I will proudly vote for her.

I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Loretta Lynch to be Attorney General.

Mitch McConnell, Richard Burr, John Cornyn, Lamar Alexander, Bob Corker, Jeff Flake, Susan M. Collins, Orrin G. Hatch, Thom Tillis, Lisa Murkowski, Harry Reid, Richard J. Durbin, Patrick J. Leahy, Patty Murray, Amy Klobuchar, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Charles E. Schumer.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Loretta E. Lynch, of New York, to be Attorney General shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 66, nays 34, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 164 Ex.]

YEAS—66

Alexander	Flake	Murphy
Ayotte	Franken	Murray
Baldwin	Gardner	Nelson
Bennet	Gillibrand	Peters
Blumenthal	Graham	Portman
Booker	Hatch	Reed
Boxer	Heinrich	Reid
Brown	Heitkamp	Roberts
Burr	Hirono	Rounds
Cantwell	Johnson	Sanders
Capito	Kaine	Schatz
Cardin	King	Schumer
Carper	Kirk	Shaheen
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Cochran	Leahy	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Thune
Coons	Markey	Tillis
Corker	McCaskill	Udall
Cornyn	McConnell	Warner
Donnelly	Menendez	Warren
Durbin	Merkley	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Mikulski	Wyden

NAYS—34

Barrasso	Cruz	Hoeven
Blunt	Daines	Inhofe
Boozman	Enzi	Isakson
Cassidy	Ernst	Lankford
Coats	Fischer	Lee
Cotton	Grassley	McCain
Crapo	Heller	Moran
Murkowski	Sasse	Toomey
Paul	Scott	Vitter
Perdue	Sessions	Wicker
Risch	Shelby	
Rubio	Sullivan	

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. FISCHER). On this vote, the yeas are 66, the nays are 34.

The motion is agreed to.

Cloture having been invoked, under the previous order, there will be up to 2 hours of postcloture debate equally divided between the two leaders prior to a vote on the Lynch nomination.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 1191

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last week the Senate entered a unanimous consent agreement to get on the bipartisan Iran congressional review act at a time to be determined by the two leaders. Now that the Senate has passed the antitrafficking bill and the Lynch confirmation vote has been scheduled for later today, it is my intention to turn to the Iran legislation.

Therefore, I ask unanimous consent that at 3 p.m. today the Senate agree to the motion to proceed to H.R. 1191, as under the previous order, with debate only during today's session of the Senate following the offering of a substitute amendment by Senator CORKER or his designee, as under the previous order.

I further ask that following leader remarks on Tuesday, April 28, 2015, Senator CORKER be recognized to offer an amendment to the pending substitute.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Democratic leader.

Mr. REID. Madam President, it is my understanding that on Monday there will be opportunity for debate.

Is that right, Mr. Leader?

We will do that at closing tonight. That would be good.

Madam President, I appreciate very much the understanding of the Republican leader, the majority leader, about how to proceed on this. This is a really important piece of legislation. I don't know of a piece of legislation in recent years that is more important than this. So I look forward to the Senate turning to this legislation.

I again applaud and commend Senators CORKER and CARDIN for the delicate and very good work they have done on this. This measure, I repeat, is important. It deals with matters of international affairs and Congress's role in carrying out the constitutional responsibilities we have. This bill will take some time. I hope we can finish it as rapidly as possible. That is what I want.

I also want to comment that I think it is important we have the opportunity—and I am sure the Republican leader—to have our caucus on Tuesday, so that we by that time will have an idea how we are going to proceed forward on this.

I have heard some Senators want to offer amendments really to hurt this bill. I hope that, in fact, is not the case. I hope people are trying to be constructive. Regardless of that, the leader has assured us that there will be an open amendment process. So no matter how a person feels about this bill, they will have an opportunity to offer amendments. In my opinion, we need to support the Corker-Cardin agreement. Those Senators worked so we can get the bill passed as soon as possible.

So I have no objection.

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

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, 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. GRASSLEY. 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. GRASSLEY. Madam President, today the Senate takes up the nomination of the 83rd Attorney General.

We all know the former Democratic leadership could have processed this nomination during last year's lame duck. But in the limited time we had, they chose to concentrate on confirming a number of judges and getting a losing vote on NSA reform. Ms. Lynch, at that time, wasn't high on the priority of the Democratic majority, but now I am pleased that the Senate was finally able to come to an agreement on the sex trafficking legislation, so we can turn to the Lynch nomination.

I voted against Ms. Lynch's nomination in committee and will oppose her nomination again when it is time to vote this afternoon. I will spend a few minutes now explaining my reasons to my colleagues.

This nomination comes at a pivotal time for the Department of Justice and our country. The next Attorney General will face some very difficult challenges—from combatting cybercrime, to protecting our children from exploitation, to helping fight the war on terror. But beyond that, the new Attorney General has a mess to clean up. The Justice Department has been plagued the last few years by decisionmaking driven by politics—pure politics. Some of these I have mentioned before, but I would like to give just a few examples.

The Department's own inspector general listed this as one of the top management challenges for the Department of Justice: ''Restoring Confidence in the Integrity, Fairness, and Accountability of the Department.'' That is quite a major management challenge the Department faces.

This inspector general cited several examples, including the Department's falsely denying basic facts in the Fast and Furious controversy. The inspector general concluded this ''resulted in an erosion of trust in the Department.''

In that fiasco, our government knowingly allowed firearms to fall into the hands of international gun traffickers, and, I am sorry to say, it led to the death of Border Patrol agent Brian Terry.

Then how did the Department respond to all this obviously wrong action on their part? They denied, they spun, and they hid the facts from Congress. And if you hide the facts from the American Congress, you are hiding the facts from the American people.

They bullied and intimidated whistleblowers, members of the press, and, you might say, anyone who had the audacity to investigate and help us uncover the truth.

But Fast and Furious isn't the Department's only major failing under the Holder tenure. It has also failed to hold another government agency accountable, the Internal Revenue Service.

We watched with dismay as that powerful agency was weaponized and turned against individual citizens who spoke out in defense of faith, freedom, and our Constitution. What was the Department's reaction to the targeting of citizens based on their political beliefs? They appointed a campaign donor to lead an investigation that hasn't gone anywhere, and then, after that, the Department called it a day.

Meanwhile, the Department's top litigator, the Nation's Solicitor General, is arguing in case after case for breathtaking expansions of Federal power.

I said this before, but it bears repeating: Had the Department prevailed in just some of the arguments it pressed before the Supreme Court in the last several years—and I will give five examples:

One, there would be essentially no limit on what the Federal Government could order States to do as a condition for receiving Federal money.

Two, the Environmental Protection Agency could fine homeowners $75,000 a day for not complying with an order and then turn around and deny that homeowner any right to challenge the order or those fines in court when the order is issued.

Three, the Federal Government could review decisions by religious organizations regarding who can serve as a minister of a particular religion.

Four, the Federal Government could ban books that expressly advocate for the election or the defeat of political candidates.

And five, lastly, the way this Solicitor General argued, as I said, would bring the most massive expansion of Federal power in the history of the country. The Fourth Amendment wouldn't have anything to say about the police attaching a GPS device to a citizen's car without a warrant and constantly tracking their every movement for months or years.

Now, I have given five reasons of expansion of the Federal Government. These positions aren't in any way mainstream positions. At the end of the day, the common thread that binds all of these challenges together is a Department of Justice which has become deeply politicized. But that is what happens when the Attorney General of the United States views himself—and these are his own words—as the President's ''wingman.''

Because of all the politicized decisions we have witnessed over the last few years, I have said from the very beginning of this process that what we need more than anything else out of our new Attorney General is independence. Ever since she was nominated, it was my sincere hope that Ms. Lynch would demonstrate that sort of independence. It was my hope that she would make clear that, while she serves at the pleasure of the President, she is accountable to the American people, because the job of Attorney General is defined by a duty to defend the Constitution and uphold the rule of law. The job is not simply to defend the President and his policies.

I voted for Attorney General Holder despite some reservations and misgivings, but I have come to regret that vote because of the political way he has led the Department. I realize that the quickest way to end his tenure as Attorney General is to confirm Ms. Lynch, but, as I have said, the question for me from the start has been whether Ms. Lynch will make a clean break from the Holder policies and take the Department in a new direction.

Some of my Democratic colleagues have said that no one has raised any objection to Ms. Lynch's nomination. This, of course, is inaccurate. No one disputes that she has an impressive legal background. It was her testimony before the committee that caused concerns for many Senators, including me. After thoroughly reviewing that testimony, I concluded that she won't lead the Department in a different direction. That is very unfortunate. After 6 years of Attorney General Holder's leadership, the Department desperately needs a change of direction.

I would like to remind my Democratic colleagues that it was not too long ago that a majority of Democrats voted against Judge Mukasey for Attorney General—not based on his records but instead based upon his testimony before the committee. In fact, then-Senator Obama had this to say about Judge Mukasey: ''While his legal credentials are strong, his views on two critical and related matters are, in my view, disqualifying.''

I asked Ms. Lynch about her views on Fast and Furious, on the IRS scandal, and other ways the Department has been politicized. She did not demonstrate that she would do things differently. Instead, she gave nonanswers.

She was eloquent and polished but nonresponsive.

The bottom line is that Ms. Lynch does not seem willing to commit to a new, independent way of running the Department. That surprised me very much. Based on everything we were told, I expected Ms. Lynch to demonstrate a bit more independence from the President. I am confident that if she had done so, she would have garnered more support.

As I said when the committee voted on her nomination, to illustrate this point, we need to look no further than the confirmation of Secretary Carter to the Department of Defense earlier this year. When he testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Secretary Carter demonstrated the type of independent streak that many of us were hoping we would see in Ms. Lynch.

Most of the media reporting on the two nominations seemed to agree. Headlines regarding the Carter nomination in the New York Times and the Washington Post commended his shift from the President's policies with headlines such as ''Defense nominee Carter casts himself as an independent voice,'' which was in the Washington Post, and in the New York Times, ''In Ashton Carter, Nominee for Defense Secretary, a Change in Direction.'' But on the Lynch nomination, those same newspapers highlighted that she defended the President's policies on immigration and surveillance with headlines such as ''Lynch Defends Obama's Immigration Action,'' which was in the New York Times, and from the Huffington Post, ''Loretta Lynch Defends Obama's Immigration Actions.''

Secretary Carter was confirmed with 93 votes. Only five Senators voted against Secretary Carter's nomination. That lopsided vote was a reflection of his testimony before the Senate, which demonstrated a willingness to be an independent voice within the administration. Unfortunately, Ms. Lynch did not demonstrate the same type of independence.

I sincerely hope Ms. Lynch proves me wrong and is willing to stand up to the President and say no when the duty of office demands it. But based upon my review of her record, I cannot support the nomination.

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

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

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, I rise today to discuss the nomination of Loretta Lynch, a proud New Yorker and soon-to-be Attorney General of the United States of America. She was born in North Carolina, and her father was a fourth-generation Baptist minister, a man who grew up in the segregated South, and her mother picked cotton when she was a girl so her daughter would never have to. Their daughter grew up to be one of the keenest legal minds our country has to offer, someone who has excelled at every stage of her education and her career while cultivating a reputation—well deserved—as someone who is levelheaded, fair, judicious, and eminently likable.

If there is an American dream story, Loretta Lynch is it. Still, despite her intellectual and career achievements, Ms. Lynch has always been a nose-to-the-grindstone type, rarely seeking acclaim, only a job well done.

Throughout her career, she has had a yearning to serve the public, which began when she took a 75-percent pay cut to join the Eastern District as a prosecutor. There, she found her calling, handling some of the toughest litigation cases in the country on cyber crime, public corruption, financial fraud, police abuse, gang activity, organized crime, and especially terrorism.

When you look at the breadth and the depth of the cases she has handled, it is clear that Loretta Lynch is law enforcement's Renaissance woman. Because of her judicious, balanced, and careful approach to prosecuting on complex and emotional community-police relations matters, Ms. Lynch has always emerged with praise from both community leaders and the police. America needs this kind of leadership in our top law enforcement position.

In this age of global terrorism, the Attorney General's role in national security has never been more important.

I know her well. I was the person who recommended her to the President to be U.S. attorney twice. I know how good she is. In some of the most difficult cases—cases where the community was on one side and the police were on the other—she emerged with fair decisions that made both sides praise her. In this difficult world we are in, where we have so much tension, she is going to be great. That is why I was so proud when the President nominated her for Attorney General. She is just great. But one sad note—there is one cloud on this sunny day, and that is the long time it took to confirm her. We heard about a whole lot of issues completely unrelated to her experience or her qualifications. No one can assail Loretta Lynch—who she is, what she has done, how good an Attorney General she would be.

One quick story about Ms. Lynch. As I mentioned, I originally recommended Loretta Lynch for the position of U.S. attorney in 1999 because I thought she was excellent. Sure enough, she was.

When President Bush took office, Ms. Lynch went to the private sector to earn some money. When I had the opportunity to recommend a candidate for U.S. attorney again when President Obama became President in 2009, I was certain I wanted Ms. Lynch to serve again. She had only served for about 1½ years. She had done such a good job, I said, we need her back. But she had a good life. She was making a lot of money and had gotten married in the interim.

Knowing what a great person she is, I decided I would call her late on a Friday afternoon. I was confident that with the weekend to think it over, she would be drawn to answer the call to public service. When I called her Friday afternoon, she said to me, I was dreading this call, because she was happy in her life. But sure enough on Monday morning she called me back and said, I cannot turn this down because my desire to serve is so strong.

She is a great person in every way. On top of decades of experience at the highest levels of law enforcement and a sterling track record, Loretta Lynch brings a passion and deep commitment to public service befitting of the high office she is about to attain.

She will make an outstanding Attorney General. I believe every Member of this body will be proud of her, and I look forward to voting for her with great enthusiasm.

I yield the floor.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, today I underscore my opposition to the nomination of Loretta Lynch to be the next Attorney General of the United States. While her experience is extensive, both her judgment and independence were called into question by her expressed views on President Obama's clearly unconstitutional actions on immigration, and this is something that cannot be overlooked when considering a nominee to be our Nation's chief law enforcement officer.

Let's review Ms. Lynch's testimony before the Judiciary Committee on whether she believes the President's actions are constitutional. During that hearing, Ms. Lynch stated that she ''thought the legal opinion was reasonable'' and that the President's actions were a ''reasonable way to marshal limited resources to deal with the problem.'' When asked for a yes or no answer on whether she thinks Obama's executive actions on immigration were legal and constitutional, she stated, ''[A]s I've read the opinion, I do believe it is.''

What do these statements tell us? On the specific question of whether she thought the executive action was constitutional, Ms. Lynch was, at best, ambiguous. She attempted to obfuscate by saying that she found the underlying legal opinion ''reasonable.'' In my view, all obfuscation aside, she sufficiently conveyed to the committee that she, in fact, thought the executive actions were legal and constitutional.

Many have asked me: But, Senator MCCAIN, wouldn't you expect a Presidential nominee to support a position being taken by the President who is nominating her? In most cases, the answer is yes. And, it is well known that, historically, I have been deferential to the President's prerogative to select his senior advisors—even those who require Senate confirmation. But, on

matters regarding the U.S. Constitution—particularly those that implicate the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches, the Attorney General is different.

It is the job of the U.S. Attorney General to represent the people of the United States and to ''do justice.'' It is not to serve as a policy instrument or cheerleader for the President. We have had years of that with Attorney General Holder. It has to stop with this nomination. Inasmuch as, by her own testimony, Ms. Lynch sees merit in a position that impinges on the constitutional prerogatives of the branch of government that I serve, I must vote in opposition to her nomination.

By the President's own repeated appraisal, the executive actions on immigration are unconstitutional. At least 22 times in the past few years, President Obama claimed he did not have the authority to unilaterally change the law in the way he did. For years, he pointed to Congress as the only way this change could take place, but reversed that position last November with his executive actions declaring the law as currently drafted to be inapplicable to millions of people. The following is a just a sampling of these oft-repeated statements:

''Comprehensive reform, that's how we're going to solve this problem. . . . Anybody who tells you it's going to be easy or that I can wave a magic wand and make it happen hasn't been paying attention to how this town works.''

''I can't simply ignore laws that are out there. I've got to work to make sure that they are changed.''

''I am president, I am not king. I can't do these things just by myself.''

''But there's a limit to the discretion that I can show because I am obliged to execute the law. That's what the Executive Branch means. I can't just make the laws up by myself. So the most important thing that we can do is focus on changing the underlying laws.''

''With respect to the notion that I can just suspend deportations through executive order, that's just not the case . . .''

''Believe me, the idea of doing things on my own is very tempting. I promise you. Not just on immigration reform. But that's not how our system works. That's not how our democracy functions. That's not how our Constitution is written.''

Whether you call it prosecutorial discretion or prioritizing enforcement, the argument does not survive scrutiny. With the stroke of a pen, the President's Executive action on immigration unilaterally changed the law as he saw fit, in violation of our Constitution and the way our system of government wisely provides for laws to be changed.

To the extent Ms. Lynch is willing to characterize this as reasonable and even constitutional, I cannot support her nomination. For all these reasons, I cast my vote in opposition to her confirmation to be U.S. Attorney General and urge my colleagues to do the same.

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

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

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

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

TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I rise in strong opposition to the fast-track bill the Finance Committee approved last night, and that I think will be on the floor next week or the following week, on the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

I think the most important aspect of this debate is that what we are discussing with the TPP is not a new concept. It is not as though somebody came and said, I have a great idea; let's try this trade agreement, and it is going to be really good for the American worker and the American middle class and the American people. The truth is that we have seen this movie time and time and time again. Let me tell my colleagues that the ending of this movie is not very good. It is a pretty bad ending. I think most Americans understand that our past trade agreements have failed our American workers and have led to the loss of millions of decent-paying jobs.

What I simply don't understand—if we were going forward in the first place, with a new idea, maybe we should give it a shot. But when we went forward with NAFTA, when we went forward with CAFTA, when we went forward with Normal Permanent Trade Relations and there were all of these folks telling us how great these agreements were going to be and it turned out that virtually everything they said was inaccurate—not true—why in God's Name would we go forward with another trade agreement which is, in fact, larger than previous trade agreements?

Let me give an example of what I mean. On September 19, 1993, President Bill Clinton said the following:

> I believe that NAFTA will create 200,000 American jobs in the first two years of its effect. . . . I believe that NAFTA will create a million jobs in the first five years of its effect.

So President Clinton was pushing the NAFTA agreement very hard, and that is what he said.

In 1993, the same year, the Heritage Foundation, which is one of the most conservative think tanks in the country—so here we have a liberal President, Bill Clinton, and we have a conservative think tank, the Heritage Foundation—this is what they said: ''Virtually all economists agree that NAFTA will produce a net increase of U.S. jobs over the next decade.''

In 1993, the distinguished Senator from Kentucky, who is now our majority leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, said: ''American firms will not move to Mexico just for lower wages.'' MITCH MCCONNELL: ''American firms will not move to Mexico just for lower wages.''

Well, was President Clinton right? Was the Heritage Foundation right? Was Senator MCCONNELL right? No. I think the evidence is pretty clear they were all wrong.

According to a well-respected economist at the Economic Policy Institute—and their facts usually hold up pretty well—NAFTA has led to the loss of more than 680,000 American jobs. What President Clinton said was wrong, what the Heritage Foundation said was wrong. We lost substantial numbers of jobs.

In 1993, the year before NAFTA was implemented, the United States had a trade surplus with Mexico of more than $1.6 billion. Last year, the trade deficit with Mexico was $53 billion. We had a trade surplus of $1.6 billion; last year we had a deficit of $53 billion. Now, how is that a success? I don't know.

In other words, NAFTA has been a disaster for American workers.

What about the Chinese trade agreement? I remember hearing all of the discussions about how great it would be if we had a trade agreement with a huge country such as China; thinking about all of the American products they would be buying, manufactured here in the United States. Here is what President Bill Clinton said about PNTR with China back in 1999. It is important to remember what people said because they are saying the same thing about this trade agreement. But this is back in 1999, Bill Clinton, President, PNTR with China:

> In opening the economy of China, the agreement will create unprecedented opportunities for American farmers, workers and companies to compete successfully in China's market. . . . This is a hundred-to-nothing deal for America when it comes to the economic consequences.

Once again, that is a liberal President.

Now, we have the conservative think tanks that love unfettered free trade. In 1999, discussing PNTR with China, the conservative economists at the Cato Institute—these are really conservative guys and this is what they said:

> The silliest argument against PNTR is that Chinese imports would overwhelm U.S. industry. In fact, American workers are far more productive than their Chinese counterparts. . . . PNTR would create far more export opportunities for America than the Chinese.

Well, what can we say about that? The Cato Institute wrote in 1999: ''The silliest argument against PNTR is that Chinese imports would overwhelm U.S. industry.''

Sure. Right.

If we go out to any department store in America and we buy products, where

are those products made? Guess what. They are made in China. It appears that, in fact, Chinese imports did overwhelm U.S. industry. The Cato Institute was dead wrong.

Again, nobody is really surprised at this. There is no more debate about this. Permanent Normal Trade Relations with China, that trade agreement, was a disaster.

The Economic Policy Institute has estimated that trade agreement with China has led to the loss of 2.7 million American jobs. The trade deficit with China has increased from $83 billion in 2001 to $342 billion in 2014.

Now, in terms of China, I don't know that the American people have any doubt about it. Every time we go shopping, the products overwhelmingly are made in China. People look in their own towns and in their own States—my State—and see losses of more and more manufacturing jobs. Since 2001, we have lost 60,000 manufacturing facilities in America. Not all of it is attributable to trade; there are other reasons, but a lot of it is attributable to trade. Millions of decent-paying jobs are gone; people thrown out on the street as companies move to China, Vietnam, and other low-wage countries. There is not a debate about it. That is exactly what has happened. Corporation after corporation has said, Why do I want to pay an American worker $15, $20 an hour? Why do I want to deal with the union? Why do I have to obey environmental regulations? I can move to China, I can move to Vietnam, I can move to Malaysia or Mexico and I can pay people pennies an hour and bring the product back into the United States. That is what they said, and that is what they have done.

Major corporation after major corporation has reduced employment in America at the same time as they have increased employment in other countries.

Not only is it the loss of jobs, it is the race to the bottom. It is employers saying to workers, Look, I am cutting your health care, I am not giving you a raise, and if you don't like it, I am moving to China because there are people all over the world who are prepared to work for wages a lot lower than you are receiving. You can take it or leave it. That is one of the reasons why today the typical American worker is working longer hours for lower wages than he or she used to and why wages have gone down in America. That is what the global economy has done. That is what these horrendous unfettered free-trade agreements have pushed on American workers. That is the Chinese trade agreement: an estimated 2.7 million American jobs lost.

Then we have the Korea Free Trade Agreement, which has led to a loss of some 60,000 jobs. Our trade deficit with that country has gone up from $16.6 billion in 2012 to $25 billion in 2014.

So we have a history of failed trade agreement after failed trade agreement after failed trade agreement and people say, Hey, we failed, we failed, we failed; let's do the same thing again and this time we are really, really, really going to succeed. I don't think anybody really believes that.

I do understand that Wall Street loves this trade agreement and they are staying up nights worrying about ordinary Americans; and I understand that the major corporations in this country love this agreement and the truck companies love this agreement, which gives us enough reason to hold this agreement in doubt.

Now, the Obama administration says, Well, trust us. Forget about the other trade agreements. This TPP is something different. It is a better agreement. This time will be different. This time it will support about 650,000 American jobs. Well, supporters of unfettered free trade were wrong about NAFTA, they were wrong about CAFTA, they were wrong about PNTR with China, and they were wrong about the Korea Free Trade Agreement and—surprise of all surprises—they are wrong again.

If the fast-track is approved, it would pave the way for the passage of the TPP—the Trans-Pacific Partnership—trade agreement. As my colleagues know, this trade agreement is poised to be the largest free-trade agreement in history, encompassing 12 nations that account for roughly 40 percent of the global economy. This is a very big deal.

Let me speak about two of those countries that are involved in the TPP; those are Vietnam and Malaysia. We are fighting here—and I understand there are differences of opinion—we are fighting here in the U.S. Congress to raise the minimum wage. I happen to believe a $7.25 minimum wage, which is what it is federally, is a starvation wage. I would like to see it go up over a period of years to $15 an hour. The Presiding Officer may disagree, and there are others who disagree.

Let me tell my colleagues what the minimum wage is in Vietnam. The minimum wage in Vietnam is 56 cents an hour—56 cents an hour. So we have American workers being forced to compete against people who make 56 cents an hour. And we have a situation, just as one example of many, where the Nike company—a company which produces over 365 million pairs of athletic shoes each year—goes all over the world. Do you know how many of those athletic shoes are manufactured in the United States of America? Fifty million? Twenty million? Ten million? One million? Zero. On the other hand, they employ 330,000 workers in Vietnam—mostly young women—and while they refuse to tell us, give us the detailed information, our supposition is that most of those women make very low wages.

Let's be clear about what is going on. According to a November 11, 2014, article in the Vietnamese newspaper Thanh Nien News: ''Analysts acknowledge that Vietnam's abundance of cheap labor has played an increasingly pivotal role in wooing foreign firms looking to set up overseas manufacturing operations in a country with a population of 90 million.''

In other words, that is what this is all about. Wages are very low in Vietnam. Companies from the United States and all over the world will go to that country. Allowing the TPP to pass will make it easier for multinational companies to shut down in America and move to Vietnam. That is wrong.

When we talk about free trade, it is important to understand what is involved. Whom are we competing against? Are we competing against Canadian workers whose standard of living is as high or higher than ours? Are we competing against workers in Germany whose standard of living may be higher than ours? No. We are competing against people who are struggling to stay alive, earning the lowest possible wages that keep a human being alive.

Last year, the Human Rights Watch published a report on Vietnam. Here are some of the quotes from that report:

> The human rights situation in Vietnam deteriorated significantly in 2013, worsening a trend evident for several years. The year was marked by a severe and intensifying crackdown on critics, including long prison terms for many peaceful activists whose ''crime'' was calling for political change.

In other words, in Vietnam, if you speak up, you want political change, there is a likelihood you will end up in jail.

> Vietnam bans all political parties, labor unions and human rights organizations independent of the government. . . . The authorities require official approval for public gatherings and refuse to grant permission for meetings, marches, or protests they deem politically or otherwise unacceptable.

It is not my point to beat up on Vietnam. They are a struggling country—a poor country that went through a terrible war with the United States that caused them incredible harm. But when we look at a trade agreement, when we say to American workers: This is your competition, people who are making 56 cents an hour in some cases, people who can't form an independent trade union, people who politically can't stand up and speak up for their rights, is that really appropriate and fair to the American worker? I don't think it is. I don't think it is.

Let me say a word not just on Vietnam but another country in that consortium of partners in the TPP; that is, the country of Malaysia.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a New York Times article, dated September 17, 2014.

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

[From the New York Times, Sept. 17, 2014]

REPORT CITES FORCED LABOR IN MALAYSIA'S ELECTRONICS INDUSTRY

(By Steven Greenhouse)

Nearly one in three migrant workers in Malaysia's thriving electronics industry

toils under forced labor conditions, essentially trapped in the job, a factory monitoring group found in a report issued on Wednesday.

The monitoring group, Verité—which conducted a two-year investigation commissioned by the United States Department of Labor—found that 32 percent of the industry's nearly 200,000 migrant workers were employed in forced situations because their passports had been taken away or because they were straining to pay back illegally high recruitment fees.

The report said those practices were prevalent among the migrants from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Vietnam and other countries who work in Malaysia's nearly 200 electronics factories. Those factories, which produce consumer electronics, motherboards, computer peripherals and other electronic goods, account for a third of Malaysia's exports and produce for many well-known companies, including Apple, Flextronics, Samsung and Sony.

The Verité report said that 92 percent of the migrant workers in Malaysia's electronics industry had paid recruitment fees and that 92 percent of that group had paid fees that exceeded legal or industry standards, defined as more than one month's wages.

The report said about half of the migrant workers who borrowed for their recruitment fees spent more than a year paying off those fees. According to the report, 94 percent of the migrants did not have their passports when Verité's investigators interviewed them, and 71 percent said it would be impossible or difficult to get their passports back when needed.

''This most modern of industrial sectors is characterized by a form of exploitation that long ago should have been relegated to the past,'' said Daniel Viederman, chief executive of Verité. ''The problem is not one of a few isolated cases. It is indeed widespread.''

Labor Department officials commissioned the study because the federal government frowns on the importation of goods made by forced labor. They sought an investigation after seeing evidence that the problem was serious in Malaysia.

Twelve investigators working for Verité interviewed a total of 501 workers from nearly 200 Malaysian factories. According to the study, ''92 percent reported feeling compelled to work overtime hours to pay off their debt, and 85 percent felt it was impossible to leave their job before paying off their debt.'' Seventy-seven percent had to borrow money to pay their recruitment fees.

''Workers are paying too much to get their jobs,'' Mr. Viederman said. ''That leaves them vulnerable to being trapped in their jobs.''

He told of a migrant worker from Nepal who spoke good English and was the only one of five children with a college degree. His family paid a recruitment agent $1,500 for his job, which was more than twice the annual income in Nepal, and they borrowed much of that at a 36 percent annual interest rate.

When the Nepali arrived in Malaysia, his passport was taken from him at the airport, and he has not seen it since, he told the Verité interviewer. ''He has now completed 14 months of a three-year contract, and he has not been able to save any money'' because he is still paying back the recruitment fees, Mr. Viederman said. The Nepali works 12 hours a day, often seven days a week, and said it would take two years to finish repaying the loan.

''He doesn't want to be in Malaysia anymore,'' Mr. Viederman said. ''He wants to quit and return home, but then he would have to pay a hefty fine and purchase his own plane ticket and still have the loan payment hanging over his head. He wasn't sure if he could get his passport back.''

The report found that 30 percent of foreign workers said they slept in a room with more than eight people, and 43 percent said there was no place where they could safely store their belongings. Twenty-two percent of the workers said they had been deceived about their wages, hours or overtime requirements during the recruitment process.

Mr. Viederman said many workers faced a ''one-two punch''—being charged high recruitment fees and then being paid less than they had been promised. He said many workers were told that their wages would be withheld or they would be reported to authorities if they complained or protested.

The Malaysian Embassy in Washington did not respond to inquiries—Tuesday was a national holiday.

Officials from Samsung and Sony did not respond to questions about Malaysia.

Asked about the reports of forced labor, Chris Gaither, a spokesman for Apple, said: ''This is an issue we have paid a lot of attention to and done a lot of work on. We were the first electronics company to mandate reimbursement to workers who were charged excessive recruitment fees.''

Mr. Gaither said Apple's supply chain, which employs 1.5 million workers worldwide, employs 18,000 in Malaysia, including 4,000 migrant contract workers. He said that since 2008, Apple had helped migrant workers in Malaysia and elsewhere to reclaim $19.8 million in excessive recruitment fees, which he defined as more than one month's wages. Apple uses about 30 factories in Malaysia, and Apple had audits done at 18 of them in the last year to investigate forced labor and other problems.

Mr. Viederman said companies should strengthen their codes of conduct to bar payment of recruitment fees for workers at any factories they use and to prohibit supplier factories from taking migrant workers' passports. He said companies should make sure their factory monitors engaged in aggressive investigations to unearth such practices. In addition, he called for a grievance procedure for workers that would hold the companies, suppliers and labor brokers accountable.

The Verité report found 62 percent of migrant workers said they were unable to move around freely without their passports. Fifty-seven percent said they could not leave their job before their contract was finished because they would be charged an illegally high fine, lose their passport or be denounced to the authorities.

Forty-six percent reported having encounters with police, immigration officials or a volunteer citizens security corps. Most of the 46 percent said they had to pay a bribe, were detained or were threatened with detention or physical harm. Twenty-seven percent of the foreign workers said they could not come and go freely from their housing.

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, what the New York Times article talks about is that today there are nearly 200 electronics factories in Malaysia where high-tech products from Apple, Dell, Intel, Motorola, and Texas Instruments are manufactured and brought back into the United States. It turns out Malaysia is a major center for the manufacturing of electronics, and some of the largest electronics manufacturers in the world are centered or have plants in Malaysia. If the TPP is approved, that number will go up substantially. Now, what is wrong with that?

Well, let's talk about what is going on in Malaysia, where American companies in this country and American workers will have to compete as part of the TPP. Well, it turns out that many of the workers at the electronics plants in Malaysia are immigrants to that country and are forced to work there under subhuman working conditions.

According to Verite, which conducted a 2-year investigation into labor abuses in Malaysia, which was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor—this report was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor.

This report tells us that 32 percent of the electronics industries' nearly 200,000 migrant workers in Malaysia were employed in forced situations because their passports had been taken away or because they were straining to pay back illegally high recruitment fees.

According to the New York Times article commenting on the study, 92 percent of the migrant workers in Malaysia's electronics industries had paid recruitment fees, and 92 percent of that group had paid fees that exceeded legal or industry standards defined as more than one month's wages.

Ninety-four percent of the migrants did not have their passports when Verite's investigators interviewed them. Let me repeat that. The passports were taken away from 94 percent of the people whom these investigators interviewed. Now, if you are a migrant in a foreign country and your passport is taken away, you have no rights at all. You can't leave. You may not be able to travel. You have no rights at all. In other words, many of these workers who wanted to leave Malaysia were unable to do so. They were forced to stay and continue to work under these subhuman conditions.

Mr. President, 30 percent of foreign workers—this is again in the report from Verite, commissioned by the U.S. Department of Labor—30 percent of foreign workers said they slept in a room with more than eight people, and 43 percent said there was no place where they could safely store their belongings.

Well, when we talk about competition and a competitive global economy, I do not believe the American worker should be forced to compete against workers who are literally held in slave-like conditions, unable to leave the country, having their passports taken away, working for pennies an hour.

Let me conclude simply by saying this: This trade agreement is being pushed on the Congress by the largest corporations in the United States of America. They love unfettered free trade because it enables them to shut down in America and move to low-wage countries where they can employ workers at pennies an hour. This trade agreement is pushed on us by Wall Street, that wants to make sure that around the world they will have financial regulations that make it easier for them to do what they do, rather than serve the economies of countries around the world.

This legislation is strongly supported by the pharmaceutical industry that will have the opportunity to prevent poor countries around the world from moving to generic drugs and make medicine affordable to the poor people in these countries. So all of the billionaire class, all of the powerful corporate world is supporting this trade agreement.

Who is opposing this trade agreement? Well, virtually every trade union in America whose job it is to stand up for American workers. They are in opposition. I was just at a rally with them the other day. They are united. They are in opposition. You have many environmental groups that understand this is a bad agreement. You have medical groups that understand this is a bad agreement for poor people in developing countries, and you have millions of workers in this country who do not want to compete. They are not afraid of competition. We are a productive country. They do not want to compete against people making 56 cents an hour or against forced labor in Malaysia. That is where we are today.

Where we are today is, Do we go forward with a failed trade policy or do we take a deep breath and say enough is enough? Let us rethink trade policy. Let us figure out a way we can grow the American economy, create decent jobs in the United States, and, by the way, help poor people around the world. All of us want to see wages go up in poor countries around the world, but that does not mean wages have got to go down in the United States of America. We need a trade agreement that works for our people, works for people around the world but is not a trade agreement that only works for the Big Money interests in the United States.

I hope very much the Senate will take a real hard look at this trade agreement, take a hard look at what people have been saying for years about previous trade agreements and say we are not going down this failed path anymore.

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

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

REMEMBERING DR. IRWIN SCHATZ

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I came across an article in the New York Times on Sunday that called my attention to the passing of an amazing man, a man who has a connection to the U.S. Senate.

I rise to pay my respects to a man of uncommon integrity. Dr. Irwin Schatz passed away on April 1 at the age of 83. Beloved and respected in the medical community, Dr. Schatz spent his career helping people. He was a major contributor to the Honolulu Heart Program, a landmark study with half a century of followup on Japanese American men in Hawaii.

Dr. Schatz was the rare critic of the notorious Tuskegee, AL, syphilis medical experiments.

From 1952 to 1972, the U.S. Public Health Service conducted the Tuskegee clinical study on poor African-American sharecroppers. They wanted to know about untreated syphilis on African Americans. There were 600 men enrolled in the study. Almost two-thirds had syphilis, while the rest were used as control subjects. Between 1932 and 1947, the date when penicillin was determined to be the cure for the disease, at least seven men died, and their wives, children, and untold number of others had been infected.

Men participating in the study were told they were being treated for bad blood. Bad blood wasn't running in the veins of these men, it was running in the veins of those who decided this study was worth more than their humanity.

Dr. Irwin Schatz was 4 years out of medical school working as a cardiologist at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit when he came across the December 1964 issue of the journal ''Archives of Internal Medicine,'' which mentioned the Tuskegee study. We cannot be sure how many other people read this issue, but Dr. Schatz read it, and he was horrified.

Dr. Schatz wrote to the study's senior author, Dr. Donald Rockwell. His letter was only three sentences long. These three sentences could have put his career at risk. Here was this young doctor criticizing an investigation overseen by some of the leading figures in the American Public Health Service.

Here is what he wrote:

> I am utterly astounded by the fact that physicians allow patients with a potentially fatal diseases to remain untreated when effective therapy is available. I assume you feel the information which is extracted from observations of this untreated group is their sacrifice. If this is the case, then I suggest the United States Public Health Service and those physicians associated with it in this study need to reevaluate their moral judgment in this regard.

The sad reality is that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention buried Dr. Schatz' letter, and it would sit in their archives until 1972. A Wall Street Journal reporter found the letter the same year that Peter Buxtun, health service employee turned whistleblower, told the world about this horrific study.

Dr. Schatz went on to serve in a variety of hospitals. In 1975 he joined the University of Hawaii and eventually became chairman of their department of medicine. In 2009, he was named a medical hero by the Mayo Clinic because of his career but also because of the moral fury he expressed in that three-sentence letter.

Irwin Schatz was truly a hero. My prayers and thoughts go out to his sons, Jacob, Edward, Stephen, and our colleague Senator BRIAN SCHATZ, his nine grandchildren and his family.

Mr. President, I would like to speak on a separate topic very briefly.

The moment is going to finally arrive in just a few minutes when we are going to, I hope, approve by a bipartisan vote the nomination of Loretta Lynch to be our next Attorney General. This is a milestone in the history of the United States—the first African-American woman to become Attorney General of this country.

I would like to say that I am sorry—and I am—for the delay in bringing this nomination before the Senate. It should have been done long ago. She is an extraordinary person from an extraordinary family. We have been blessed with her public service for so many years, and now she has reached the top in her career to be able to serve as our next Attorney General.

I will, with a great deal of admiration and respect, be voting in favor of this nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I eagerly echo the words of my dear friend, the senior Senator from Illinois. This is a great, historic moment. Earlier today, we ended the filibuster on this woman, Loretta Lynch. We ended the filibuster of her nomination to be Attorney General of the United States.

The good news is that we ended the filibuster. The bad news is that for the first time in our Nation's history, we had to overcome a filibuster for an Attorney General nominee—of either party. Eighty-two prior Attorneys General, going back to George Washington straight through, and not one of them has been treated the way Loretta Lynch has been treated.

I have come to know what a strong and good woman she is from her time as U.S. attorney and straight through to her confirmation hearing. At her confirmation hearing, those opposed to her brought witnesses but when I asked them, are there any of you who would vote against her, not a single hand went up.

You see, I know her strengths. I know she has persevered through much more difficult circumstances in her life. I believe this will make her even stronger. But do I hope after this extended delay, that Senate Republicans will show her more respect as Attorney General of the United States than she has received as a nominee.

She deserves all of America's respect and our gratitude for being willing to continue to serve our Nation. Loretta Lynch is eminently qualified to be Attorney General. She has twice been unanimously confirmed by the Senate to be U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York. Her record as a top Federal prosecutor in Brooklyn is unimpeachable.

I have no doubt that as Attorney General, Ms. Lynch will effectively, fairly, and independently enforce the law.

She has received the highest praise from those on both sides of the aisle. A group of 26 former United States Attorneys from both Republican and Democratic administrations have written, ''Ms. Lynch has the experience, temperament, independence, integrity, and judgment to immediately assume this critically important position.'' A former Associate Attorney General serving at the Justice Department under President Bush wrote to me saying that ''[Ms. Lynch is] uniquely qualified to serve as Attorney General.'' Former Republican mayor of New York City, Rudy Guiliani, said, ''If I were in the Senate, I would confirm her,'' and Louis Freeh, former director of the FBI and Federal judge, has written ''[i]n my twenty-five years of public service—23 in the Department of Justice—I cannot think of a more qualified nominee to be America's chief law enforcement officer.'' This is just a glimpse of the broad support she has received.

Loretta Lynch deserves to be considered by this Chamber based on her record, her accomplishments, and her extraordinary character. Let us come together. Let us make history by confirming Loretta Lynch to be the first African-American woman to serve as Attorney General of the United States.

I ask unanimous consent to yield back all time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, all time is yielded back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Loretta E. Lynch, of New York, to be Attorney General?

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

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

The result was announced—yeas 56, nays 43, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 165 Ex.]

YEAS—56

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

NAYS—43

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

NOT VOTING—1

Cruz

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. As a reminder, expressions of approval or disapproval are not permitted from the gallery.

The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I appreciate the majority leader making the usual request that the President be notified, but I have a sneaky suspicion the President knows what the final vote was.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and be in a period of morning business until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

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

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

FIRST 100 DAYS OF THE REPUBLICAN-LED SENATE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, last Thursday marked the 100th day of the new Republican-led Senate. While it is still very early, and there is still much to be done, we can report there has been bipartisan progress in a number of important areas. So I am optimistic. I am optimistic that the momentum we have seen over the last several months is going to translate into further successes on behalf of Americans.

It is interesting to read from last Thursday's USA TODAY: The first 100 days of Republican Congress. The headline is: ''Lawmakers try to prove it's possible to be productive.'' So people are noticing the fact that we are keeping our campaign promises.

During the last campaign season we told people all across the country that if they just gave us the opportunity to govern, we would do it in a bipartisan way. In November, the American people did send an unmistakable message to Washington. Voters across the country said they were tired of gridlock and tired of a lack of action. They said it was time for a new majority—a Republican majority—a majority to get the Senate working again and to get America on a better course.

Republicans have responded, and we are working hard to make the Senate accountable again to the people who sent us here. And you don't have to take my word for it. Just the other day, the Bipartisan Policy Center came out with its healthy Congress index. This is a group of former Republican and Democratic leaders of Congress. They talked about how the new Senate has been showing signs of life. The total number of days worked, they report, is up from that of previous years—43 days in the first 100 calendar days of this Senate versus 33 days at the same point last Congress, and 33 days in the Congress before that.

Also, the number of bills reported out of committee is way up. In the first 100 days we had 15 bills reported out of committees in the Senate compared to just 8 in the first 100 days of the previous two Congresses. Imagine that, our committees are working, and we are pushing out bipartisan bills, such as the Iran congressional review bill that passed unanimously in the Foreign Relations Committee.

The number of amendments voted on is larger than it has been in previous Congresses. In the first 100 days of this Congress, we voted on more than 100 amendments. These are amendments by both Republicans and Democrats. For all of last year there were only 15 up-and-down votes on amendments—just 15 for the entire year. This year we topped that number of amendment votes by January 22.

That is just one more way the Senate is working again. In the first 100 days we passed a dozen bipartisan bills. We passed the bipartisan Keystone XL Pipeline jobs bill. We passed a bill to make much-needed reforms to the Medicare program and to reauthorize the Children's Health Insurance Program. We passed the Clay Hunt Veterans Suicide Prevention Act. We reached an agreement to help victims of modern slavery who are abused and exploited by human traffickers. These important bills are just part of our commitment to work together to solve problems for the American people.

On top of all that, we passed a budget that actually balances over the next 10 years. Even former Democratic Senate leader Tom Daschle recently said that ''there's been more open debate and

consideration of issues'' under Senator MCCONNELL's leadership. Well, that is exactly right. The Senate is working again, and we are just getting started.

I am hopeful we can continue to work together to find solutions for more issues that matter to the American people. As chairman of the Indian Affairs Committee, I can say that we have made real progress on bills to improve the lives of people across Indian Country. We have passed bills to improve irrigation projects, to help protect children in foster care, and to increase self-governance by Indian tribes. It has been a positive agenda, and I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of all the committee members.

Along with a group of six Democrats and six Republicans who are working as cosponsors, I introduced a bill to speed up exports of American liquefied natural gas. We have bipartisan agreement on the need to streamline the permitting process for the sale of this clean American energy.

This week we also made great progress on a bipartisan bill on the waters of the United States. I am optimistic we can reach an agreement with Senators on the other side of the aisle to get that issue behind us.

The American people want an honest debate on important issues such as these. The American people want their representatives in the Senate to be able to offer amendments. The American people want to see their Senators take a stand and cast a vote up or down. That is how the Senate should work. That is how the Senate has been working for the first 100 days under Republican leadership.

I am pleased with how productive the Senate has been over the first 100 days. Of course we want to do more, and we will have the chance shortly. I look forward to more votes, more debate, and more consideration of ideas from both sides of the aisle. This is the commitment Republicans made to the American people, and we are keeping that commitment.

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

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

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I am happy to stand here today knowing that the Senate has had a pretty good week of getting its work done—or I should say the people's work done—and overwhelmingly passing important legislation that will actually help, first of all, victims of human trafficking, but generally speaking, help make the lives of our constituents, the American people, just a little bit better. I am talking about the antitrafficking legislation in particular—something I am particularly excited about—the unanimous, 99-to-0 vote yesterday. We passed this piece of legislation after a hard-fought few weeks of debate. The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act was a bill we all agree was worth fighting for. Why? Is this important to the rich and powerful, the people who have a lot of influence here in Washington and around the country? No. We thought it was worth fighting for because it would help the people who, frankly, need a voice. They need somebody to speak up for them because they can't speak for themselves. This antitrafficking bill, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, protects the most vulnerable people in our country.

I thank the majority leader for his tireless help and commitment to making sure we got this job done to fight this monstrous crime and punish those who seek to hold our children in what has been appropriately called nothing less than modern-day slavery.

As the majority leader said yesterday, today is a new day. Under his leadership, the Senate is now in a new era of bipartisanship and functioning. If there is one thing I heard last year as I was campaigning for reelection in Texas or traveling around the country—I am sure the Presiding Officer had the same experience—it is that people would tell me how frustrated they were with Washington and the fact that no one seemed to be working together to try to solve the problems that were making their lives more difficult. ''Dysfunction'' was the word most commonly used.

But now, after this first 100 days of a new Congress, I think we are demonstrating that we are capable of functioning and working together in the best interest of the American people. Does that mean we are sacrificing our principles? People are Republicans or Democrats for good reason: They have a different point of view. But what is inexcusable is for Republicans and Democrats to refuse to work together and get nothing done.

We have a colleague, a very conservative colleague who years ago told me, while working with a very liberal colleague—I asked him: How is it that somebody who really represents the book ends in terms of ideology—Republican versus Democrat, liberal versus conservative—how is it that you actually are able to get things done?

He said to me: Well, it is easy. It is the 80–20 rule. We take the 80 percent we can agree on and we leave the 20 percent we can't agree on for another day and another fight.

As we are celebrating, in a sense, a new era of bipartisanship and functioning here in the Senate, it is clear we can't rest on our laurels. We still have a lot of work to do, and I would like to spend a couple minutes talking about that.

Our upcoming agenda will include some very important and weighty matters, including the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, which will give Congress the ability and time to scrutinize any agreement reached between the Obama administration and the P5+1 nations, while also prohibiting the President from lifting sanctions on Iran during this period of review.

This commonsense bill was unanimously reported out last week by the Foreign Relations Committee. I think that is a little bit of a surprise to many given the fact that the President initially said that if Congress were to pass this sort of legislation giving the American people a voice in this nuclear agreement, he would veto it. Well, when this came roaring out of the Foreign Relations Committee with unanimous support and when it became clear that enough Democrats were going to join together with Republicans to pass this legislation and prevent a veto by having enough votes to override a veto, then the President very commonsensically said: Well, I think I will sign it. I will agree to go along with that.

So the President finally agreed with Republicans and Democrats in the Senate that congressional oversight was warranted and admitted last week that he would not stand in the way of this legislation.

We are here not to guard our own prerogatives or privileges as individual Senators. That means essentially nothing. What we are here for is to stand in the shoes of our constituents—the 26.9 million people whom I represent in Texas, the people of Arkansas whom the Presiding Officer represents—and it is absolutely critical that we, as the representatives of the American people, have the opportunity to review this Iran deal and to consider its implications, to debate it, and to make that entirely transparent to the American people because this is about not just the national security of the nation of Israel, this is about our national security as well as that of our other allies.

We will spend much of the next few days and perhaps through next week discussing this bill, so I won't belabor my thoughts on that at this time, but I did want to express a few concerns on the current state of the proposed framework with Iran.

On April 2, President Obama announced not a deal with Iran but a ''historic understanding with Iran.''

Well, people naturally asked: What does that understanding look like? What does it consist of? Where can I get a copy of it so I can read it?

To our surprise, there wasn't a deal. Nothing was written. It was somehow a historic understanding that—even the parties who negotiated it disagreed about the details. So it should come as no surprise that the President and the P5+1 countries have not been able to secure an actual deal with Iran, which is our biggest threat and most dangerous adversary in the Middle East. After all, let's think about whom we are talking to and with—the nation of Iran. This is the No. 1 state sponsor of international terrorism, a country that has repeatedly lied to and deceived inspectors in the past as a matter of

standard operating procedure. As Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel reminded us just last month, for more than 30 years Iran has been hostile to America and her allies. In fact, Iran first killed Americans back in the early 1980s and has subsequently killed Americans mainly through proxies since that time until the present time. This is the same regime that has continued to target the United States since 1979. It is the same regime that has been on the State Department's terrorism blacklist since 1984 following an Iran-backed terrorist attack that resulted in the deaths of hundreds of American servicemen, including many from my State. Given this track record, does anybody really wonder what Iran would do with a nuclear weapon?

As these important negotiations continue for the next months, there remain a lot of question marks about Iran's true intentions and about whether the deal—once it is done—the Obama administration is finalizing will essentially cement Iran's status as a nuclear threshold nation.

I remember Prime Minister Netanyahu speaking to a joint meeting of the Congress. He said the framework he has seen doesn't prevent Iran from gaining a nuclear weapon. What he said is that essentially the framework paves the way or paves the path to a nuclear weapon, which, of course, would represent a tremendous change in American policy.

Our policy has been—the administration's policy has been, as stated, no nukes for Iran, none. But at least according to the framework that has been leaked, there appears to be more of the nature of a pathway toward a nuclear weapon as opposed to a prohibition. I look forward to continuing the discussion in the coming days, but Iran is only one issue we will be turning to as the Senate continues to work on bipartisan legislation to get work done for the American people.

We will be working on the very important issue of trade. Trade is important to my State, and it is important to the United States. Anytime we can open new markets to the things we grow in our agricultural sector or the livestock we raise—the beef, pork, poultry sector—anytime we can create and open new markets to the things we manufacture and we make in the United States, it strikes me it is a good thing, because while we occupy only 5 percent of the world's territory, we constitute 20 percent of the purchasing power in the world. That means 95 percent of the population—80 percent of the purchasing power in the world—lies beyond our shores. It just makes sense to me that we would want to open our markets, our goods that we make and grow and raise to markets overseas; in this case, primarily to Asia. But once we take up the Trans-Pacific Partnership, once it is negotiated, then at some future point we will turn to Europe and the so-called TTIP negotiation.

Last night, I am glad to report that the Finance Committee reported out the trade promotion authority piece of this legislation. This is something that has been a little bit misunderstood and, frankly, it is a little confusing. People have asked, Why in the world would you want to give the President authority to negotiate this Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiation? The simple answer is this trade promotion authority is not just for President Obama and his administration—he is only going to be there for the next 20 months. This will last for 6 years and go into the next Presidential administration.

The fact is, you can't negotiate something as complex as a trade deal like the Trans-Pacific Partnership with 535 negotiators; in other words, all the Members of the Senate and all the Members of the House. But what this does provide is that once a deal is reached, it has to be laid before the Congress and it has to be laid before the American people so they can read it and understand it.

After about 6 months, then there will be a debate in the Senate, and we will have an up-or-down vote. If we do not think it serves the interests of the United States, of our citizens and of our country, we can vote it down. But conversely, if we think this does improve trade and the economic prospects, jobs and wages for the American people, then we can vote to approve it. This bill will open American goods and services to global markets, which is good for our economy, good for jobs, and good for better wages, something that has been under a lot of negative pressure over the last few years.

To sum up this week, we passed legislation that will help thousands of victims of modern-day slavery—typically, a girl between the ages of 12 and 14—who are routinely sex trafficked in our own backyards. This will provide real resources. It will not only help rescue them but begin to help them heal and to begin the path to restoration.

I think this should be a proud accomplishment for the Senate. But the bottom line is, we still have a lot of work to do, and I look forward to more accomplishments with my colleagues and for the new spirit of bipartisanship to continue as we tackle real problems for the American people.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mrs. FISCHER. Mr. President, I come to the floor to discuss the importance of trade and the Nebraskans who depend upon it. Since 1989, U.S. agricultural exports have nearly quadrupled in value. This is a direct result of our trade agreements, which have opened foreign markets to our goods. In 2014 alone, the value of U.S. agriculture exports was $152.5 billion, yielding a trade surplus of more than $43 billion. This surplus is the result of hard work by millions of American farmers and ranchers.

My home State of Nebraska is leading the way in progress as a top producer and exporter of agriculture and manufacturing products. In 2013, Nebraska exported $7.3 billion in products tied to agriculture and the processing industries. By trading internationally, we are creating jobs and long-term income here at home. From farms and ranches to food processing, transportation, and manufacturing industries, countless parts of our economy rely on flow of goods across our Nation and around the world.

Nebraska's Governor, director of agriculture, and 22 Nebraska agriculture stakeholders echoed the necessity of these trade agreements, urging congressional leaders to quickly pass important legislation for these agreements to materialize. This point was reinforced in a recent Omaha World-Herald Editorial, which noted that Nebraska producers operate on a global scale and therefore understand the economic benefit of robust free-trade agreements.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that every $1 billion of U.S. agricultural exports generates $1.3 billion in economic activity and supports the full-time work of approximately 6,600 Americans throughout the economy. Simply put, international trade is an essential component of opening foreign markets to U.S. agriculture and food products. The best avenues we have to open new markets, increase that productivity, and create jobs are through strong, fair, and inclusive free-trade agreements.

With more than 95 percent of the world's population located outside the United States, economic growth and job creation depend on trade opportunities that allow our U.S. companies and our producers to tap into new markets to sell more American products.

As we debate, the world's population continues to grow. In more and more countries, we see a growing middle class with a mounting appetite. What do they want to eat? They want high-quality meat, produce, and food products from the United States of America. What a tremendous opportunity for American producers to capture new markets and reach more consumers worldwide, but these new markets cannot be developed unless the United States is at the table and at the table negotiating for comprehensive free-trade agreements that ensure producers and exporters receive that fair deal.

In order to accomplish this goal, the Senate must first pass trade promotion authority or the TPA. TPA effectively combines Congress's authority to regulate foreign commerce alongside the President's authority to negotiate treaties. It reinforces the role of Congress to set negotiation priorities, and it requires the President to consult extensively with legislators throughout

this entire negotiation process. Under TPA, Congress retains its authority to review and determine whether the proposed trade agreement will be implemented through an up-or-down vote.

TPA has been granted to every President since Gerald Ford. This longstanding and proven partnership between the legislative and executive branches is essential to finalizing those free-trade agreements that create countless opportunities for American enterprise. TPA will allow us to actually complete the trade negotiations that are currently underway. America is on the brink of some very ambitious and progrowth deals. It will also provide our negotiators with the credibility they need in order to conclude those trade agreements. Our trading partners must be certain the United States is serious about its trade priorities and that we are serious about our commitments. To get the best deal, there is no doubt our trade negotiators need this vital negotiating tool.

Furthermore, as this administration negotiates the two largest regional trade agreements in history, we must position ourselves to extract the best deals possible. The Trans-Pacific Partnership or the TPP includes countries such as Japan, Vietnam, and Malaysia, which have great, tremendous opportunities for our exports. This agreement will give us greater access to the fastest growing economic region in the world. The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is between the European Union and the United States, which together account for nearly half of global GDP.

I support the negotiations for each of these regional trade agreements. Both agreements hold enormous potential for continued progress in agricultural exports, and they will create jobs here at home. The United States has negotiated free-trade agreements with 20 countries over the past three decades. These trading partners only represent 10 percent of the global economy, but they consume nearly half of the U.S. exports. Economic growth and American job creation would only expand under TPP, where negotiating countries represent the fastest growing economies in the world.

That said, it is critical trade agreements eliminate barriers and level the playing field for American businesses. Fair, two-way market access that eliminates tariffs is essential to any comprehensive trade agreement.

We are in the 21st century, and our trade agreements should reflect 21st century principles. TPA is critical to providing our trade representatives with the necessary tools to finalize these pending negotiations, while also ensuring that the unsung heroes of the American dinner table—our farmers, our ranchers, our food processors—receive the greatest benefit.

Nebraska's farmers and ranchers are global leaders and the very best at producing safe, high-quality food to feed the world. It is imperative that foreign markets are open, balanced, and that they provide a level playing field for all of our U.S. products. One of best ways we can do this is by expanding free trade and authorizing TPA.

I encourage my colleagues to support this very important legislation.

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

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

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). Under the previous order, the motion to proceed to H.R. 1191 is agreed to.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1191) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 1140

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I call up amendment No. 1140, which is the text of the substitute amendment to S. 615, which was reported out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Tennessee [Mr. CORKER], for himself and Mr. CARDIN, proposes an amendment numbered 1140.

(The amendment is printed in today's RECORD under ''Text of Amendments.'')

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I am thrilled to be here on the floor with my partner, Senator BEN CARDIN, who is the ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee. We had an outstanding week last week in our Foreign Relations Committee in passing out this bill that is now before us on a 19-to-0 vote. I thank all of the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which obviously includes Senator CARDIN, Senator RISCH, Senator MENENDEZ, Senator RUBIO, Senator KAINE, Senator JOHNSON, Senator COONS, Senator FLAKE, Senator UDALL, Senator GARDNER, Senator BOXER, Senator PERDUE, Senator SHAHEEN, Senator ISAKSON, Senator MURPHY, Senator PAUL, Senator BARRASSO, and Senator MARKEY.

Also, before we get into discussing the text, I wish to thank Senator BOB MENENDEZ and Senator MARK KIRK, who have been all things Iran. From the very beginning, these two Senators have led this body to put in place sanctions—crushing sanctions—that have led us to this place. I cannot thank them enough for their leadership in dealing with the issue of Iran.

Last year, we did a significant amount of work on creating some kind of review process relative to a final agreement that might be worked out with Iran. I thank Senator LINDSEY, GRAHAM who has been a stalwart in ensuring that Congress play a role in the ultimate final deal that may or may not occur. Senator GRAHAM has been steadfast in wanting congressional review. Senator JOHN MCCAIN has joined in that effort and has been outstanding to work with, as well as Senator JIM RISCH and Senator MARCO RUBIO, who have also pushed for this type of legislation.

When we began this process, there were some original—or when we moved to the process we are now in, there were some original supporters of this current bipartisan bill who really caused us to have the leverage, if you will, to move to the place where we are today. Again, Senator MENENDEZ certainly was one of those who led us in that effort; Senator GRAHAM; Senator TIM KAINE, who came here as a former Governor of Virginia and who has been so focused on Congress playing its appropriate role. Obviously, Senator MCCAIN, as he has been a leader from the beginning, Senator JOE DONNELLY, Senator MARCO RUBIO, Senator HEIDI HEITKAMP, Senator KELLY AYOTTE, Senator BILL NELSON, Senator JIM RISCH, and Senator ANGUS KING have played a role in creating the leverage, if you will, to get us where we are today.

As Senator CARDIN knows, we now have 62 cosponsors of this legislation that is now before us, obviously from both parties. So I think this is quite an accomplishment.

Obviously, we have a tremendous amount of work in front of us with this bill now on the floor. I know Senator CARDIN and I hope that people will come to the floor and begin offering their amendments, begin debating, begin discussing. Obviously, we won't be taking up any amendments, per the order that is before us, until Tuesday, but we hope people will begin bringing their ideas and amendments to the floor and certainly begin discussing the important issue of Iran.

Let me speak a little bit about what this bill does. First of all, I think everyone knows the administration is part of the P5+1. It is today negotiating an agreement to try to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. I think all of us know there was a political agreement that was achieved the first part of April that was more of a verbal agreement about how the P5+1 and Iran might interact in a manner that hopefully would keep Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

One of the things that I think everyone in this body knows and many people on the outside may not is that Congress has played a substantial and

maybe the biggest role in getting Iran to the table in the first place. There were three sets of sanctions, three types of sanctions that have been instrumental in making this happen. They include the U.N. Security Council sanctions that have been put in place. The executive branch has put some sanctions in place as well. But Congress especially has four tranches of sanctions which have been put in place since 2010 which really have had a crushing effect on Iran's economy. They haves created all kinds of inflation, and they have caused them not to be able to export the amount of oil—the 40 percent of the oil that they produce. That has hurt them in manufacturing.

I see Senator MENENDEZ has just come to the floor. He may not have heard me, but I cannot thank him and Senator KIRK enough for their leadership on each set of those tranches—putting them in place, taking the leadership, and bringing Iran to the table.

I think the second thing people may understand is that on the U.N. Security Council sanctions, the White House has the ability, with the other members of the permanent Security Council, to lift those at any time they wish. They can obviously lift the executive sanctions. One of the things that all of us have been concerned about, though, is that Congress put in place the sanctions that really brought them to the table. We want to ensure that Congress has the ability, before those sanctions are lifted, to be able to voice an opinion through a vote.

What this legislation does—and we will be talking about it a great deal over the next week—is four things:

First of all, it forces the administration, in the event a final deal is agreed to, to bring all of those details to Congress, including the classified annexes we would likely not see until 6 months or so after an agreement is reached, without this legislation, if we can pass it.

Secondly, it keeps the executive branch from being able to lift the congressionally mandated sanctions that we put in place, while we have a reasonable period of time to go through the documents that have been provided to us.

Thirdly, it allows Congress to take a vote. The vote can take all kinds of forms. It can be a vote of approval. It also allows the leader to decide not to take a vote at all or we could take a vote of disapproval. If we decided that this was not something that was good for our country, not good for the Middle East, then we could cause this vote of disapproval to take place, and if it passed, it would keep the executive branch from being able to lift the congressionally mandated sanctions we have put in place.

The fourth and very important component is that it causes us to know whether Iran is in compliance. This bill stipulates, if passed, that the President would have to certify to us every 90 days as to whether Iran is in compliance. If there are significant violations, on a 10-day basis, let us know that is taking place so we can respond accordingly.

Let me close by saying this: I believe everybody in this body hopes we are able to achieve a negotiated agreement that will keep Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. I think everyone understands that is the best thing for our country. I think everybody also understands that Iran is a country in which we have little trust. Iran is a country that is the major exporter of terrorism in the region. Iran is a country that has a terrible human rights record. Iran is a country that is really moving ahead relative to its ballistic missile design. And, obviously, Iran is a country that has been doing some things in its nuclear program that give us reason to believe they are moving toward a nuclear weapon.

One of the worst things we could possibly do is enter into an agreement with Iran that doesn't keep them from getting a nuclear weapon—in other words, one that is faulty, that has flaws, and that allows them to get a nuclear weapon. What that would mean is we would have a situation where the No. 1 exporter of terrorism in the region had access to not just a nuclear weapon but very quickly had access to the $130 billion-plus that they have trapped overseas to conduct even more terrorism in the region, which could allow their economy to all of a sudden be growing at more rapid rates and, again, to have resources available to conduct even more terrorism in the region. As we can imagine, having an actor such as Iran has acted—and we hope at some point that behavior will change—having access to a nuclear weapon certainly would create the possibility of nuclear proliferation in the region.

So I think this is a very important piece of legislation. I thank Senator CARDIN for the way he has come into this and worked with us in a manner to reach an accommodation so that we have sufficient, ample, actually extraordinary support on both sides of the aisle to ensure that Congress has its rightful role in this agreement. It is one of the biggest geopolitical agreements we will deal with probably during the time we are here in the Senate.

With that, I yield the floor to my good friend Senator CARDIN. Again, he has done exemplary work in bringing us to this point. I thank him for all of his efforts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to thank and congratulate Senator CORKER for his extraordinary work in reaching this moment where we have brought to the floor of the Senate a bill that deals with congressional oversight of the nuclear discussions and agreements taking place between the P5+1, our negotiating partners in Iran.

It was just 3 weeks ago that the framework was announced by the White House and that Senator CORKER and I started our discussions to see whether we could find a common path forward on a bill which, to say the least, was very controversial; a bill which the President of the United States had threatened to veto; a bill in which there were Democrats and Republicans lined up on different sides of this issue, and it appeared just about impossible that we would be able to reach a bipartisan agreement on a path forward for the legislation.

Senator CORKER exercised the greatest leadership and diplomacy. He mentioned all the members of our committee. Each of those members has pretty strong views on this issue. This was not a simple matter of people saying: Gee, I will just yield to the thoughts of others. The only way we could reach this moment was to ask and solicit and listen to each member of the committee, and that is what Senator CORKER did. He encouraged me to do the same in regard to not just the Democratic members, because Senator CORKER talked to some of the Democratic members and I talked to some of the Republican members. We had to have that type of confidence.

I again congratulate Senator CORKER on his leadership. It has been a real pleasure to work with him. I am proud that we bring this bill forward with a 19-to-0 vote from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

We have a long history in this country of putting aside partisan differences on foreign policy issues. I know we often quote from one of our former colleagues, but I think it is worth putting into the RECORD the comments of Senator Arthur Vandenberg, Jr.

He was a Republican Member of this body who said 63 years ago:

> To me ''bipartisan foreign policy'' means a mutual effort under our indispensable two-Party system, to unite our official voice at the water's edge so that America speaks with maximum authority against those who would divide and conquer us and the free world. It does not involve the remotest surrender of free debate in determining our position. On the contrary, frank cooperation and free debate are indispensable to ultimate unity. In a word, it simply seeks national security ahead of partisan advantage.

Mr. President, that is exactly what the Foreign Relations Committee did. We had a very robust debate, there were many different views, but at the end of the day we spoke with unity. In speaking with unity, our country today is stronger, and that is exactly where we needed to be.

What we are trying to do, and I think as a result of the actions of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee—and I hope it will be approved by this body and by the House and sent to the President for signature—we are in a stronger position to accomplish our goal. Our goal is pretty simple, to prevent Iran from ever acquiring a nuclear weapon because we know that is a game changer in the region—a game changer in regard to not just one country in that region but to just about every country in

that region. Their security is threatened and the U.S. security is threatened.

So what we did in the bill that we bring forward to you is a compromise—a compromise. Each of us gave and listened and we found common ground. We could use more compromise on the issues that confront this country in the work we do. I would hope my colleagues would look at how we worked out these issues and use it as a model for other opportunities to move forward on issues that are important.

Senator CORKER pointed out why we are here—why we had a bill for congressional review. It started in the 1990s, when Congress passed sanctions against Iran because we saw, at the time, that Iran was developing the nuclear capacity to develop a nuclear weapon, and we said that could not happen. We imposed sanctions against Iran. Congress did this on several occasions in an effort to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state, telling them there would be an economic price to pay until they changed course.

Administrations—including President Obama's administration—worked with the international community and we were able to get U.N. sanctions. Congress's action was responsible for leading Iran to being willing to negotiate, and that is where we are today. Only Congress—only Congress—can permanently remove those sanctions or permanently change those sanctions.

So Congress must be involved in the sanctions and in the discussions. That is exactly what this legislation does. It provides an orderly process for us to review any agreement reached by the President and our negotiating partners with Iran. No congressional action will take place until and unless the President submits an agreement that he has made with our negotiating partners and Iran.

The April 2 framework that was recently announced is not an agreement and is not subject to review. There would be a 30-day review period, during which Congress would have the opportunity to review the agreement. No sanctions or additional sanction relief could be imposed during that 30-day period. If you read the April 2 framework, the President has made it clear that Iran will only get sanction relief if they earn sanction relief, if there is concrete progress made in dismantling their nuclear program. It is hard to believe that could take place within 30 days. So this 30-day period is a very reasonable period for Congress to be able to review any agreement.

As Senator CORKER pointed out, all information—all information—would be presented to us, and we would have an opportunity for full hearings and debate as to what we should do. It would follow the regular congressional order as far as committee hearings and potential action on the floor of the Senate and the House. Senator CORKER pointed out the options we would have. We could approve the agreement, we could disapprove the agreement, we could pass legislation affecting the sanctions, we could take whatever action we think is appropriate, but no action is required.

The agreement can commence without congressional action. If we do take congressional action, the President has the prerogative of a veto, and if the President vetoes, we have the prerogative of an override of the veto. That is how the checks and balances system of our country should operate.

There is a second major component to this legislation and that is for the oversight of an agreement after it is reached; that is, there would be a quarterly certification by the President of the United States to Congress that Iran is in compliance with the agreement. If there is a material breach, it would trigger an expedited process so Congress could act, that we could not only snap back sanctions that may have been relieved, but if appropriate, we could impose additional sanctions if Iran had a material breach of the agreement. That is very important because I think we all agree, if we are going to have an effective agreement, that agreement must give us time before Iran can become a nuclear weapons country; that we can, through full inspections, determine if they have breached the agreement because, quite frankly, no agreement is going to be based on trust because we don't trust Iran. It is going to be based upon inspections and being able to confirm their compliance with the agreement. If they don't comply with the agreement, we need to make sure we have adequate time and take adequate steps to prevent them from becoming a nuclear weapons state. This review process and an expedited process in Congress puts Congress in the position of working with the administration to make sure we take those effective steps.

As Senator CORKER pointed out, there are other issues with Iran in addition to the nuclear proliferation issues. We have serious concerns about Iran. It sponsors terrorism. Its human rights violations against its own citizens is horrible. Its ballistic missile program is of great concern. The threats against Israel and other countries in that region are all of direct interest to the United States. So, in this legislation, we provide for regular reports twice a year to the Congress of the United States about the activities that Iran is participating in, in regard to terrorism and human rights.

I call our colleagues' attention to the detailed requirements, on pages 37 and 38 of the bill, concerning issues about whether Iran's financial institutions are engaged in money laundering, whether Iran is advancing its ballistic missile program, an assessment of whether Iran has directly supported, financed, planned or carried out any terrorism against the United States, ''whether, and to the extent to which, Iran supported acts of terrorism . . . all actions, including international fora, being taken by the United States to stop, counter, and condemn acts by Iran'' involving terrorism; ''the impact on the national security of the United States and the safety of United States citizens as a result of any Iranian actions reported under this paragraph. . . . '' It is all required that that information be given to us because we may want to use that for other strategies against Iran.

An amendment that was added requires ''an assessment of whether violations of internationally recognized human rights in Iran have changed, increased, or decreased, as compared to the prior 180-day [period].''

We are going to monitor their human rights record, and we will have that information. So, yes, we are concerned about issues beyond nuclear proliferation, but this agreement that is now being negotiated by the President deals with preventing Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state.

It is clear. I want to underscore this because Senator CORKER was very strong to make sure it got into the bill. It says that ''United States sanctions on Iran for terrorism, human rights abuses, and ballistic missiles will remain in place under an agreement. . . .'' We are not talking about actions we have taken against Iran for terrorism or human rights violations. That is a separate issue—a major concern to us. What we are talking about is how do we implement oversight and review an agreement concerning nuclear weapons programs.

And lastly, we make it very clear in this agreement that ''the President should determine the agreement in no way compromises the commitment of the United States to Israel's security, nor its support for Israel's right to exist.'' Israel is a key ally of the United States and our friendship is deep. Our commitment is solid. We make that very clear in the bill that is before you.

Let me conclude with two additional points—one dealing with the amendment process. As Senator CORKER pointed out, we asked Members who believe they can approve this bill to come forward. Let's see the amendments and try to work with you on the amendments. Let's maintain the bipartisan cooperation we have. Let's maintain a strong bill that accomplishes its purpose. Come down and let us take a look at it. Remember, we have a lot of strong views in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and we came together. Let's keep that same spirit, and I would just urge those who may have amendments to come on down and let us see them. We have today and up to before next Tuesday. Share them with us so we have an opportunity to keep the unity we have.

Then, lastly, I just want to join where Senator CORKER began, and that is to thank the incredible effort that took place on behalf of this bill. Senator CORKER already mentioned all my colleagues who were involved here.

Senator MENENDEZ and Senator KAINE are both on the floor. On the Democratic side, they are the authors of this bill. They are the ones who drafted it. They are the ones who are responsible for why we are here today—from the Democrats. I thank both of them. From the beginning they said: We want a process to review. We are not talking about the merits. The merits are something we will pick up later. We want to preserve the normal prerogatives of the Senate, and we want to keep politics out of it. That was their intent from day one. Quite frankly, working with Senator CORKER, that is what I carried out in my negotiations with Senator CORKER; to maintain that balance that was the intent of the legislation. So I thank both of them and the other members of our committee who were involved.

Lastly, on a point of personal privilege right now, because I might forget to do this later, I want to thank Jodi Herman of our staff and Margaret Taylor, Algene Sajery, and Chris Lynch for the extraordinary amount of time they put in.

I want to thank President Obama. I want to thank President Obama for giving me his time so I understood what he was trying to achieve and how we could work together in order to achieve the objectives of the United States, and I thank Katie Fallon and Denis McDonough of his staff for the work they put in so we could reach this moment.

With that, Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I want to rise in support of this bipartisan legislation, with a sincere hope that we can pass the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act as it was unanimously voted out of the committee.

I have worked tirelessly with the chairman and with the ranking member and with members of the committee—Senator KAINE, who had so much input in the conceptualization of what we wanted to do to bring this bill to the floor with the strongest bipartisan support.

In my view, the best way to send a clear message to Tehran about our expectations is for Congress to pass the Corker-Menendez Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act as it was voted out of committee. The spirit of bipartisanship that underscores Congress's critical role in the highest priority, national security, the nuclear nonproliferation challenge of our time, was unanimously passed out of the Foreign Relations Committee. I hope we can send this same message from the Senate floor.

Countering Iran's nuclear ambitions has been something I have worked on passionately for a long time. Senator CORKER and I fashioned language that became the framework of this final bill to ensure that Congress remains engaged in reviewing and, if there is an agreement, overseeing its implementation.

So I want to thank Chairman CORKER. He has just done an exceptional job. He had this concept before any of us were agreed to it, and he was willing to work with us—and was dogged, I must say—until we got to the point that we would come together and offer the legislation in a bipartisan way. That has been the hallmark of his chairmanship and it was the hallmark of his time as ranking member when I was chairman. I appreciate the fashion in which he has worked to continue to move the committee, as I started it, in a bipartisan way, because as the ranking member Senator CARDIN says, that is when we are most powerful in terms of foreign policy.

I thank Senator CARDIN for his work in helping to forge a deal that both sides of the aisle can come to this floor and support with a clear conscience, knowing that we have sent a clear message to Tehran and that we are united, as we have always been, on Iran policy, and on this issue we speak with one voice.

The simple fact is, if the P5+1 and Iran ultimately achieve a comprehensive agreement by the June deadline, at the end of the day, Congress must make a judgment on it and have oversight responsibility. This legislation provides it. It establishes a managed process for congressional review and a framework for congressional oversight.

Now, I differentiate between this agreement and others the administration has cited for exclusive Executive action because the sanctions relief that is at the heart of this deal was crafted by Congress and enacted by Congress into law. It is primarily statutory. As the author of those sanctions, working with others, I can tell you we never envisioned a wholesale waiver of sanctions without congressional input and without congressional action.

The limited sanctions relief provided in the law was intended to provide the President with discretion to waive specific sanctions in specific circumstances, such as if a country was making real progress in reducing their oil purchases from Iran. So my goal has always been one goal; that is, to make certain Iran does not have the infrastructure to develop a nuclear weapon.

I have worked on that goal since my earliest days in Congress. Now, as we approach the witching hour for an agreement, the best way to achieve our goal is with bipartisan support on this legislation that strengthens the U.S. hand in moving from a political framework to a comprehensive agreement and sets out clear and decisive expectations for Iranian compliance.

The message we send to Tehran is that sanctions relief is not a given, and sanctions relief certainly is not a prize for signing on the dotted line. This bill ensures that Iran must fully comply with all provisions of an agreement that effectively dismantle its nuclear weapons program and provide robust inspection and verification mechanisms to ensure its compliance with every word of that deal.

If Iran breaches an agreement, Congress will have the ability to restore sanctions on an expedited basis. Now, as I have said, I have been outspoken on this issue from the beginning, for years, for as long as I have been here. Frankly, I have many questions about the framework agreement. I have questions about the divergent understandings of the agreement.

I have questions about the pace of sanctions relief. I do not believe Iran should get a signing bonus. I am concerned by the President's most recent statement that greater sanctions relief could come upfront for Iran. I have questions about Iran's retention of research and development authorities and to what extent they can advance their research and development, because greater research and development means more sophisticated centrifuges that can spin faster and, therefore, dramatically reduce breakout time toward a nuclear bomb.

I am concerned about the ability to snap back sanctions if there are violations of the agreement. From what I can see, we have a committee process that will not guarantee that the snapback will take place or that it will take place expeditiously. I am concerned about the International Atomic Energy Administration's ability to obtain ''anytime-anywhere'' snap inspections. What happened to Iran having to come clean about the possible military and weapons dimensions of their program?

More than anything else, I am concerned about what will happen when the critical elements of the proposed agreement expire after 10 years. Are we relegated to accepting Iran as a nuclear weapons state? The presumption that Iran will become a compliant Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty state in that time for me is not borne out when you see their insistence and our acquiescence to keeping key nuclear infrastructure and key nuclear facilities under the agreement.

It is not borne out by history. Iran has been on a single path toward nuclear weapons for more than 20 years. By deceit and deception—sometimes without detection until there were well-established covert facilities—they have advanced their drive for nuclear power to the precipice of achieving a nuclear bomb. For me, these are all issues that speak more forcefully to the reasons for having congressional review and oversight of any potential agreement.

Now, I did not fashion, along with colleagues, a sanctions regime for the sake of sanctions. It was for the sake of getting Iran to deter its course. There is no one who would want to see the successful result of that design more than I. But by the same token, I do embrace what the administration has said time and time again that no deal is

better than a bad deal. I will independently judge what that deal is when and if there is a final deal.

At a minimum, this legislation gives us the oversight role to monitor and address our concerns. So I urge my colleagues, when the bill comes for a vote, to vote for it as it was voted out of committee, because it does what all of us want to do: provides a clear opportunity for a review of any agreement, so we can express, if desired, our support or opposition to any agreement and have a clear oversight role with established parameters for compliance.

Let's vote on what the agreement does, not what it might have done or could have done if we had different amendments to it. I respect everybody's views and everybody's rights to have amendments. I hope those who have ideas will work with the chairman and the ranking member. But I will oppose amendments, at least with my own vote, that I consider to be poisonous and that undermine the very essence of what we have accomplished in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Sometimes you have to know when you hit a home run and be able to cross the plate and say, We hit a home run—and not think that you are still stuck in the dugout. What we did in the committee is pretty close to a home run as far as I can see it. So let's vote on the merits of the bill that give us the oversight and the ability to pass the judgment that we need to send a clear message that we are united in our determination to prevent Iran from ever becoming a nuclear weapons state, potentially igniting a nuclear arms race in the most dangerous tinderbox of the world.

So I urge my colleagues to suppress any intentions that will drive us to a point that we can't have that strong vote, that we can't send that strong message to Iran. There is no stronger message to Iran, particularly in this critical time, in which I think we strengthen the administration and the P5+1's hand by saying there is a congressional review and potential judgment.

So that final agreement we get, hopefully, can be one we can all embrace. We can do that—we can actually have an effect by passing this legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. CORKER. Mr. President, I just want to again thank Senator MENENDEZ for his tremendous leadership on this issue. He brought up a point I wish I had made in my opening comments. I have made it every time I have presented this bill elseways. But a lot of people do not realize that at present, because of the waivers that are part of the sanctions that we put in place—some of them through independent pieces of legislation, some of them through NDAAs—in each case the President was given a national security waiver.

Again, as the Senator mentioned, it was never thought that waiver would be utilized to waive things ad infinitum. At present—a lot of people do not realize this—but the President today has the power, without this legislation, to go straight to the U.N. Security Council, without coming to Congress, and implement whatever deal he wants to implement with Iran. He has that ability.

So when you think about what is happening here, and this is what is so powerful about this bipartisan effort, is that we together—we together—have said: Wait a minute. If we pass this legislation, we want to retake the ability ourselves to lift those sanctions or to have them lifted; we do not want the President going straight to the U.N. Security Council.

I know Senator KAINE is on the floor. I cannot thank him enough for getting involved at the time he did. I remember distinctly in the committee meeting, where we had testimony from our Secretary of State, him articulating, better than anyone yet, the fact that at some point down the road we are going to have to permanently lift the sanctions, which, by the way, could be 5, 6, 7 years down the road, long after the sanctions regime has totally imploded. We are going to have to do it permanently down the road.

Would it not make sense for us to go ahead and review this on the front end and have the opportunity, if we think it is not something worthy of this, to disapprove or to approve if we decide to do that.

So I know Senator KAINE wants to speak. I cannot thank him enough for his knowledge of congressional responsibilities as it relates to these kinds of issues and his input, which was invaluable at the time it occurred. He really created the momentum for us to move ahead.

I will yield the floor, thanking him very much for his efforts in this regard.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise to speak in favor of the Corker-Menendez bill. I thank Chairman CORKER for his kind words and for the opportunity to work together on something, in what I believe to be the best traditions of our committee and the Senate. I thank my ranking member, Senator CARDIN, for being a great facilitator at the end to help us get over a number of challenging issues, to a point of unanimity on the committee, and to Senator MENENDEZ, whose long-term interest on this issue has been so consistent and so helpful and whose work on this particular piece of legislation was critical.

I believe Senator CORKER began, and I want to begin as well, with a condolence to the family of Dr. Weinstein, a Marylander who—the announcement today about his death in Afghanistan in a drone strike sort of reminds us of the stakes that are involved in these kinds of issues. When we are talking about American military action or about diplomacy around a nuclear weapons program, it is not a bill we are talking about, it is not a concept we are talking about, we are talking about human lives; that even in the best of circumstances there will be days like today when there will be sad news and Americans who are in harm's way because of the dangerous nature of the world—and I feel like the announcement today about Dr. Weinstein—our condolences to his family should remind us of the seriousness of our obligation.

Senator CARDIN started with that great wisdom of Senator Vandenberg that ''politics stops at the water's edge.'' Now, we probably all know that was never 100 percent true. I know a little bit about some of the challenges Jefferson and other Virginians had early. There is always politics, but there is a core wisdom to that principle, a very important wisdom.

Of course, we are going to battle because we see things differently, and people seeing things differently can sometimes get to a greater understanding. That is what we hope to do. But the reason politics should stop at the water's edge is because we want to send a unified message to our allies as they depend on us. We need to send a unified message to our adversaries about our intentions.

But I would say in a personal way, because of maybe representing the Commonwealth of Virginia, we have to send a unified message to the men and women in our armed services who serve, who are serving in battlefields, who are serving in theaters of military operations around the world. When we are contemplating decisions about something so big that could potentially lead to war—we just deployed Virginia-based ships like the *Theodore Roosevelt* to Yemen to potentially check Iranian ambitions vis-a-vis the Houthi rebels in Yemen. Those are Virginians, many from other States, who are deployed on those ships.

We owe it to those who are serving and risking their lives to try to be as nonpartisan as we can, so they know they are not serving just because one party thinks they should or the other party thinks they should, but the missions they are undertaking are missions of national consensus. I feel that very strongly. That is why I am so gratified this bill now reaches the floor on a fundamental matter in a bipartisan way.

With respect to our negotiations with Iran, there was a view out there on the table that if Congress wanted to be involved, it must be because we are against diplomacy. In the committee I said that notion was offensive to me. There were those even who suggested that those who wanted a congressional oversight role were prowar, which was highly offensive and insulting.

I am prodiplomacy. I supported the President's commencement of these negotiations in November of 2013. I think America has a wonderful diplomatic

tradition where we have been able to achieve a lot when diplomacy is done right.

I actually think the negotiation period from November 2013 to today has produced tangible benefits for the United States, our allies, and the world because Iran has rolled back its stockpile of 20-percent enriched uranium. They have allowed inspections they didn't allow before. And even nations and leaders who were skeptical about whether the negotiation would work have admitted to me: Maybe I shouldn't have been skeptical. The negotiation period has produced some benefits.

In the framework announced on April 2, I see some items I like and I see some other things I have some deep questions about. But a commitment by Iran, for example, to roll back uranium stockpiles from 10,000 kilograms to 300 kilograms—just a fraction of what would be necessary to produce even one weapon—would be very positive.

But I say all that just to say that as a prodiplomacy Senator, as someone who would love to find a negotiation that would work to a positive end, I believe strongly that a congressional review role of a matter such as this is necessary, it is helpful, and it is something, frankly, that the American public deserves. It is necessary for the reasons that have been described.

Now, a President, under article II powers, has significant ability to conduct foreign policy and even strike agreements without congressional approval. There are many things a President can do in the foreign policy sphere without congressional approval.

But this is fundamentally a negotiation about what Iran must do to get out from under sanctions that Congress has constructed, that Congress has imposed, and that Congress has perfected and approved over the years. If that is the negotiation, there is no way to have an ultimate deal about the unwinding and eventual repeal of a congressional sanctions statute without congressional review. So Congress is necessary to this deal.

Second, congressional review is helpful. It is helpful for the negotiators, as they are in this final chapter, to know that they must negotiate to their very best because they will have to sell this deal to Congress as the elected representatives of the American people. That is a helpful discipline for our negotiators. It is helpful for the Iranians who want to get out from under congressional sanctions to have some sense of how Congress might ultimately look at this deal.

Put yourself in the Iranian shoes. We want them to make huge concessions, not modest ones. But what is their incentive to make big concessions to get out from under congressional sanctions if they have no idea what Congress will likely do? We have put a process in place that will give them some sense of what Congress would do in an orderly way, and that will be an incentive, I believe, for larger concessions.

Not only is this review bill necessary, not only is it helpful, but it is what the American public expects and deserves. I think we have all been looking at the way the American public has been reacting to this negotiation.

The American public is like all of us. They are deeply worried about an Iranian nuclear weapons program. They are like all of us. They would love it if we could find a diplomatic end to the Iranian nuclear weapons program. They are like all of us. They are skeptical about whether Iran will follow an agreement, and they overwhelmingly believe that if there is an agreement, it should be an agreement that Congress approves.

Why do they think Congress should approve it? Is it because we have fantastic approval ratings? Absolutely not. We don't have great approval ratings. But, the American public says: In our anxiety about whether we can trust Iran on a deal, we will feel better if both the executive and the legislative have looked at this deal and concluded—like you would try to get a second opinion from a doctor on something that was very important—that it is a good deal for our country and our national security. They are going to feel more comfortable, given the natural anxiety they have about Iranian compliance.

That is why this bill is so important.

Finally, I want to talk about how the bill got here because I do think there is a lesson for the floor activity on the bill but also for the body, more generally.

This bill was filed in original version in 2014, and I did not sign onto it.

Our chairman, Senator CORKER, and I were in the Middle East in January with five other Senators, in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Israel.

As we returned after a set of discussions with governmental leaders, military leaders, civil society, and political leaders about many topics, including the Iranian negotiation, Senator CORKER, a friend, sort of challenged me a little bit: Hey, you are the guy who likes to say that Congress needs to play a role. I have been pushing hard for Congress to play a role in an authorization of military force against ISIL. If that is what you think, why aren't you on this bill about congressional approval of a deal with Iran?

I said: You are absolutely right congressional approval, but there are some aspects of the bill I don't like.

The chairman said to me: Then, fine, you rewrite it or propose amendments, and let's see if we can work together.

So I did and others did, and we put our best good-faith proposals down on the table. We found a listening ear, a staff, and a set of Senators on both sides of the aisle who were willing to try to exercise that congressional approval role—but do it in the right way, not the wrong way.

When we filed this bill on September 27, there were two Democratic original sponsors and two Republican original sponsors. Then there were five additional Democratic cosponsors and five additional Republican cosponsors.

So from the very day this bill hit the floor, we were trying to build it in a bipartisan way to show that the Vandenberg maxim, although it is not as true even when it was stated and it certainly is not as true today as we would like it, still had some power. And we wanted to show the body that we could do it in a bipartisan way so that our allies, our adversaries, and our troops would see that we could act in a bipartisan way on something so important.

There were steps between the filing of the bill and the Foreign Relations Committee action that threatened to push the bill off of the bipartisan rails into partisanship in ways that might have served the short-term purpose but that would have probably killed the bill. The chairman and others made sure that did not happen.

So when we got to the vote in the Foreign Relations Committee—and it went from 2 plus 2, to 7 plus 7, and eventually, 19 to zero—we carefully worked at every step along the way to make this bipartisan and, hopefully, to send an example on the floor that this is what it should be. Robust debate and amendment, of course, is what this body is about. But we want to make sure that review of this most important matter is done in a way that is careful, prompt, and deliberate, according to rules that all can respect and all can understand.

I conclude with thanks to my colleagues on the committee, to the leadership of the chair—both as the original drafter of the bill, then as the drafter willing to entertain other ideas, and then as the chair of this committee, trying to bring this to a productive place.

I thank Senator CARDIN for his great role in helping us bridge differences and, especially, for his communication with the White House. The White House threatened to veto this bill, but Senator CARDIN, probably better than most, was able to listen to the concerns and then try to respond to the concerns in a way that we could make the bill productive.

This matter is so important that we just cannot tackle it in any way other than trying to follow—the best we humanly can—that Vandenberg maxim. I hope, as we get into deliberations on the floor next week, that this would be the spirit of all the colleagues who tackled this most important matter.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I thank Senator KAINE. I appreciate his outline of how this legislation went from unlikely to have much impact, because we didn't have the consensus and the numbers necessary to get it through the finish line. It would have had a very, very difficult time getting through the committee—let alone the floor of the Senate, the House, and

signed by the President—but for how people listen to each other.

So I am pleased the two of you went on the trip together because I think we need to do more of that in the Senate.

Senator KAINE and Senator CORKER are both individuals who have a deep respect for the proper role of the Senate, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the Senators.

I am proud to serve with both of you. I am pleased to see that we have found ways that we really can bridge differences in order to achieve a common purpose. We were not interested in scoring political points. We are interested in doing what our responsibility is all about.

So Senator CORKER is now probing a way in which we can reauthorize the State Department, the role that our committee should have, and, therefore, to directly deal with our responsibilities in the Senate through the appropriate committee. I think all of these are efforts with which, working together, we can have the Senate perform the proper role in this government of ours to make sure that the legislative branch weighs in where it is appropriate on foreign policy issues.

I thank Senator KAINE and Senator CORKER for giving us a good model as to how legislation should be developed. I was proud to work with Senator CORKER so that we could get the White House and get some of our Members who didn't quite share the enthusiasm of this legislation to a place where they are comfortable in supporting the bill—not only supporting the bill but enthusiastically supporting the bill in order to get it done.

I also appreciate your mentioning Warren Weinstein. Warren Weinstein was a resident of Maryland. His wife, Elaine, I talked to on frequent occasions. She is a very brave woman and did everything she could to bring her husband home. Warren Weinstein was a USAID worker in Pakistan. He did that because he wanted to do good for the world.

He was very well respected, carrying out his mission in a most professional way. He was on his way home, basically, when he was kidnapped in 2011 by Al Qaeda. As we know, the President announced today that he was killed in January, along with an Italian national who was also serving. Our thoughts and prayers first go out to the families. Our hearts are broken.

Senator MIKULSKI, Congressman DELANEY, and I have frequently met with the family over the years to try to put a spotlight at the appropriate time in dealing with the hostage situation. It is very difficult to deal with a hostage situation when it is not a government that is holding the person, and it makes it much more complicated.

But I do think that in addition to doing everything we can to keep our Americans safe who go to these countries on our behalf, using diplomacy, basically, and developing assistance for a more stable country, we have to do everything we can to keep them safe. We have to recognize the risk factors in circumstances such as this. We have to have strategies to do everything we possibly can to bring these people back home safely.

I know you all share that. But then we have to make the world a little bit safer, and that is what this review statute is all about. I do believe it does give us a better opportunity to get the right agreement from Iran that would prevent it from becoming a nuclear weapons power, which is a game changer for the security in that region.

I wish to mention just one other example. There was an enormous human tragedy when another boat carrying desperate refugees and migrants capsized in the Mediterranean Sea. In the most recent instance over 850 men, women, and children have died. Now these are very desperate situations when you take these dangerous voyages.

The number of people who have died in the Mediterranean—in 2014 we know that well over 218,000 refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea, many fleeing violence, conflicts, and persecution in Syria, Iraq, and Eritrea. We also know that Yemen is involved here. Last year's death total surpassed 1,750 victims.

I mention that because what Iran is doing in this region is adding to the migration and refugee issues. Its support of terrorism, its involvement in Yemen, its involvement in Syria, and its involvement in other countries are causing people to take desperate action in order to stay safe. So we are here today to do something about that.

It is just another motivation for us to do everything we can to provide the types of policies that are necessary in that region of the world to make people safer and to have sustainable countries that can protect all of their citizens.

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

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

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, today we will begin the most important debate this Congress will have this year, probably this Congress, perhaps in the entire tenure any Member of this Senate has. This debate is not just about this piece of legislation but about a nuclear Iran and the consequences a nuclear Iran would create for the world.

Iran is today the greatest threat to the world. Iran already is the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, according to the Obama administration's own State Department. We see their regional aggression on display in Syria, in Lebanon, in Iraq, and now in Yemen. They have a very bad habit of killing Jews around the world, from Israel, to Bulgaria, to Argentina. They hold four U.S. citizens hostage today without just cause or due process. They do all those things without a nuclear weapon and with tens of billions of dollars frozen overseas.

What could we expect if Iran is able to develop nuclear weapons capabilities?

First, we will see more regional aggression as they use their nuclear umbrella to continue their drive for regional dominance throughout the Middle East. They would use the tens of billions of dollars sanctions relief would give them not to build hospitals or schools or roads or to improve the lives of their people but, rather, to prop up their proxies, such as the Hezbollah or the Houthis or the Shiite militia currently at risk of tearing Iraq apart.

Second, they are likely to use those nuclear weapons. Ayatollah Khamenei, the original Supreme Leader, upon taking power said the Islamic revolution did not care about Iran or the Persian nation or its history, they cared about spreading worldwide Islamic revolution. This is not a normal state, and these are not normal leaders.

Third, we will see a nuclear arms race throughout the Middle East. As many Senators in this institution have heard from senior government officials of Sunni states throughout the gulf, they cannot tolerate a Persian Shiite nuclear power. Whether they develop with their indigenous capabilities, in some instances, or whether they purchase it from overseas, we will see the world's most dangerous and volatile region strung with nuclear tripwires.

Fourth, these countries may provide nuclear weapons to terrorists to be used against American troops in the region, against our allies, such as Israel, or other countries or in one of the harbors on America's coasts, if not in America's heartland.

Fifth, terrorists or insurgents could get their hands on nuclear materials if they were able to destabilize or topple the wrong regime, as has tended to happen in the Middle East in the last 4 years and in recent decades.

The President started these negotiations on the grounds that we would stop Iran from getting a nuclear weapon. Yet he has consistently backpedaled, conceded, and reversed himself. Rather than now trying to dismantle and disarm Iran's nuclear arms program, we are content to trying to manage it, to limit its breakout time to 1 mere year, if that.

The United Nation's Security Council has passed multiple resolutions saying that Iran has no right to enrich uranium. Yet now we are going to concede Iran the right to keep thousands of centrifuges, to continue advanced research into centrifuges, and to keep its stockpile of uranium.

The President said barely more than a year ago, after the negotiations started, that Iran had no reason to

have a hardened underground military bunker in which they kept centrifuge cascades in Fordow. Yet, according to our own proposed fact sheet—much of which Iran disputes—we are going to concede the Fordow issue.

The President said at the very same time after negotiations had begun that Iran had no reason to keep its uranium stockpiles, and Iran had, in fact, reportedly agreed to tentatively export those to a third party. At the last minute, in Switzerland earlier this month, they reversed themselves, saying they were going to insist on keeping their stockpile, and we conceded on that front as well.

We have insisted throughout the period of these negotiations that we would not grant Iran immediate sanctions relief. The President's own term sheet said we wouldn't grant such relief. Iran's term sheet says differently. Just Friday, when confronted with this discrepancy, the President said we may have to find creative ways around this disagreement—creative ways to give Iran, the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, on its way to becoming a nuclear threshold power, tens of billions of dollars and reportedly even a $50 billion signing bonus, as if Iran were not a theocratic dictatorial regime but a blue chip prospect in the NFL draft.

These negotiations have also excluded most of Iran's outlaw behavior—currently developing intercontinental ballistic missiles for which there is no reason other than striking the United States; holding those four hostages without due process or fair trials—and stopping its regional aggression and stopping its support for terrorism.

This legislation has some good elements in it. It would suspend the President's ability to waive any sanctions for approximately 7 weeks while we consider any proposed bill if such a deal is reached at some point in the future. It would also require the President to certify every 90 days that Iran is living up to its obligations under any such deal. But it only goes into effect after such a deal is announced. Any deal along the lines the President proposed 2 weeks ago is dangerous for the United States and dangerous for the world, and it is Congress's job to stop such a deal before it happens.

The sponsors of this bill didn't upend the constitutional baseline. This bill should be submitted for a treaty. The President should have to get 67 votes for a major nuclear arms agreement with an outlaw regime. Instead, Congress has to get 67 votes in the Senate to block such a bill. That is why I intend to support Senator JOHNSON's amendment that would require this to be submitted as a treaty.

This legislation omits most of Iran's outlaw behavior, and it doesn't lay out the terms on which Congress would insist, before there is sanctions relief, in addressing this outlaw behavior. And it may allow the President to argue in the future—if a mere 34 Senators vote against a resolution of disapproval—and say that Congress has acquiesced in his agreement and that he now has support from the Congress and is not just acting on his own whim.

Therefore, I expect to offer and I expect to support amendments that are offered in three main categories—first, an amendment that would treat any resolution of disapproval as a privileged amendment subject not to a 60-vote threshold but to a 51-vote threshold. We should not let 34 Senators block a resolution of disapproval from going into effect. We certainly shouldn't allow 41 Senators to impede the will of 59 Senators who disagree with any future deal from forcing the President to veto it and depriving him of the ability to claim that Congress has acquiesced to his action.

The second main category would be to limit the administration's discretion in the future on reporting about breaches of an agreement, should an agreement be reached and should it not be blocked by the Congress.

This legislation says the administration should report potentially significant breaches to the Congress and then determine whether those potentially significant breaches are a material breach, which is defined as substantially reducing Iran's breakout time or improving Iran's nuclear program. We should strike those lawyers' vague terms. They should submit every breach to us. They should submit every time the breakout time is decreased or Iran's nuclear program improves its position. It is our job as the people's representatives to decide whether it is material, whether it is significant.

The third category of amendments is that Iran should not get sanctions relief until they live up to their international obligations, until they meet the very baseline terms the President himself laid out at the beginning of these negotiations or even after the negotiations had begun, and until Iran acts like a civilized country.

There should be no sanctions relief until the President can certify that the hardened underground military facility at Fordow is closed. He himself said Iran had no need for it.

There should be no sanctions relief until Iran has lived up to its international obligation to the IAEA—the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog—and disclosed the past military dimensions of its nuclear program, without which inspectors have no baseline to know what the status of their program is today.

There should be no sanctions relief until the President can certify that Iran is not developing intercontinental ballistic missiles. They have missiles that can defend their own territory and that can strike most of their neighbors in the Middle East. They are developing intercontinental ballistic missiles for one reason: to strike the United States with a nuclear warhead.

There should be no sanctions relief until the President can certify that Iran is no longer sponsoring terrorism because it goes to the heart of the threat Iran poses. Other countries in the world are a nuclear threshold power—Japan, Germany, and South Korea. We don't have debates about those countries being a nuclear threshold power because they are normal countries with normal leaders who do not call us the Great Satan and Israel the Little Satan and threaten to wipe Israel off the map. Until the nature of the Iran regime changes, we cannot allow them to have weapons of this nature. And they will not change until they have renounced terrorism.

Next, the President should have to certify that Iran is not cooperating with North Korea—as it has done countless times on ballistic missile programs and nuclear technology—an outlaw regime whose current nuclear status foretells the future of this deal. In 1994, the agreed framework was supposed to stop North Korea from becoming a nuclear power. Yet, just 12 years later, they have developed nuclear weapons. Now, by most estimates, they have 20—a number that could double in just a few years—with much of the United States falling underneath the threat of a North Korean nuclear attack.

Next, there should be no sanctions relief until all four American hostages are released—Pastor Saeed Abenini; Amir Hekmati, a decorated marine; Robert Levinson; and Jason Rezaian, a Washington Post reporter. That should have been a term before we even sat down at the table, that no American citizen will be held hostage by an outlaw, third-rate regime like Iran—before we started negotiating with them. They and their families deserve no less.

There should be no sanctions relief until the President can certify that Iran has agreed to anytime, anywhere inspections. This is an ongoing point of major dispute between President Obama and Iran's leaders, but if we can't go to their military facilities, if we can't inspect any facility instantly, without notification, we will be engaged in the same kind of cat-and-mouse regime that has caused inspection regimes to fail time and time again.

Finally, Iran should recognize Israel's right to exist. It is not too much to simply say that Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish and a democratic country. This is a country that just a few months ago was tweeting—tweeting—nine different reasons why Israel should be annihilated from the world.

These are very simple terms, most of which President Obama himself outlined before these negotiations began or which are clear and binding international obligations on Iran. They are good amendments that would strengthen this bill—a bill that touches on the most important issues that most of us will address during our time in the Senate.

When we considered the Keystone Pipeline bill—an important bill but a

bill that dealt with a single pipeline—we considered almost 250 amendments, and we voted on 40. Surely, we should have the same kind of robust consideration, debate, and voting on this bill. I strongly support the majority leader's call earlier this morning for exactly that kind of robust process. Most of these amendments touch directly on the heart of this legislation. I look forward to casting up-or-down votes on a 51-vote threshold on all of these amendments and many more that my colleagues may offer.

I regret that I may miss some of this debate. I may have to ask some of my colleagues to submit amendments for me. My first child is due today. By the time this bill gets to the floor next week for debate and voting, I expect my first child will have arrived. But I will not allow my son to live under the threat of a nuclear Iran—the threat of nuclear attack and ultimate nuclear war—any more than I will allow the sons and daughters of all Americans to live under that threat.

So I look forward to this debate. I look forward to stopping Iran from getting a nuclear weapon.

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

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

HONORING VIETNAM VETERANS AND NORTH DAKOTA'S SOLDIERS WHO LOST THEIR LIVES IN VIETNAM

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I rise today to continue our efforts to honor the Nation's and North Dakota's Vietnam veterans and specifically those brave servicemembers who were killed in action during the Vietnam war.

Mr. President, 198 soldiers from North Dakota died while serving in Vietnam. Today, I am honored to speak about some of these brave men and the stories their families have shared with us.

I need to credit David Erbstoesser of Bismarck, a Vietnam veteran, for his service and for his years of reaching out to the family members of these fallen North Dakota patriots. Over the past 20 years, David contacted each family to obtain a photo of every servicemember and a photo of their gravestone. I am grateful to David for meeting with my staff to share his collection of obituaries, news articles, and photos he has collected.

The Bismarck High students and their teachers are also researching North Dakota's servicemembers who didn't come home from Vietnam. Today, I am happy to include research from BHS's 11th grade students about two such men: Gary Myers and David Bujalski.

RAPHAEL ''JOHN'' FROST

The first of our soldiers is John Frost. John was from Hunter. He was born on March 16, 1948. He served in the Army's 196th Infantry Brigade. John was 20 years old when he was killed on December 20, 1968.

John was the oldest of three children and helped his dad on the family farm. During high school, John participated in the school newspaper, choir, the Letterman's Club, a school play, and was a class officer. He was also an all-around athlete who earned letters in track, baseball, football, and basketball. His mother Lois still remembers how proud she was the day he scored 33 points in one basketball game in a winning effort.

After high school, John enrolled at Valley City State College. He was a quiet, fun-loving boy who dreamed of returning to his hometown to work as a teacher and basketball coach.

John's mother and brother Kevin remember John's kindness, especially toward his Grandma Alice while she was staying with the family recuperating from breaking her hip. While his parents were out of town, John stayed home caring for his grandmother, even making potato pancakes for her.

JON GREENLEY

Jon Greenley was from Fargo. He was born on January 30, 1942. He served in the Air Force's 774th Tactical Aerial Flight Squadron. Jon died on January 7, 1966. He was 23 years old.

Jon was one of three sons. His brother Doug remembers that Jon respected authority. Jon sent Doug a letter stating that the only time he questioned their parents' judgment was when he was buying a lawnmower and they suggested he buy a type he didn't like.

From a young age, Jon had an interest in planes and in the military. He joined the North Dakota Air National Guard. When his parents wouldn't take him to see the Air Museum in Ohio, he hitchhiked there.

Jon attended North Dakota State University and became president of the international relations group there. He was named Outstanding ROTC of the Air Force and was the first alternate to the Air Force Academy. The Fargo AMVETS post, founded in 1980, was named after Jon.

His body has never been recovered.

DAN HERDEBU

Dan Herdebu was from Baldwin. He was born on July 21, 1948. He served in the Army's 1st Aviation Brigade. He was 19 years old when he died on March 10, 1968.

Dan and his two brothers attended their two-room school through the eighth grade and attended Bismarck High School.

Dan planned to put his aviation experience to good use by flying helicopters for law enforcement or medical facilities someday.

Dan's older brother Eugene was in basic training when Dan was killed in a helicopter crash in Vietnam. After Dan's death, Eugene also served in Vietnam in the Army.

ALAN HINZPETER

Alan Hinzpeter was from Minot. He was born on May 12, 1949. He served in the Army's 101st Airborne Division. Alan died on September 6, 1971. He was 22 years old. Alan was one of four children. His brother Gordie also served in Vietnam, and their father served in World War II in the Navy.

Alan's friends and family called him Pete and remember him as a hard worker who was smart and generous with his money. He was a jokester who liked everyone and whom everyone liked. His oldest sister Jean tells about the time he wanted to watch the World Series, so he smoked a cigarette at school so he would be suspended. Jean says that Alan was 5 feet 4 inches but had a big personality. Many people attended his funeral and still to this day remember him fondly.

GERALD ALLEN ''AL'' IVERSON

Al Iverson was from Oakes. He was born on May 26, 1947. He served in the Army's 9th Infantry Division. He was 20 years old when he died on November 1, 1967.

Al was the second youngest of 14 kids—7 boys and 7 girls. Al's siblings say he was a fun-loving brother with red hair and freckles. He loved baseball and fishing. He also enjoyed spending time with his older siblings' kids, the oldest in his family, and he wanted to get married someday and have six kids of his own.

Al had 3 months left before he was scheduled to return home. He was the first Dickey County soldier to die in Vietnam.

NORBERT FROEHLICH

Norbert Froehlich was from Belfield. He was born on March 4, 1947. He served in the Army's 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment. Norbert died on January 30, 1968. He was 19 years old.

He was the ninth of 10 kids and grew up on his family farm. Three of his brothers also served our country in the military.

His friends, both in the Army and from high school, remembered Norbert as a friend who stuck by them through thick and thin. His brother Don says that Norbert was wounded in Vietnam and was supposed to be on R&R in Australia but chose to stay in Vietnam to

help his fellow soldiers. His church in Belfield recognizes him every year on the anniversary of his death. After his death, the Army promoted Norbert to corporal.

GERHARDT JUST

Gerhardt Just was from Wishek and was born October 31, 1925. He served in the Army's 1st Aviation Brigade. Gerhardt died on August 27, 1965. He was 39 years old. He was survived by his wife Lillian, daughters Oteeka and Cora, and his son Butch.

Gerhardt joined the Army, served in Korea, and then reenlisted in the Army to provide for his family.

Gerhardt's oldest child, Oteeka, remembers that it was so important for her dad to support his family financially that after his pickup caught fire and burned the driver's seat, he put a kitchen chair in the cab so he could drive to his second job.

His kids have memories of spending their last time together working on the house he bought them, installing grass in the yard and painting the house days before his deployment.

Gerhardt was killed just a month after arriving in Vietnam.

Gerhardt's children appreciate how after his death, Gerhardt's parents and siblings always welcomed his widow and children into their family with open arms.

GARY MYERS

Gary Myers was from Fort Yates and was born on November 4, 1947. He served in the Marine Corps's 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion. Gary was 20 years old when he died on May 13, 1968.

Gary's father served in the Army during the Korean war and was stationed in Germany, where Gary was born. Gary spent 1 year at Dickinson State University before enlisting.

Gary's sister Linda remembers him as an outgoing person who loved to help people when he had a chance. He was an honor student and enjoyed playing sports, including wrestling, football, and rodeo. When we wasn't busy with sports, Gary was helping his father work on their cattle ranch.

Gary's hometown friends and fellow soldiers reported that Gary was killed in Vietnam while leading a mission to retrieve his lieutenant's body 1 month before Gary was scheduled to return home to his family in the United States.

LARRY OLSON

Larry Olson was from McHenry. He was born on June 26, 1945. He served in the Army's 25th Infantry Division. Larry died on June 19, 1968. He was 22 years old.

Larry's grandfather served in World War I, his father in World War II, and his brother and nephews also served our country.

Larry was the oldest of six children. His sister Rita remembers him as the big brother who always watched out for her and kept bullies away.

Larry was a hard worker and a good friend. Fellow soldiers from his regiment loved Larry so much that they asked Rita to show them his grave.

RICHARD ''RICK'' BORGMAN

Rick Borgman was from Minot and was born on January 23, 1947. He served in the Army's 101st Airborne Division. He was 21 years old when he died on March 3, 1968.

Rick's mother Anita and sister Pat remember him as a loving, gentle person. He participated in Boy Scouts, worked at the Red Owl grocery store, and enjoyed fast cars and life in general.

Rick left behind his widow Linda, his son Shannon, and daughter Laura. Linda learned that she was pregnant with Laura shortly after Rick's funeral. Linda remembers Rick's big heart, great sense of humor, and that he was loved by many. She says she can see Rick whenever she looks at Shannon and Laura and that Shannon's laugh is contagious, just as his dad's was.

Linda is grateful that her second husband, Bruce Sullivan, a Vietnam veteran, adopted Shannon and Laura and lovingly helped her raise them.

DAVID BUJALSKI

David Bujalski was from Carrington. He was born on August 18, 1940. He served in the Army Corps of Engineers' 65th Energy Battalion. On August 15, 1967, David died. He was 27 years old.

David was the youngest of six children, lovingly called ''Little David.'' But after reaching the height of 6 foot 2 inches, his family more often referred to cheerful and friendly David as a gentle giant.

He graduated in the top third of his class from West Point and married Barbara. They had a daughter Elizabeth while David was stationed in Germany. They moved to Arizona, and David became a commander. His first sergeant there was quoted saying, ''He was revered by his cadre, loved by his students, and respected by his superiors.''

David felt a duty to serve in Vietnam, and 8 days after arriving there, he was killed by a sniper. His second daughter Kathleen was born 6 weeks later.

David's brother Jack, also a West Point graduate, wrote the following about his brother:

> David's life was too short for him to have reached his full potential. We can only conjecture as to what he would have achieved, but we do know that he influenced the lives of all who knew him.

LESLIE CARTER

Leslie Carter was from Jamestown. He was born on November 3, 1943. He served in the Navy as a medic. He was 24 years old when he died on July 1, 1968.

Leslie left behind his widow Marlys and his daughter Heidi. Leslie met Marlys through his brother Douglas. While home on leave, Leslie won Marlys over, and the couple later married. A year after their wedding, their daughter Heidi was born. Heidi was 5 months old when her father died and never had an opportunity to meet him.

One of Leslie's high school friends, who also served in the Navy, James Bitz, called Leslie ''Butch'' and remembers him as one of the nicest, most generous people he had ever had the pleasure of knowing.

DAVID CORCORAN

David Corcoran was from Grand Forks. He was born on May 5, 1951. He served in the Army's 101st Airborne Division. David died on June 26, 1969. He was 18 years old.

David was one of five children and the only son. He loved hunting with his father, grandfather, and uncles. He also loved cars and playing basketball. David helped construct a figure 8 racetrack in Grand Forks and was happy to be able to race his own cars on the track a few times before being deployed.

Wanting to serve his country like his World War II veteran father, David joined the Army at age 17. His family hoped he would not be assigned to a combat unit because he was only 17, but a day after his 18th birthday, he received his orders to Vietnam.

WILBERT FLECK

Wilbert Fleck was from Breien and was born November 22, 1949. He served in the Army's 1st Infantry Division. He was 19 years old when he died on July 27, 1969.

Wilbert was one of 13 children—7 boys and 6 girls. Six of the seven boys served in the military.

Wilbert's brothers and sisters remember him as a selfless and caring person. He was always willing to help out a neighbor. He was dedicated to caring for his aging parents and was extremely protective of those he loved.

Wilbert died taking charge of his platoon after his platoon leader was killed. His sister Pauline says that this was just the kind of person he was—always willing to put the needs of others before his own. Wilbert was Pauline's best friend.

LOWELL HARDMEYER

Lowell Hardmeyer was from Mott. He was born on February 16, 1949. He served in the Army's 198th Light Infantry Brigade. He died on June 10, 1970. He was 21 years old.

Lowell was the younger of two sons. He was a blue-eyed boy who loved horses and grew up on his family farm and ranch in the Prairie Hills.

In 1967, Lowell graduated from high school and enrolled in the National Electronics Institute in Denver before serving in the Army.

In Vietnam, Lowell had various duties, including rear security guard, walking on point patrol, and radio operator. He was killed when his company came under mortar attack.

Lowell's cousin, Lauren, remembers Lowell was a shy, sweet young man. Lauren says that Lowell's parents, George and Clara Hardmeyer, grieved Lowell's death until their own in the 1990s.

MERLYN PAULSON

Merlyn Pauslon was from Fargo and he was born on June 19, 1936. He served

in the Air Force's 8th Tactical Fighter Wing. He was 35 years old when he went missing on March 29, 1972.

Merlyn was one of nine children, six boys and three girls. Five of the boys served their country, three in World War II and two in Vietnam.

Merlyn's brother Bob remembers him as a wonderful boy who people couldn't help but love. Bob jokes that Merlyn had personality to burn.

Merlyn went missing when his plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile. Fourteen years later, in 1986, his body was finally recovered. Years later, his family was finally able to lay him to rest in Arlington National Cemetery.

These are just a few stories that, by sharing today with the Senate and sharing today on the floor of the Senate, I hope will remind us all of the tremendous sacrifice that not only these young men have provided for their country but the sacrifice also of their families, their children, and the wives they leave behind, the parents they leave behind, and that it is a constant reminder that we must never forget the duty to our country and we must never forget those among us who have paid the ultimate price.

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. HATCH. 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 STATE OF THE SENATE AS AN INSTITUTION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, in the last Congress, I came to the Senate floor to express my concern about the state of the Senate as an institution, how it had been beset by dysfunction, destructive partisanship, and corrosion of its vital characteristics.

Today, I wish to reflect on some of the progress we have made in the first few months of this Congress in restoring this great institution to its essential role in our constitutional system. While significant progress has been made, there still remains much more to be done.

Central to properly understanding our responsibilities as Senators is an appreciation of the Senate's role in our system of government. Consider the particularly distinct purposes of the two Houses of Congress. The House of Representatives is the organ of government designed to embody the will of the people. Its small constituencies and short terms allow its Members to be as closely in touch with the voters as possible. With 435 Members, robust participation by every Member in each debate is impossibly cumbersome. Thus, the House's work is defined by majority rule as logically befits a body that represents the popular will.

By contrast, the Framers designed the Senate to serve as what they called ''a necessary fence'' against the ''fickleness and passion'' that sometimes drives popular pressure for hasty and ill-considered lawmaking—or, as Edmund Randolph put it, ''the turbulence and follies of democracy.'' Similarly, James Madison described its purpose as ''protect[ing] the people against the transient impressions into which they themselves might be led.''

Through its character and its institutional structure, the Senate not only checks transient and occasionally intemperate impulses but also refines the popular will with wisdom and sound judgment. Perhaps the most important characteristic that guarantees this key function is the Senate's relatively small size, which enables each and every Senator to contribute meaningfully in debate.

The primacy of individual Senators' rights has long guided the development of the Senate's rules and traditions, including the right to extend debate, open amendment consideration, and a committee system that gives all Members, from the most seasoned chairman to the newest freshman, a hand in drafting and improving legislation. Moreover, there is the reality that to function efficiently and effectively, the Senate frequently requires temporary modifications to the institution's oftentimes complex and cumbersome rules—agreements that require the unanimous consent of all Senators to take effect.

The expansive rights of Senators are a double-edged sword—at once both the great genius of the institution and the source of some of the greatest pitfalls that may befall it. By giving a minority of Senators—sometimes even a minority of one—great sway over the business of the whole body, each one of us is entrusted with enormous powers that can be used to grind the Senate to a halt. These powers can be used to do enormous good when used wisely and judiciously—from forcing a majority to reconsider misguided legislation to extracting important guarantees from the executive branch in exchange for allowing a nomination to go forward.

The former Senator from Oklahoma, Dr. Tom Coburn, was a leading exponent of these rights. During his time in the Senate, he was legendary for his use of the rules to stop wasteful spending and limit the expansion of the Federal Government. While we may not always have agreed on particular matters, it is beyond question that his willingness to stand up for what he believed in—even in the face of overwhelming opposition—did enormous good for our Nation. Dr. Coburn's service demonstrates exactly why the Senate allows a minority to hold such a sway over this body.

Nevertheless, while the whole Republic has benefited time and again from a Senate minority's judicious exercise of its rights, we know all too well how these rights can be abused. Today, the Senate's procedures have become bywords for mindless obstruction. In the minds of many of our fellow citizens, what drives the exercise of minority rights is not the interests of thoughtful legislating or productive oversight but, rather, reflexive partisanship and political grandstanding.

From various quarters, including some within this very body, we often hear calls to eliminate the various rights of the minority. Although these calls may be instinctively appealing, we should decisively reject them. After all, without these minority rights, the Senate would lose its unique character, which has allowed it to serve the Republic so well for so many years. The Senate, stripped of its minority rights, would merely duplicate and needlessly frustrate the work of the House of Representatives.

Those of us in the present day should recall that we are not the first in our Nation's history to confront the potential for great dysfunction. In particular, we should recall the example of the late Senator from Montana, Mike Mansfield. Senator Mansfield served as majority leader from 1961 until 1977, holding that position longer than any other Senate leader. These were turbulent times for the Nation and the Senate alike, when the issues of the day could hardly have been more divisive and problematic.

Near the beginning of his tenure, when a determined minority stalled President Kennedy's legislative priorities, Senator Mansfield faced great pressure from within his own party to exert the majority's power more assertively. In an act of great courage, Mansfield resisted these calls to bend the Senate's rules. Although tempted by the prospect of important policy and political victories, he instead counseled that the remedy to gridlock ''lies not in the seeking of shortcuts, not in the cracking of nonexistent whips, not in wheeling and dealing, but in an honest facing of the situation and a resolution of it by the Senate itself, by accommodation, by respect for one another, [and] by mutual restraint.''

Senator Mansfield was absolutely right, and his wisdom is perhaps more relevant now than ever. For the Senate to function effectively, Senators of all stripes must practice mutual restraint—Republican and Democrat, conservative and liberal, majority and minority alike.

In practice, restraint requires different sacrifices of different Senators, depending on their position. For the majority leadership, it is measured in part by what sort of measures are brought before the Senate for consideration. Do they tend to be divisive and partisan messaging bills, or do they tend to be measures that can gather bipartisan support—those that may offer less prospects of a messaging victory but greater prospects for actually becoming law? Have the measures typically been considered by the committee of jurisdiction, allowing for a

thorough vetting and best chance for bipartisan consensus?

Restraint is also measured in how the majority conducts its consideration of a particular measure. Is there an open amendment process that allows all Senators to contribute to the Chamber's work and seek means of mutual accommodation, or does the majority leader fill up the so-called amendment tree, thereby freezing legislation in the exact form that he demands? Is the full Senate allowed sufficient time for full and free debate on a measure important enough for consideration on the floor, or does the majority leader move to end debate as soon as it begins?

The need for mutual restraint also creates correlative obligations for the minority. From filibusters, to poison-pill amendments, to objections, to routine unanimous consent requests—an often underappreciated but incredibly important tool to chew up this body's valuable time—Senators in the minority have numerous ways in which they can grind this body to a halt and derail a measure. Senators on both sides of the aisle—myself included—have relied on these means before. Their use can be quite legitimate when employed judiciously and motivated by serious policy disagreement; however, when employed indiscriminately for the purpose of frustrating the operation of the Senate for partisan gain, the use of such tactics is deeply improper.

The appropriateness of the minority's behavior hinges in large part on the actions of the majority. With the power to decide the Senate's business, including what the Senate considers as well as how it considers it, the majority's behavior rightfully shapes the minority's response. Majority restraint invites minority restraint, begetting productive legislating, whereas majority overreach invites minority intransigence, causing only dysfunction.

The Senate's dysfunction over the past few years resulted from exactly that—repeated instances of overreach by the majority in direct contradiction to the restraint counseled by Senator Mansfield. This overreach occurred along a wide variety of fronts, many of which my colleagues and I spoke out against in great detail.

In the last Congress, many bills that received floor consideration had completely bypassed the committee process. In fact, each of the past four Congresses set a new record for the use of this extraordinary procedure. The unfortunate but predictable result was the waste of the Senate's valuable floor time on partisan messaging bills that no one seriously expected to become law.

Instead of allowing an open amendment process, the previous majority used the procedural maneuver known as filling the tree to deny Senators the right to offer an amendment. By refusing to allow amendments out of a desire to prevent a vote on commonsense bipartisan ideas, such as building the Keystone XL Pipeline and rolling back bureaucratic red tape, the previous majority invited minority opposition to the underlying measures, killing important bipartisan legislation such as the energy efficiency bill and the sportsman's bill.

In the last Congress, almost a year went by during which the majority allowed votes on only 11 minority amendments. During that period, all 45 Senators in the minority together got fewer votes on amendments than, for example, one House Democrat, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE. In fact, the Congressional Research Service confirms that the previous majority leader used his position to block the consideration of amendments more than twice as often as the previous six majority leaders combined.

The previous majority also frequently moved to end debate on a measure at the very same time it was brought up for consideration, employing this tactic far more often than previous majorities. Its effect is not to end debate on legislation but to prevent it all together. Whenever those of us then in the minority resisted this demand that we end debate as soon as we began consideration, the majority wrongfully labeled it a ''filibuster.'' Worst of all, the majority used this supposedly unprecedented level of obstruction to take the drastic step of abolishing extended debate all together on most nominations using the so-called nuclear option.

With the new leadership of the Senate under the senior Senator from Kentucky, we have made enormous progress toward restoring this sense of mutual restraint. Consider the sort of legislation the current majority leader has brought up for floor consideration so far this Congress: the bipartisan Hoeven-Manchin bill to authorize the Keystone XL Pipeline; the permanent solution for Medicare's Sustainable Growth Rate and reauthorization of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which passed 92 to 8; and the Cornyn-Klobuchar bill to fight the scourge of modern-day slavery known as human trafficking.

These are not Republican messaging bills. The majority leader has admirably avoided the temptation to fill our agenda with partisan bills just to score cheap political points. Instead, we have focused on bills that command broad bipartisan support. Moreover, consider the bills that the majority leader has indicated are next up for floor consideration: the Corker-Menendez Iran nuclear agreement legislation that passed the Foreign Relations Committee with unexpected and impressive unanimity; the bipartisan Alexander-Murray rewrite of No Child Left Behind; and our bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act, which passed out of the Finance Committee last night with the support of 13 Republicans and 7 Democrats. By identifying these priorities, the majority leader has indicated that his focus on bipartisan committee-vetted legislation is not a fleeting illusion but a long-term commitment to responsible leadership.

The way in which the majority leader has conducted our consideration of these bills also demonstrates this commitment to restraint. We have seen committee consideration of legislation restored as the norm. We have also seen a renewed commitment to an open amendment process. In January, for example, the Senate voted on more amendments in 1 week than in all of last year. By my count, we have voted on 114 individual amendments in less than 4 months, the majority of which were offered by the minority. Many of these were tough votes, but the need to govern responsibly far outweighed any political cost. Instead of cutting off debate before it even begins, we have moved at a deliberate pace to allow the amendment process to flourish, tempering our own desire to move legislation faster in order to legislate according to the best traditions of this body.

This is not to say that the past 4 months have been perfect. There have been times when the sailing has been a bit rocky. While the current minority has repeatedly displayed admirable cooperation—the sort of mutual restraint that Senator Mansfield wisely lauded so many years ago—there have been times when some of my colleagues have fallen prey to the temptation of partisan obstruction.

In particular, I was extremely disappointed by the logjam that developed over the Hyde amendment and impeded progress on the bipartisan human trafficking bill. The gridlock over what should have been an uncontroversial provision indicated a troubling willingness on the part of some to derail our efforts to legislate responsibly and instead resort to tired and discredited war-on-women rhetoric to win cheap political votes.

I was so encouraged by this week's resolution of that impasse. The willingness on the part of leaders on both sides of the aisle to break the gridlock reflected the best of the Senate's great tradition of statesmanship. I want to extend my sincere thanks and respect to the senior Senators from Washington, Minnesota, and Texas, Senators MURRAY, KLOBUCHAR and CORNYN, as well as everyone else who helped craft the compromise.

By putting partisanship aside, they have not only benefitted the victims of human trafficking; they have also helped reinvigorate the ethos of accommodation and mutual restraint that is at the heart of this institution. We should all look to this example as a model of leadership worthy of the world's greatest deliberative body.

It is incumbent on all of us to get the Senate back to work for the American people. By returning to the spirit of comity that served this body so well for so long, we have already made real and meaningful progress. I urge all of my colleagues to continue in this noble pursuit. It is undoubtedly worth the cost.

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. 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.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor the millions of Armenians who were deported during the Armenian genocide in 1915, and the 1.5 million men, women, and children who were killed. April 24, 2015, marks the Centennial Remembrance Day of the Armenian genocide, and my thoughts go out to the descendants of the victims and all of the Armenian people as the world commemorates this tragedy.

As we reflect upon this horrific period in history, we are reminded of the importance of promoting tolerance and standing firm against hatred and discrimination. That is why I have always recognized the terrible atrocities that took place in Armenia as genocide and why I consistently support resolutions in the Senate to remember the anniversaries of the Armenian genocide. I will continue to support these resolutions and speak about this issue so we never forget the families who were torn apart and destroyed due to brutal intolerance.

Nevada is home to a vibrant community of thousands of Armenian Americans. Through churches and other organizations, Armenians in Nevada have demonstrated a commitment to working to improve their communities and serve others. For instance, the Armenian Relief Association in Las Vegas has dedicated years to serving the Las Vegas community and providing Saturday school for children to learn Armenian history. Kirk Kerkorian, an immensely successful Armenian American businessman and philanthropist, has shaped Nevada's booming tourism industry and created jobs with his investments on the Las Vegas Strip. Kirk has also generously donated to organizations across the Nation and in Armenia through his charitable foundation, the Lincy Foundation, to support important causes such as public education, health care, and infrastructure development. Another well-known Armenian American, the late Jerry Tarkanian, will long be remembered in Nevada not only for his success leading the University of Nevada, Las Vegas basketball team, but also for his dedication to teaching young college athletes to be better people and proudly represent their city.

I am proud that, for years, Nevada has officially recognized the Armenian genocide, and that Nevada continues to find ways to honor this strong community and Armenian history. I am grateful for the efforts of the Armenian American Cultural Society of Las Vegas, which raised thousands of dollars for an Armenian Genocide Monument at Sunset Park in Las Vegas, Nevada. The monument will represent the 12 provinces where Armenians were slaughtered during the genocide, and will provide Nevadans with a place for reflection for years to come.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

Between 1915 and 1923, the Ottoman Empire carried out genocide against the Armenian people. Over the course of 8 years, more than 1.5 million Armenians were marched to their deaths in the deserts of the Middle East, murdered in concentration camps, drowned at sea, and forced to endure unimaginable acts of brutality.

Over the years, this deliberate massacre of the Armenians has been well-documented and confirmed by scholars and experts. And there are countless testimonies from victims who lived to tell of their harrowing experiences.

In his memoirs, Henry Morgenthau, the American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire between 1913 and 1916, wrote: ''When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact.''

Despite an irrefutable body of evidence, the U.S. Government has refused to call the deliberate massacre of the Armenians by its rightful name. Mr. President, 100 years have passed since the beginning of the Armenian genocide. It is long past time for our government to finally acknowledge one of the greatest atrocities of the 20th century for what it was—genocide.

This year, I am proud to be an original cosponsor of a Senate resolution calling on the President to ''ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide.''

But each day that goes by without full acknowledgement by the United States prolongs the pain felt by the descendants of the victims of the Armenian genocide, as well as the entire Armenian community.

By affirming the Armenian genocide, the United States would join countries across the globe—including Argentina, Canada, France, Italy, Poland, Russia, Switzerland, and Venezuela—as well as the Holy See and 43 U.S. States in standing on the right side of history.

For years, I have urged both Democratic and Republican administrations to finally acknowledge the truth of the Armenian genocide. Today, I reiterate my call and I hope that this year the United States will finally correct this century-old injustice.

During a recent mass commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide, Pope Francis said:

> It is necessary, and indeed a duty, to honour their memory, for whenever memory fades, it means that evil allows wounds to fester. Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it!

On this April 24, as we take time to remember and honor the victims of the Armenian genocide, I hope the United States will heed the eloquent words of Pope Francis by formally and unequivocally affirming the incontestable fact of the Armenian genocide.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I wish to solemnly observe the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide.

One hundred years ago, one of the greatest tragedies of the 20th Century began when the young Turk leaders of the Ottoman Empire executed more than 200 Armenian leaders and intellectuals. What followed was an 8-year systematic campaign of oppression, which by 1923, left an estimated 1.5 million Armenians dead and over a half a million survivors exiled.

These atrocities affected the lives of every Armenian living in Asia Minor and, indeed, across the globe, and many called for the United States to take action. The U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire during this dark time, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., unsuccessfully pleaded with President Wilson to take action, and later remembered the events of the genocide, saying:

> I am confident that the whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this. The great massacres and persecutions of the past seem almost insignificant when compared to the sufferings of the Armenian race in 1915.

Former President Theodore Roosevelt also called for an American response, saying, ''Until we put honor and duty first, and are willing to risk something in order to achieve righteousness both for ourselves and for others, we shall accomplish nothing; and we shall earn and deserve the contempt of the strong nations of mankind.''

Unfortunately, the United States and the world did not intervene. It is a testament to the unbreakable spirit of the survivors of the Armenian genocide that they persevered and went on to enrich their countries of emigration, including the United States. That is why today we not only commemorate this grave tragedy, but we celebrate the traditions, the contributions, as well as the bright future of the Armenian people. Indeed, my home State of Rhode Island continues to be enriched by our strong and vibrant Armenian-American community.

Denial of this history is inconsistent with our country's values and as we mark this centennial, I once again join with my colleagues on a resolution that encourages the United States to recognize the Armenian genocide. We must continue to guard against hatred and oppression so that we can prevent such crimes against humanity. I would

note that, earlier this month, Pope Francis held a mass to recognize this centennial and described this mass atrocity against Armenians as the first genocide of the 20th century. On this, the 100th anniversary, the United States should similarly recognize this horrific tragedy as genocide, joining the ranks of the many countries that have already done so.

I remain committed to supporting efforts, as ranking member on the Senate Armed Services Committee and as a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, to provide assistance to Armenia to promote economic growth, strengthen security, and support democratic reforms and development.

I am pleased that on May 7, at my invitation, His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Worldwide Armenian Apostolic Church and the Great House of Cilicia, will serve as guest Chaplain before this body and continue this important message. We must find a way to come together to recognize what happened a century ago and show our unwavering support to those facing persecution today. I hope we can do that.

Mr. ROUNDS. Mr. President, I rise today to commemorate and reflect on the centennial anniversary of the beginning of the Armenian genocide. With great sadness, we remember the beginning of the genocide of 1.5 million Armenians, Assyrians, and Greeks who died 100 years ago. On April 24, 1915, the campaign targeting the Armenian people began. They, along with Assyrians and Greeks, were viewed as threats to the Ottoman Empire and driven from their homeland. The persecuted minorities were uprooted from their way of life leaving behind generations of family history, property, and memories. The Armenians were then force-marched into the desert without proper rations and supplies, with most dying along this brutal passage. The remaining survivors were detained in concentration camps rampant with disease and hunger. These mass killings are historically documented and served as a tragic prelude to the Holocaust.

This solemn anniversary offers us a chance to renew our commitment to the principle of ''never again,'' a vow that surfaced after the Holocaust. And so today I rise to proclaim never again can an ethnic group be targeted due to race, religion, or ethnicity.

BANGLADESH RANA PLAZA ANNIVERSARY

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, April 24 marks the 2-year anniversary of the Rana Plaza building collapse which resulted in the death of over 1,130 Bangladeshi workers and the injury of approximately 2,500 more. To date, this remains the single largest disaster of its kind. Since 2013, many in the governmental, nongovernmental, private, and business sectors have pledged their financial resources and time to addressing the numerous issues and problems surrounding the ready-made garment industry. Even though progress has been made, many promises remain unfulfilled, especially in providing Bangladeshi workers the rights they deserve.

As a long-term U.S. ally, I want Bangladesh to be prosperous because only through a growing economy that delivers shared prosperity to its people can stability be ensured.

The country's garment industry is now, and will be for the foreseeable future, the engine of economic growth as it accounts for close to 80 percent of foreign exchange earnings. The United States, which remains the single largest country buyer of Bangladeshi garments, has an important responsibility to ensure that those garments are made in a way that do not put people's lives at risk and that fairly rewards workers for their labor.

Domestically, while there has been progress in conducting safety inspections and hiring additional inspectors, much work remains in providing for freedom of association. On this front, I have been very disappointed by the role played by the government of Bangladesh. The record over the past 2 years shows that the Bangladeshi government has failed to keep promises it made to our Government and to the European Union.

It has failed to pass a labor law in line with international labor standards and has not promulgated implementing regulations for the law that exists.

Workers still have no rights to form unions in Export Processing Zones and once again the government is saying it has no power to change regulations because of contractual obligations to companies.

The government of Bangladesh has made little progress with regard to the inspection of well over a thousand factories that it agreed to inspect for fire safety.

The government of Bangladesh personnel responsible for investigating unfair labor practices are not doing so and some police have refused to accept cases filed by labor organizers who experience violence from management-hired thugs. Such antiunion behavior on the part of employers is common throughout many developing countries but in the case of Bangladesh, it is compounded by the government's actions which actively abet such behavior. For that, the government of Bangladesh must be held responsible.

There needs to be a clear, consistent and transparent union registration process. While approximately 300 factory-level garment unions have been registered in the last 2 years, more than 100 unions that filed for registration have been rejected by the government, many for arbitrary or unfair reasons.

The people of Bangladesh need mechanisms where workers can swiftly get the justice they deserve when their rights are violated. Bangladeshi authorities need to properly investigate, address and, if necessary, penalize employers for unfair labor practices to end the culture of impunity that surrounds employer resistance to legally protected union activity.

So as my colleagues can see, much work remains.

Until substantial progress is made, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative has rightfully decided to keep in place the suspension of Bangladesh's Generalized System of Preferences—GSP—trade benefits with the United States. I support this decision.

The ''Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh'' and the ''Alliance on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh'' are two private sector initiatives made up of American and European retailers which have conducted safety inspections in more than 2,500 factories. As a result, some factories have adopted new safety practices and have made physical improvements such as the installation of fire doors to make it safer for workers to evacuate when fires occur. These inspections have resulted in the full or partial shutdown of a number of unsafe factories. The private sector has a critical role to play in changing the RMG culture in Bangladesh and I strongly urge both coalitions to focus on how workers' rights can be improved in the coming years.

Aside from ensuring that improvements are made to prevent another Rana Plaza, it is critical that full compensation is paid to the victims and their families. As of today, the ''Rana Plaza Donors Trust Fund'' has received roughly $21 million from a variety of donors, including both large global brands and the Bangladeshi Prime Minister's Fund. While $21 million sounds impressive, the fund is suffering from an approximate $9 million shortfall. Because of this, some victims and their families have only received approximately 70 percent of the money they are entitled to. I am happy to hear that Benetton has recently agreed to donate to the Fund. I hope that other companies that had business at Rana Plaza come forward and contribute, or continue contributing, their fair share.

It is encouraging to see different elements of the international community come together to support the garment factory workers in Bangladesh. Real progress in the RMG sector will require continued vigilance on the part of the international community. Earlier this year, we were once again saddened by the news of yet another tragedy involving the collapse of a building in Bangladesh. On March 12, in the town of Mongla, a cement factory collapsed and tragically killed eight people while injuring approximately 60 others. Whether in a garment factory or cement factory, we must remain vigilant to ensure that workers' safety and workers' rights are top priorities of the U.S. government and international buyers in Bangladesh.

REFUGEE AND MIGRANT DEATHS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to discuss an enormous human tragedy: another boat carrying desperate refugees and migrants capsized in the Mediterranean Sea and, in this most recent instance, over 850 men, women, and children have died. It is profoundly heartwrenching to view the anguished images of innocent refugees and migrants, men and women, old and young, who embarked on this desperate journey bound for a more hopeful future, but which instead ended in death on the Mediterranean Sea for so many people.

In 2014, we know that well over 218,000 refugees and migrants crossed the Mediterranean Sea, many fleeing violence, conflict, and persecution in Syria, Iraq, Eritrea and elsewhere, traveling on overcrowded and unseaworthy boats. Last year, over 3,500 women, men, and children died or went missing in their desperate attempts to reach Europe. According to the International Organization on Migration, IOM, this year's death toll in the Mediterranean Sea is believed to have surpassed 1,750 victims already—a drastic spike when compared to the same period last year. During the first 3 weeks of April alone, more than 11,000 people have been rescued.

This is a journey of unimaginable peril, and only the most despairing families with nothing to lose would sacrifice their lives in the hopes that this voyage will deliver an escape from misery. From Syria to Iraq, from South Sudan to Yemen, multiplying conflicts, gross human rights violations, statelessness, the effects of climate change, and food and water insecurity are all contributing to millions of people being forced from their homes in search of safety and survival.

The international community is witnessing the enormous costs of unending wars and the failure to resolve or prevent conflict. The number of refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people worldwide has, for the first time in the post-World War II era, exceeded 50 million people, according to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, UNHCR.

This massive increase is largely driven by the war in Syria, which is now in its fifth year. The Assad regime's ruthless attacks on Syrian civilians—compounded by horrific violence by armed extremists—has led to Syria's disintegration and massive internal and external displacement of its people.

Europe, facing conflicts to its south in Libya, east in Ukraine, and southeast in Syria, Iraq and the Horn of Africa, is currently seeing the largest numbers of refugees and migrants arriving by boat across the Mediterranean. To confront this enormous challenge, European Council President Donald Tusk called on member states on Monday, April 20, to meet their funding commitments for Trident, the European Union's, EU, naval operation in the Mediterranean. EU leaders also agreed to meet on Thursday, April 23, to consider increasing resources for rescue operations and the 10-point action plan on migration proposed by the Joint Foreign Affairs and Home Council.

The proposed plan would alleviate pressure on the member states receiving the majority of those rescued and also aims to combat trafficking and smuggling.

The EU's proposed 10-point plan is an important first step, but a bold and comprehensive response is urgently needed. First, rescue at sea is and should be the top priority. It is a moral imperative based on European values, as well as a fundamental principle of maritime law. A robust search and rescue operation, comparable to Mare Nostrum, that focuses on saving lives must be reinstated. While the reinforcement of the Joint Operations in the Mediterranean is welcomed, border surveillance operations are not an answer to this crisis.

Second, there needs to be a credible and firm commitment from countries both in Europe and across the globe to resettle significant numbers of refugees. Moreover, efforts to encourage legal alternatives to such dangerous voyages must be pursued. These include enhanced family reunification, private sponsorship programs, and study and labor migration programs for people in need of international protection.

Finally, I urge the U.S. Government to provide robust assistance, and to work closely with our European partners, so that we might all rise to the demands presented by this humanitarian crisis and commit to the measures needed to prevent tragedies such as the drowning deaths of 850 men, women, and children off the coast of Libya this past weekend.

NATIONAL MINORITY HEALTH MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing April as National Minority Health Month. 2015 marks the 30th anniversary of this event, which provides us with an opportunity to celebrate the progress we have made in addressing minority health issues and health disparities in our country and to renew our commitment to continue this critically important work.

Minorities now make up more than 35 percent of the American population and that number is expected to rise in the future. However, study after study has shown that minorities, especially African Americans and Latinos, continue to face significant health disparities in diseases such as diabetes, HIV/AIDS, and asthma.

Currently, over 26 million Americans suffer from diabetes. But African Americans are twice as likely to be diagnosed with, and to die from, diabetes compared to non-Hispanic whites. African Americans are also more than 2½ times more likely to suffer from diabetes-related end-stage renal disease than non-Hispanic whites, and are more likely to have other complications, such as lower extremity amputations.

Obesity, which increases the risk of developing diabetes, is also more prevalent in minority communities. Nearly 4 out of 5 African-American women are overweight or obese, as well as 78 percent of Hispanic men. It is no coincidence that, nationwide, 27.2 percent of African Americans and 23.5 percent of Latinos lived below the Federal poverty line in 2013. Limited means and the lack of access to fresh fruits and vegetables in ''food deserts'' prevent many people from accessing the nutrition they need to lead healthy lives.

Those living in impoverished areas are also much more likely to be exposed to polluted air, which exacerbates respiratory conditions like asthma. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, in 2012, African Americans were 20 percent more likely to have asthma versus non-Hispanic whites.

HIV and AIDS, which are especially prevalent in low-income neighborhoods with widespread drug use, continue to devastate minorities across the country. African American women are 23 times more likely to have AIDS than their white counterparts and Hispanic women are four times more likely to be infected. In Maryland, African Americans are diagnosed with HIV at more than 10 times the rate of white Marylanders.

The role that access to resources, proper nutrition, and clean air plays in our well-being cannot be overstated. According to a 2012 report about Baltimore neighborhoods from the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, those living in higher-income parts of the city live, on average, nearly 30 years longer than their neighbors in impoverished areas.

Fortunately, thanks to the Affordable Care Act, ACA, we have recently made health coverage more accessible and affordable than it has been in decades. By reducing the number of uninsured Americans across the country, the ACA is working to address health inequalities. Between 2013 and 2014, the percentage of uninsured Latinos dropped by 7.7 percent, and the percentage of uninsured African Americans fell by 6.8 percent.

Also, as a result of the ACA, increased funding is available for community health clinics. Mr. President, 300,000 Marylanders, including more than 140,000 African Americans and 38,000 Latinos, are served by these clinics.

Under the ACA, preventive services, which are critical to the early detection and treatment of many diseases that disproportionately affect minorities, are now free for 76 million Americans, including 1.5 million Marylanders.

In 2011, African American women in Maryland died from cervical cancer at

nearly twice the rate of white women. This disparity is simply unacceptable and illustrates the importance of access to preventive health care services: cervical cancer is preventable through regular screening tests and follow-up and, when detected and treated early, it is highly curable.

In our country, we are incredibly fortunate to have the National Institutes of Health, NIH, which works tirelessly to improve the health of all Americans, and the NIH's National Institute for Minority Health & Health Disparities, NIMHD, has the specific mission of addressing minority health issues and eliminating health disparities. I am proud of my role in the establishment of the NIMHD, which supports groundbreaking research at universities and medical institutions across our country.

This critically important work ranges from enhancing our understanding of the basic biological processes associated with health disparities to applied, clinical, and translational research and interventions that seek to address those disparities.

Some examples of recent NIMHD-funded projects include exploring racial disparities in sudden infant death syndrome, SIDS, to inform health education interventions about safe infant sleep practices, which historically have been shown to be less effective among African Americans; evaluating a community-based intervention to promote follow-up among uninsured minority women with abnormal breast or cervical cancer screening results; and developing a culturally tailored lifestyle intervention to prevent diabetes among African American and Hispanic adults.

Enhancing our understanding of the complex disparities across racial, ethnic, and other minority populations and their specific risk factors will help us develop better preventive health care, reduce long-term health care costs, and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans.

Minority health disparities cost many of our constituents their health and even their lives, and they cost our health care system and economy, as well. A 2009 joint center study found that direct medical costs resulting from health inequities among minorities totaled nearly $230 billion between 2003 and 2006. With indirect costs such as lowered work productivity and lost tax revenue added to the equation, the tab amounts to more than $1.24 trillion.

We owe it to our constituents to do everything in our power to fight for affordable, high-quality health care for everyone. One's ethnic or racial background should never determine the quality of his or her health or the length of his or her life. This month, let us renew our commitment to ensuring access to affordable, high-quality health care for all Americans, and pledge to do everything we can to eliminate health disparities in our country.

TRIBUTE TO ROSE BAUMANN

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize my chief of staff, Rose Baumann, and to pay tribute to her hard work on behalf of the people of Minnesota as a member of my staff for the past 9 years.

For anyone who has met Rose, it will come as no surprise to you that Rose went from being a junior staffer in my office in 2006 just after graduating from Gustavus Adolphus College to my chief of staff just 7 years later. For the first 4 of those 7 years, Rose handled health care issues first as an outreach director in the Twin Cities and then as a legislative assistant in Washington. Rose approached every challenge with dedication and grace, regardless of whether she was helping a constituent access their Medicare benefits or talking with Minnesota physicians about health care reform proposals or organizing and executing a health care summit. Rose's intelligence, strong Minnesota work ethic, tenacity, and optimism always seemed to ensure success.

During the health reform debate, Rose played a critical role in helping me highlight cost-saving health care delivery models like the Mayo Clinic uses and worked to ensure we reward quality, not quantity, of care. She worked tirelessly to advocate for Minnesota's hospitals, providers, patients, and industries, and that hard work is reflected today as we watch these policies being implemented.

As my legislative director for 3 years, Rose advanced my legislative agenda while successfully managing 12 people and every policy area. My work on consumer safety, transportation, international adoptions, protection of our natural resources and cutting redtape at our Federal agencies all became law under Rose's leadership. Her natural ability, organization, and plain old hard work ensured that my legislative ideas became reality, while crucial events such as the confirmation hearing for Justice Elena Kagan were a success.

Rose has been a remarkable chief of staff. She is a natural leader who quickly adapts to any situation, no matter how large or small. Her enthusiasm has been a motivating force in my office, and her compassion toward the people of Minnesota and understanding of the problems they face has been instrumental to my ability to serve them in the Senate.

Rose Baumann—a proud native of St. Louis Park, MN—will soon begin a new professional adventure with new challenges, and I have no doubt that she will succeed. She is also getting married later this year, and I am so happy to see her so excited about this new phase of her life.

Mr. President, I hope you will join me as I say thank you to Rose Baumann for her 9 remarkable years of service to my office, the Senate, the people of the State of Minnesota, and the United States of America.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TENNESSEE NISSAN STORY

• Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD a copy of my remarks at the Nissan plant in Smyrna, Tennessee earlier this week.

TENNESSEE NISSAN STORY

Thank you Randy, Gov. Haslam, Mr. Martin, ladies and gentlemen of Nissan.

When Randy invited me, he suggested I tell a little history of the Tennessee Nissan story in 5 minutes. And I am delighted to have that opportunity, and I would like to do it by putting a few human faces on the story that is usually told in cars and trucks and dollars and cents. And the best face is the one that Randy told me of his mother.

I remember sitting up with her one night and the boys had gone to their rooms, and she said to me she was sad. And I said, ''Why would you be sad?'' She said, ''Because I've got smart boys and they will never find a job around here, and I will never see my grandchildren.'' Well as Randy said, two years later, here came Nissan.

There were many faces that had to do with the history of this company in the last 35 years. One was President Jimmy Carter. Two months after I was elected, I was at a White House dinner, and he said, ''Governors, go to Japan. Persuade the Japanese to make in the United States what they sell in the United States.'' And at that time, Nissan made no cars and trucks in the United States, and Tennessee had almost no auto jobs.

So I took a photograph of the United States at night, taken at night from a satellite, to see Mr. Kawamata, the Chairman of Nissan. I showed it to him. He said exactly where is Tennessee? I said right in the middle of the lights, which is where you want to be if you're building a plant with lots of heavy things that you want to ship around the country.

I thought Tennessee and Japan were a perfect match. They had no cars here, and we had almost no auto jobs here.

In Detroit in 1980 at the Republican Convention, the country was in a recession. Everybody was gloomy. As I looked around at all the gloomy faces, I said, ''You guys have so much more money than we do. You've got higher teacher salaries. You've got better universities. You have all these things because you've got the auto industry.''

So I skipped a meeting with Ronald Reagan, came home to meet with Takashi Ishihara, the CEO of Nissan. He was a big bluff chief executive. He knew exactly the depth of the lock in Dickson County. And he knew he wanted 400 acres in Rutherford County, where the McClary's had a farm. So one of the faces of Nissan was sitting on the back porch with the McClary family, they were in their 70's, and persuading them to sell their farm to Nissan and then Mr. Ishihara wanted to get the next 400 acres, which was owned by Maymee Cantrell. She wouldn't sell because she promised her tenant farmer that he could live there for his whole life. And she said, ''I am a woman of my word.'' We found 400 acres in Williamson County for her tenant farmer to live on, so Maymee could be a woman of her word and Mr. Ishihara got 800 acres, which you have about filled up, 35 years later.

The faces of Nissan include Marvin Runyon and the Ford team that came from Detroit to a different part of the country to start from scratch in a new environment. They knew they didn't have another advantage. That every state north of Tennessee did not have a Right To Work law, and if they could

work in the environment in which they could be competitive.

The faces of Nissan include the 300 Middle Tennesseans, who never once built a car who went to Japan and spent several weeks learning to build cars the Nissan way. It includes the governors, the local officials, and the legislatures who for 35 years, whether Republican or Democrat, have kept a consistent level of support for an environment that permits the workers of Nissan to produce quality products. It includes the faces of employees at places like Calsonic which was the first tier-one supplier, but now there are hundreds of them in 80 counties across this state, the wealth of Nissan, the family incomes, don't just belong in Middle Tennessee.

And, more than anything else, it includes the men and women of Nissan. It includes you. Those of you who proved early on that Tennesseans could not only build cars and trucks as of a high quality as those in Japan, but could build them better and produce the most efficient auto plant anywhere in North America.

So, look at those 35 years. Look at how Nissan has transformed Tennessee. Tennessee had almost no auto jobs. Today, one-third of its jobs in manufacturing are auto jobs. Then, Tennessee was the third poorest state. Today, Tennessee's family incomes have grown rapidly. Then, Nissan made no cars and trucks in the United States. Today, 85% of what it sells in the United States, it makes in North America.

But, the real story of Nissan and its transformation of Tennessee is the story of the faces of Nissan.

There's no better or more memorable face for me than the face of Lillian, sitting there late one evening in Melton 37 years ago saying that she was afraid that her boys who were talented would never have a chance to get a job around here, and she would never be able to see her grandchildren.

Think how proud she would be today.

Thank you.●

TRIBUTE TO STEVE PITTS

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today I wish to congratulate Steve Pitts on his retirement after over 35 years of service to the Reno Police Department. It gives me great pleasure to recognize his years of hard work and dedication to creating a safe environment in the local Reno community.

Mr. Pitts stands as a shining example of someone who has devoted his life to serving his State. He earned his bachelor's degree in organizational studies from California State University, Long Beach, and later pursued his master's in public administration from Golden Gate University. He is also a graduate of the National Academy at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Leadership Program at the Center for Public Leadership at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and the Naval Postgraduate School Homeland Security Program. His career in police services began in the early 1980s, building all the way to the top of the department in 2011. Mr. Pitts dedicated his work to major case and homicide investigations, emergency management, and crisis intervention. He also built upon his skills in special weapons and tactics over a span of 25 years, as well as gained command-level experience for over 15 years of his career. His unwavering work ethic is commendable, and his undeniable concern for the Reno community is greatly respected.

During his tenure, Mr. Pitts was promoted to deputy chief in January of 2008. He then served as interim police chief from March 2010 until March 2011, at which point he accepted the permanent position of police chief. As the leading voice of the police department, Mr. Pitts emphasized the importance of moving the organization toward what best benefitted the community. His positive legacy will be felt for years to come.

It is the brave men and women who serve in the local police department who keep our communities safe. These heroes selflessly put their lives on the line every day. I extend my deepest gratitude to Mr. Pitts for his courageous contributions to the people of Reno and to the Silver State. His sacrifice and courage earn him a place among the outstanding men and women who have valiantly put their lives on the line to benefit others.

Mr. Pitts has demonstrated professionalism, commitment to excellence, and dedication to the highest standards of the Reno Police Department. I am both humbled and honored by his service and am proud to call him a fellow Nevadan. Today I ask all of my colleagues to join me in congratulating Mr. Pitts on his retirement, and I give my deepest appreciation for all that he has done to make Nevada a safer place. I offer him my best wishes for many successful and fulfilling years to come.●

RECOGNIZING WESTCARE FOUNDATION

● Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, today, I wish to recognize WestCare Foundation, WestCare, for its commitment to providing important services to Nevadans across the State and specifically for its dedication to our veterans, military servicemembers, and their families. WestCare offers programs to help with substance use disorders, mental health disorders, domestic violence, sexual assault, homelessness, criminal justice, and HIV and AIDS, and provides additional youth and veteran-specific programs. The foundation is located throughout the State, including campuses in Las Vegas and Pahrump, as well as centers offering specific services in Reno and Las Vegas. Its commitment to improving lives across Nevada does not go without notice.

WestCare's veteran programs include assistance in transitional living and case management and offer support to veterans' and active military members' families. The foundation recognizes the increasing diversity of our veteran population and works to accommodate this change. The transitional living program provides separate facilities for both male and female veterans, as well as for their children. As our Nation's military continues to adapt to a new force, it is particularly important services offered also adapt to reflect these changes. There are countless distinguished women veterans who have made sacrifices beyond measure and deserve nothing but the best treatment and services that address specific female needs. I commend WestCare for its commitment in accommodating all veterans and their individual needs.

WestCare also helps the families of those who have so bravely defended our freedoms. All too often, returning veterans and their families struggle with financial uncertainty. The foundation is a positive light in the Nevada community, working to change this reality by providing families with supportive services in times of need. Westcare stands as a shining example of an organization that has gone above and beyond to positively impact the lives of our heroes. It is important we thank not only the brave men and women that protect our freedom but also their families making so many sacrifices.

As a member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, I know the struggles that our veterans face after returning home from the battlefield. Congress has a responsibility not only to honor these brave individuals but also to ensure they receive the quality care they have earned and deserve. I remain committed to upholding this promise for our veterans and servicemembers in Nevada and throughout the Nation. I am very pleased that veterans service foundations, like WestCare, are committed to ensuring the needs of our veterans are met.

Today, I ask my colleagues and all Nevadans to join me in recognizing WestCare Foundation, an organization with a mission that is both noble and charitable. I am humbled and honored to recognize WestCare for its tireless efforts in helping our veteran community, and I wish it the best of luck in all of its future endeavors.●

GENERAL FEDERATION OF WOMEN'S CLUBS 125th ANNIVERSARY

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today I rise to pay special tribute to the General Federation of Women's Clubs. This year is very special as they celebrate their 125th anniversary tomorrow, April 24.

The General Federation of Women's Clubs is an international women's organization dedicated to community improvement by enhancing the lives of others through volunteer service. It was founded in 1890 when Jane Cunningham Croly, a professional journalist, attempted to attend a dinner in New York City honoring British novelist Charles Dickens. Croly was denied admittance based on her gender. In response, she formed a woman's club for the purpose of educating women. In 1889, Jane Croly invited women's clubs throughout the United States to pursue the cause of a federation by attending a national convention. On April 24,

1890, 63 clubs officially formed the General Federation of Women's Clubs.

I am very proud to recognize a third-generation clubwoman, Babs J. Condon from Westminster, MD, as the 2014–2016 International President of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. And, I am very pleased that the 2016 international convention will be held in Baltimore next June. For the record, there are 34 clubs in Maryland and almost 1,500 club members statewide.

By ''Living the Volunteer Spirit'', clubwomen transform lives each day, not simply with monetary donations, but with hands-on, tangible projects that provide immediate impact. With nearly 90,000 members in affiliated clubs in every State, the District of Columbia, and more than a dozen countries, GFWC members work in their own communities to support the arts, preserve natural resources, advance education, promote healthy lifestyles, encourage civic engagement, and support international efforts to feed the hungry, encourage immunizations and impact other lifesaving and economic development initiatives.

GFWC history includes many powerful examples such as advocacy for child labor laws, promotion of nationwide outreach that led to passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act, and working to pass the Violence Against Women Act.

GFWC has been instrumental in shaping our Nation. As it celebrates a history of 125 years, let's hope they continue to build upon their traditions and pave the way for a future filled with even greater success through volunteerism.●

TRIBUTE TO FORREST COLE

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I call the Senate's attention to the forthcoming retirement of U.S. Forest Service official Forrest Cole, who for the past 12 years has served as the supervisor of the Nation's largest National Forest, and probably unfortunately its most controversial one, the 16.9-million acre Tongass National Forest in southeast Alaska.

Mr. Cole, a four-decade employee of the U.S. Forest Service, began his career, following receipt of a bachelor of science degree in forestry from Northern Arizona University, working on fire-related jobs in Arizona forests. In 1979 he began what he thought at the time would be a 2-year posting working in the Tongass forest in southeast Alaska, a forest that covers an area just slightly larger than the State of West Virginia. The Coles, however, found the beauty, wildlife, and resources of southeast Alaska too attractive to leave, and the family stayed. Over the past 36 years, Mr. Cole has served as the presale forester and small sales forester on the Petersburg Ranger District in the central Tongass; as timber management assistant on the Juneau/Yakutat Ranger Districts in the northern Tongass; as the timber minerals, special uses management assistant on the Juneau Ranger District; as the timber and fire management staff officer and resources staff officer on the Stikine administrative area, and later as the Forest and Fire Management staff officer for the entire Tongass National Forest based in the southern Tongass in Ketchikan.

Mr. Cole also served in the regional office as director of forest management, and as part of the planning team for the Tongass land management plan, with responsibility for the timber, vegetation, and subsistence programs in all of southeast Alaska—the land plan being the key document that guides all activities in the forest. In 2003 he was named as the forest supervisor for the Tongass, a key supervisory post, second only to the Regional Forester.

Mr. Cole during his years in Alaska has been in the midst of many controversial issues such as of how much timber should be allowed for harvest; how to protect wolves and goshawks, bald eagles, salmon and bear while harvesting timber; and how to provide the recreation that Americans increasingly demand. Mr. Cole arrived in Alaska the year before Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, ANILCA, that cut the allowable timber harvest in the Tongass by several hundred percent, from 1.35 billion board feet a year—a level that was considered its biological, sustainable yield level when modern timber harvesting began in the 1950s—to 450 million board feet that mandated by Congress in 1980. A decade later he was involved in implementing the next Tongass timber ''reform'' bill that once again nearly cut the forest's allowable timber forest in half, creating another six areas of wilderness, and designating another 12 new areas as congressionally protected lands, bringing to 6.48 million acres the amount of the Tongass protected from development.

As forest supervisor, Mr. Cole was required to implement the national Inventoried Roadless Area rule last decade that took another 9.5 million acres of the Tongass out of the timber base. And just this year, with passage last December of the Sealaska Native Corporation final land conveyance act, Mr. Cole has started the process of revising what lands will remain in the region's slimming federal timber base. He has had to wrestle with how to guide the timber industry's survival given that only 1.8 percent of the Tongass is still ''open'' to the harvesting of older-growth trees—80 percent of them having been permanently protected, and how to manage guiding, recreation, tourism, utility and infrastructure access and development in a forest that stretches 500 miles from near Ketchikan to Yakutat.

More than any other individual Mr. Cole has been a referee between many forces. And I know it can't have been a pleasant experience implementing policy set by Congress and the executive branch, more than 3,000 miles away. It has been a hard, often thankless job managing the Tongass. I wish to publicly thank Mr. Cole for his tireless service to America in doing that job well. We have not always agreed, but I truly appreciate that he has labored long and hard to be fair. He has listened to all sides. Given the legal, political and budgetary mandates he has faced, he deserves all of our thanks for all of the difficult phone calls he has returned, all of the complaints he has patiently fielded, and for all of the tough decisions he has been forced to make. It is no wonder that Mr. Cole was the recipient of the 2008 Regional Forester Award. He deserves the gratitude of the entire Senate for doing his best to meet all of the competing demands Americans make of our national forests. And I personally thank him for his contributions and commitment to public land stewardship, community stability and for keeping the public's trust in one of America's most hotly contested regions. I think it demonstrates his love and concern for Alaska and the Tongass that he and his family are choosing to retire in Petersburg, AK. I wish him and his family well.●

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 9:33 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 535. An act to promote energy efficiency.

The enrolled bill was subsequently signed by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

At 12:52 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 1195. An act to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to establish advisory boards, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 1195. An act to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to establish advisory boards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, April 23, 2015, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 535. An act to promote energy efficiency.

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–1362. A communication from the Associate General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a vacancy in the position of General Counsel, Department of Agriculture, received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2015; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC–1363. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the Department of Defense's Evaluation of the TRICARE Program for fiscal year 2015; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC–1364. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Revisions to the Export Administration Regulations Based on the 2014 Missile Technology Control Regime Plenary Agreements'' (RIN0694–AG41) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 20, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1365. A communication from the Counsel, Legal Division, Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Submission of Credit Card Agreements Under the Truth in Lending Act'' ((RIN3170–AA50) (Docket No. CFPB–2015–0006)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 21, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1366. A communication from the Director of Legislative Affairs, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Removal of Transferred OTS Regulations Regarding Rules of Practice and Procedure and Amendments to FDIC Rules and Regulations'' (RIN3064–AE08) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 20, 2015; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1367. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Yemen that was originally declared in Executive Order 13611 on May 16, 2012; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1368. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Burma that was declared in Executive Order 13047 of May 20, 1997; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1369. A communication from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, a six-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the stabilization of Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 13303 of May 22, 2003; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC–1370. A communication from the Management and Program Analyst, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Airworthiness Directives; Stemme AG Gliders'' ((RIN2120–AA64) (Docket No. FAA–2015–0633)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 20, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1371. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and South Atlantic; Snapper-Grouper Resources of the South Atlantic; 2015–2016 Recreational Fishing Season for Black Sea Bass'' (RIN0648–XD828) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 20, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1372. A communication from the Acting Director, Office of Sustainable Fisheries, Department of Commerce, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Fisheries of the Exclusive Economic Zone Off Alaska; Reallocation of Pollock in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands'' (RIN0648–XD846) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 20, 2015; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

EC–1373. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Determination of Housing Cost Amounts Eligible for Exclusion or Deduction for 2015'' (Notice 2015–33) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 20, 2015; to the Committee on Finance.

EC–1374. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to a strategy for Support for Russia Democracy and Civil Society Organizations; a strategy for Assistance to Civil Society in Ukraine; and a strategy for Anticipated Defense Articles, Defense Services, and Training to Ukraine; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1375. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to overseas surplus property; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1376. 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 14–148); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC–1377. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Financial Report for the Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA) for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1378. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Performance Report for fiscal year 2014 for the Prescription Drug User Fee Act (PDUFA); to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1379. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) annual report on Drug Shortages for Calendar Year 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1380. A communication from the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts and a Member of the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report on the Arts and Artifacts Indemnity Program for fiscal year 2014; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC–1381. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs Annual Report to Congress for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1382. A communication from the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legislative Affairs, Department of Justice, transmitting, pursuant to law, an annual report on applications made by the Government for authority to conduct electronic surveillance for foreign intelligence during calendar year 2014 relative to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act of 1978; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC–1383. A communication from the Chief Impact Analyst, Veterans Health Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled ''Driving Distance Eligibility for the Veterans Choice Program'' (RIN2900–AP24) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 22, 2015; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM–17. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of North Dakota urging the United States Congress to call for a constitutional convention for the sole purpose of proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States which requires a balanced federal budget; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 3015

Whereas, Article V of the Constitution of the United States mandates that upon the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the states, Congress shall call a convention for proposing amendments; and

Whereas, this application is to be considered as covering the balanced budget amendment language of the presently outstanding balanced budget applications from other states; and

Whereas, this application shall be aggregated for the purpose of attaining the two-thirds necessary to require the calling of a convention for proposing a balanced budget amendment, but shall not be aggregated with any applications on any other subject; and

Whereas, this application is a continuing application until the legislatures of at least two-thirds of the states have made applications on the same subject; and

Whereas, the North Dakota Legislative Assembly deems an amendment to the Constitution of the United States requiring a balanced federal budget to be necessary for the good of the American people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives of North Dakota, the Senate concurring therein:

That the Sixty-fourth Legislative Assembly urges the Congress of the United States to call a convention of the states limited to proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States requiring that in the absence of a national emergency the total of all federal appropriations made by the Congress for any fiscal year may not exceed the total of all estimated federal revenues for that fiscal year, together with any related and appropriate fiscal restraints; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of State forward copies of this resolution to the President and Secretary of the Senate and the Speaker and Clerk of the House of Representatives of the Congress, to each member

of the United States Congressional Delegation, and also to transmit copies to the presiding officers of each of the legislative houses in the United States, requesting their cooperation.

POM–18. A resolution adopted by the Legislature of Rockland County, New York, calling for the United States Department of Transportation to immediately turn its attention to increasing the strictness of the regulations that govern rail transport of hazardous liquids; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. ISAKSON, from the Committee on Veterans' Affairs:

Report to accompany H.R. 203, a bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to provide for the conduct of annual evaluations of mental health care and suicide prevention programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to require a pilot program on loan repayment for psychiatrists who agree to serve in the Veterans Health Administration of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes (Rept. No. 114–34).

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. GRASSLEY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Sally Quillian Yates, of Georgia, to be Deputy Attorney General.

Kara Farnandez Stoll, of Virginia, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Federal Circuit.

Roseann A. Ketchmark, of Missouri, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Missouri.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 1064. A bill to amend the Public Health Service Act with regard to research on asthma, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 1065. A bill to amend title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to provide grants for the development of asthma management plans and the purchase of asthma inhalers and spacers for emergency use, as necessary; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. ISAKSON (for himself and Mr. COONS):

S. 1066. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage, as supplies associated with the injection of insulin, of containment, removal, decontamination and disposal of home-generated needles, syringes, and other sharps through a sharps container, decontamination/destruction device, or sharps-by-mail program or similar program under part D of the Medicare program; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. BLUNT (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. HELLER):

S. 1067. A bill to require the periodic review and automatic termination of Federal regulations; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. RISCH (for himself and Mr. HEINRICH):

S. 1068. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to protect the bulk-power system from cyber security threats; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Ms. WARREN, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mrs. FEINSTEIN):

S. 1069. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for qualified conservation contributions which include National Scenic Trails; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 1070. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for clarification regarding the children to whom entitlement to educational assistance may be transferred under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. TOOMEY (for himself, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. CRAPO, and Mr. CORKER):

S. 1071. A bill to amend the Victims of Crime Act of 1984 to expand the amount available for victims of child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, and other crimes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. COONS):

S. 1072. A bill to require the Supreme Court of the United States to promulgate a code of ethics; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. CARPER (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. WARNER, Mr. COATS, and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 1073. A bill to amend the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012, including making changes to the Do Not Pay initiative, for improved detection, prevention, and recovery of improper payments to deceased individuals, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Ms. BALDWIN (for herself, Mr. PETERS, Mr. MARKEY, Ms. WARREN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MURPHY):

S. 1074. A bill to clarify the status of the North Country, Ice Age, and New England National Scenic Trails as units of the National Park System, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. GILLIBRAND:

S. 1075. A bill to strengthen and extend the authorization of appropriations for the Carol M. White Physical Education Program and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Ms. MIKULSKI, Ms. HIRONO, and Mr. BLUMENTHAL):

S. 1076. A bill to require mobile service providers and smartphone manufacturers to give consumers the ability to remotely delete data from smartphones and render smartphones inoperable; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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

S. 1077. A bill to provide for expedited development of and priority review for breakthrough devices; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. HEINRICH:

S. 1078. A bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out programs and activities that connect people in the United States, especially children, youth, and families, with the outdoors; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 1079. A bill to amend titles XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act and title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to improve coverage for colorectal screening tests under Medicare and private health insurance coverage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 1080. A bill to amend title 28, United States Code, to limit the jurisdiction of Federal courts to consider cases involving same-sex marriage; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. BOOKER:

S. 1081. A bill to end the use of body-gripping traps in the National Wildlife Refuge System; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. RUBIO:

S. 1082. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal or demotion of employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs based on performance or misconduct, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. NELSON (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. HIRONO, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. REED, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. LEAHY, Mrs. BOXER, Mr. BROWN, Mr. UDALL, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. MERKLEY):

S. 1083. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require drug manufacturers to provide drug rebates for drugs dispensed to low-income individuals under the Medicare prescription drug benefit program; to the Committee on Finance.

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

S. 1084. A bill to promote transparency by permitting the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board to allow its disciplinary proceedings to be open to the public, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. MURRAY (for herself, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. TESTER, Mr. BROWN, and Mr. COONS):

S. 1085. A bill to expand eligibility for the program of comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of the Department of Veterans Affairs, to expand benefits available to participants under such program, to enhance special compensation for members of the uniformed services who require assistance in everyday life, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S.J. Res. 12. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to marriage; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PAUL:

S.J. Res. 13. A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States relative to applying laws equally to the citizens of the United States and the Federal Government; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. Res. 148. A resolution condemning the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants

on Human Rights; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

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

S. Res. 149. A resolution recognizing the importance and inspiration of the Hubble Space Telescope; considered and agreed to.

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

S. Res. 150. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate about the importance of effective civic and government education programs in schools in the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. Res. 151. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Safe Digging Month; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 71

At the request of Mr. VITTER, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 71, a bill to preserve open competition and Federal Government neutrality towards the labor relations of Federal Government contractors on Federal and federally funded construction projects.

S. 155

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) was added as a cosponsor of S. 155, a bill to promote freedom, fairness, and economic opportunity by repealing the income tax and other taxes, abolishing the Internal Revenue Service, and enacting a national sales tax to be administered primarily by the States.

S. 223

At the request of Mrs. BOXER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 223, a bill to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a pilot program on awarding grants for provision of furniture, household items, and other assistance to homeless veterans to facilitate their transition into permanent housing, and for other purposes.

S. 248

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 248, a bill to clarify the rights of Indians and Indian tribes on Indian lands under the National Labor Relations Act.

S. 299

At the request of Mr. FLAKE, the names of the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP), the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL) were added as cosponsors of S. 299, a bill to allow travel between the United States and Cuba.

S. 311

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 311, a bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to address and take action to prevent bullying and harassment of students.

S. 330

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the names of the Senator from Kansas (Mr. ROBERTS) and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) 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. 338

At the request of Mr. BURR, the names of the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN), the Senator from Maine (Mr. KING) and the Senator from Washington (Mrs. MURRAY) were added as cosponsors of S. 338, a bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S. 398

At the request of Mr. BLUMENTHAL, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 398, a bill to amend the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Programs Enhancement Act of 2001 and title 38, United States Code, to require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to expand access to such care and services, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 398, supra.

S. 471

At the request of Mr. HELLER, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 471, a bill to improve the provision of health care for women veterans by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes.

S. 553

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the names of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 553, a bill to marshal resources to undertake a concerted, transformative effort that seeks to bring an end to modern slavery, and for other purposes.

S. 571

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor 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. 578

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 578, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 586

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 586, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to foster more effective implementation and coordination of clinical care for people with pre-diabetes, diabetes, and the chronic diseases and conditions that result from diabetes.

S. 590

At the request of Mrs. MCCASKILL, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 590, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 and the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act to combat campus sexual violence, and for other purposes.

S. 609

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 609, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and increase the exclusion for benefits provided to volunteer firefighters and emergency medical responders.

S. 613

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 613, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve the efficiency of summer meals.

S. 615

At the request of Mr. CORKER, the name of the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT) was added as a cosponsor of S. 615, a bill to provide for congressional review and oversight of agreements relating to Iran's nuclear program, and for other purposes.

At the request of Mrs. MURRAY, her name was added as a cosponsor of S. 615, supra.

S. 619

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) was added as a cosponsor of S. 619, a bill to include among the principal trade negotiating objectives of the United States regarding commercial partnerships trade negotiating objectives with respect to discouraging activity that discourages, penalizes, or otherwise limits commercial relations with Israel, and for other purposes.

S. 696

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 696, a bill to increase the number and percentage of students who graduate from high school college and career ready with the ability to use knowledge to solve complex problems, think critically, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and develop academic mindsets, and for other purposes.

S. 729

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 729, a bill to amend title 11, United States Code, with respect to certain exceptions to discharge in bankruptcy.

S. 857

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the names of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) and the Senator from Colorado (Mr. BENNET) were added as cosponsors of S. 857, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for coverage under the Medicare program of an initial comprehensive care plan for Medicare beneficiaries newly diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and for other purposes.

S. 862

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 862, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 865

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 865, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for veterans with mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

S. 875

At the request of Mrs. FISCHER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 875, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to strengthen equal pay requirements.

S. 883

At the request of Ms. MURKOWSKI, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 883, a bill to facilitate the reestablishment of domestic, critical mineral designation, assessment, production, manufacturing, recycling, analysis, forecasting, workforce, education, and research capabilities in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 890

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from West Virginia (Mr. MANCHIN) were added as cosponsors of S. 890, a bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to provide consistent and reliable authority for, and for the funding of, the Land and Water Conservation Fund to maximize the effectiveness of the Fund for future generations, and for other purposes.

S. 898

At the request of Mr. KIRK, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 898, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for the participation of optometrists in the National Health Service Corps scholarship and loan repayment programs, and for other purposes.

S. 925

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 925, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to convene a panel of citizens to make a recommendation to the Secretary regarding the likeness of a woman on the twenty dollar bill, and for other purposes.

S. 933

At the request of Mr. ALEXANDER, the name of the Senator from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 933, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act with respect to the timing of elections and pre-election hearings and the identification of pre-election issues, and to require that lists of employees eligible to vote in organizing elections be provided to the National Labor Relations Board.

S. 950

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the names of the Senator from Nebraska (Mr. SASSE) and the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) were added as cosponsors of S. 950, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a refundable adoption tax credit.

S. 957

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 957, a bill to increase access to capital for veteran entrepreneurs to help create jobs.

S. 966

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 966, a bill to extend the low-interest refinancing provisions under the Local Development Business Loan Program of the Small Business Administration.

S. 967

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 967, a bill to require the Small Business Administration to make information relating to lenders making covered loans publicly available, and for other purposes.

S. 974

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the name of the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) was added as a cosponsor of S. 974, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to prohibit employment of children in tobacco-related agriculture by deeming such employment as oppressive child labor.

S. 993

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from New York (Mr. SCHUMER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 993, a bill to increase public safety by facilitating collaboration among the criminal justice, juvenile justice, veterans treatment services, mental health treatment, and substance abuse systems.

S. 1000

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Mr. PETERS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1000, a bill to strengthen resources for entrepreneurs by improving the SCORE program, and for other purposes.

S. 1001

At the request of Mr. RISCH, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO) and the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1001, a bill to establish authorization levels for general business loans for fiscal years 2015 and 2016.

S. 1016

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1016, a bill to preserve freedom and choice in health care.

S. 1032

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1032, a bill to expand the use of E-Verify, to hold employers accountable, and for other purposes.

S. 1056

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1056, a bill to eliminate racial profiling by law enforcement, and for other purposes.

S. 1057

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Montana (Mr. TESTER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1057, a bill to promote geothermal energy, and for other purposes.

S. 1060

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1060, a bill to improve the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 1061

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1061, a bill to improve the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes.

S. 1062

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1062, a bill to improve the Federal Pell Grant program, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 10

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 10, a concurrent resolution supporting the designation of the year of 2015 as the ''International Year of Soils'' and supporting locally led soil conservation.

S. RES. 140

At the request of Mr. MENENDEZ, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR) and the Senator from Nevada (Mr. REID) were added as cosponsors of S. Res. 140, a resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN:

S. 1070. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for clarification regarding the children to whom entitlement to educational assistance may be transferred under Post-9/11 Educational Assistance, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1070

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''GI Education Benefit Fairness Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION REGARDING THE CHILDREN TO WHOM ENTITLEMENT TO EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE MAY BE TRANSFERRED UNDER POST-9/11 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (c) of section 3319 of title 38, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

''(c) ELIGIBLE DEPENDENTS.—

''(1) TRANSFER.—An individual approved to transfer an entitlement to educational assistance under this section may transfer the individual's entitlement as follows:

''(A) To the individual's spouse.

''(B) To one or more of the individual's children.

''(C) To a combination of the individuals referred to in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

''(2) DEFINITION OF CHILDREN.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'children' includes dependents described in section 1072(2)(I) of title 10.''.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to educational assistance payable under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code, before, on, or after the date of the enactment of this Act.

By Mr. CARDIN:

S. 1079. A bill to amend titles XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act and title XXVII of the Public Health Service Act to improve coverage for colorectal screening tests under Medicare and private health insurance coverage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce the Supporting Colorectal Examination and Education Now, SCREEN, Act. This legislation promotes access to colorectal cancer screenings in an effort to help prevent colorectal cancer and save lives.

Colorectal cancer affects far too many Americans. The American Cancer Society, ACS, estimates that 1 in 18 Americans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in 2015, totaling an estimated 133,000 new cases. Colorectal cancer is expected to take the lives of nearly 50,000 Americans in 2015, making it the second leading cause of cancer deaths in this country.

Fortunately, colorectal cancer is also highly preventable, and colorectal cancer screening tests rank among the most effective preventive screenings available. Colonoscopy screenings are different from other types of preventive or screening services because precancerous polyps found during a screening can be removed during the same visit, before they progress to colorectal cancer. Early detection and intervention are key to preventing colon cancer. A 2012 study in the New England Journal of Medicine found that removal of precancerous polyps during a screening colonoscopy may prevent up to 53 percent of colorectal cancer deaths.

The need to address barriers to colorectal cancer screening, particularly in the Medicare population, is clear. The Medicare population makes up approximately two-thirds of all new cases of colorectal cancer. However, according to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Service, CMS, only about half of Medicare beneficiaries have had a colorectal cancer screening test, and less than two-thirds of Medicare-aged adults are up to date with recommended screenings. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, American Cancer Society, ACS, American College of Gastroenterology, ACG, and more than 200 national, State and local organizations have committed to work toward eliminating colorectal cancer through a national goal of screening 80 percent of eligible adults in the United States for colorectal cancer by 2018.

Currently, Medicare waives cost-sharing for colorectal cancer screenings recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, USPSTF, including screening colonoscopies. However, if the doctor finds and removes a pre-cancerous polyp during a screening colonoscopy, the procedure is no longer considered a ''screening'' by Medicare, and the beneficiary is required to pay the Medicare coinsurance. Because it is impossible to know in advance whether polyps will be found and removed during a screening colonoscopy, Medicare beneficiaries do not know whether the procedure will be fully covered until it is over. In February 2013, the administration announced that private insurers participating in State-based health insurance exchanges are required to waive all cost-sharing for screening colonoscopies during which a polyp is removed. Similarly, the SCREEN Act would waive Medicare's cost-sharing requirement for screening colonoscopies during which polyps are removed in order to prevent the development of colorectal cancer. In addition, the SCREEN Act would waive cost-sharing for follow-up colonoscopies necessary to complete the ''screening continuum'' following a positive finding from another recommended colorectal cancer screening test.

The SCREEN Act also seeks to improve coordination of care and promote other important age-based recommended screenings for Medicare beneficiaries, such as Hepatitis C virus, HCV, screening, by creating a demonstration project. The demonstration project would allow reimbursement for an office visit or consultation so that a Medicare beneficiary may sit down and discuss the screening with a doctor prior to the colonoscopy procedure. According to the National Institutes of Health, ''fear of the procedure itself'' is a barrier to increasing colorectal cancer screening utilization rates. This pre-procedure visit would allow providers to allay patient anxiety about the procedure, address any questions related to the colonoscopy, assess the patient's family history and risk factors for developing colorectal cancer, and educate the patient about the importance of following the pre-procedure instructions. In addition, this visit would provide an opportunity to educate Medicare beneficiaries about the importance of HCV screening. The CDC and the United States Preventive Services Task Force recommend a one-time HCV screening for all individuals born between 1945 and 1965, and a recent study suggests offering the HCV screening in connection with colonoscopies may be an effective means of increasing HCV screening rates.

Finally, the SCREEN Act would provide incentives for Medicare providers to participate in nationally recognized quality improvement registries to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries are receiving the quality screening they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the SCREEN Act, in order to help prevent colorectal cancer and save lives.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

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

S. 1079

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the ''Supporting Colorectal Examination and

Education Now Act of 2015'' or the ''SCREEN Act of 2015''.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Findings.
Sec. 3. Maintaining calendar year 2015 Medicare reimbursement rates for colonoscopy procedures for providers participating in colorectal cancer screening quality improvement registry.
Sec. 4. Eliminating Medicare beneficiary cost-sharing for certain colorectal cancer screenings, colorectal cancer screenings with therapeutic effect, and follow-up diagnostic colorectal cancer screenings covered under Medicare.
Sec. 5. Medicare demonstration project to evaluate the effectiveness of a pre-operative visit prior to screening colonoscopy and hepatitis C screening.
Sec. 6. Budget neutrality.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among men and women combined in the United States.

(2) In 2015, more than 130,000 Americans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer, and nearly 50,000 Americans are expected to die from it.

(3) Approximately 60 percent of colorectal cancer cases and 70 percent of colorectal cancer deaths occur in those aged 65 and older.

(4) Colorectal cancer screening colonoscopies allow for the detection and removal of polyps before they progress to colorectal cancer, as well as early detection of colorectal cancer when treatment can be most effective.

(5) According to a 2012 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine, removing precancerous polyps through colonoscopy could reduce the number of colorectal cancer deaths by 53 percent.

(6) Although colorectal cancer is highly preventable with appropriate screening, one in three adults between the ages of 50 and 75 years are not up to date with recommended colorectal cancer screening.

(7) Over 200 organizations have committed to eliminating colorectal cancer as a major health problem in the United States and are working toward a shared goal of screening 80 percent of eligible Americans by 2018.

(8) Hepatitis C is a liver disease that causes inflammation of the liver and results from infection with the Hepatitis C virus. Chronic Hepatitis C infection can lead to serious health problems, including liver damage, cirrhosis, and liver cancer. It is the leading cause of liver transplants in the United States.

(9) According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 75 percent of adults infected with the Hepatitis C virus in the United States were born between 1945 and 1965.

(10) The CDC estimates that up to 75 percent of individuals with Hepatitis C do not know that they are infected.

(11) The CDC and the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommend a one-time screening for Hepatitis C for all individuals born between 1945 and 1965.

(12) A recent study suggests that offering Hepatitis C screening to patients in connection with screening colonoscopies may be an effective means of increasing Hepatitis C screening rates among individuals born between 1945 and 1965.

SEC. 3. MAINTAINING CALENDAR YEAR 2015 MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR COLONOSCOPY PROCEDURES FOR PROVIDERS PARTICIPATING IN COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING QUALITY IMPROVEMENT REGISTRY.

Section 1834(d)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395m(d)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(F) MAINTAINING CALENDAR YEAR 2015 REIMBURSEMENT RATES FOR QUALIFYING CANCER SCREENING TESTS FURNISHED BY QUALIFYING PROVIDERS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—With respect to a qualifying cancer screening test furnished during each of 2016, 2017, and 2018, by a qualifying provider, the amount of payment to such provider for such test under section 1833 or section 1848 shall be equal to the amount of payment for such test under such section 1833 or 1848 during 2015.

''(ii) QUALIFYING CANCER SCREENING TEST.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'qualifying cancer screening test' means an optical screening colonoscopy (as described in section 1861(pp)(1)(C)).

''(iii) QUALIFYING PROVIDER DEFINED.—For purposes of this subparagraph, the term 'qualifying provider' means, with respect to a qualifying cancer screening test, an individual or entity—

''(I) that is eligible for payment for such test under section 1833 or section 1848; and

''(II) that—

''(aa) participates in a nationally recognized quality improvement registry with respect to such test; and

''(bb) demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the Secretary, based on the information in such registry, that the tests were provided by such individual or entity in accordance with accepted outcomes-based quality measures.''.

SEC. 4. ELIMINATING MEDICARE BENEFICIARY COST-SHARING FOR CERTAIN COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENINGS, COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENINGS WITH THERAPEUTIC EFFECT, AND FOLLOW-UP DIAGNOSTIC COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENINGS COVERED UNDER MEDICARE.

(a) WAIVER OF COST-SHARING.—Section 1833(a)(1)(Y) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(a)(1)(Y)) is amended by inserting '', including colorectal cancer screening tests covered under this part described in section 1861(pp)(1)(C) (regardless of the code that is billed for the establishment of a diagnosis as a result of the screening test, for the removal of tissue or other matter during the screening test, or for a follow-up procedure that is furnished in connection with, or as a result of, the initial screening test)'' after ''or population''.

(b) WAIVER OF APPLICATION OF DEDUCTIBLE.—Section 1833(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(b)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1) of the first sentence, by striking ''individual.'' and inserting ''individual, including colorectal cancer screening tests covered under this part described in section 1861(pp)(1)(C)''; and

(2) by striking the last sentence and inserting the following: ''Subsection (a)(1)(Y) and paragraph (1) of the first sentence of this subsection shall apply with respect to a colorectal cancer screening test covered under this part described in section 1861(pp)(1)(C), regardless of the code that is billed for the establishment of a diagnosis as a result of the screening test, for the removal of tissue or other matter during the screening test, or for a follow-up procedure that is furnished in connection with, or as a result of, the initial screening test.''

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to tests and procedures performed on or after January 1, 2016.

SEC. 5. MEDICARE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PRE-OPERATIVE VISIT PRIOR TO SCREENING COLONOSCOPY AND HEPATITIS C SCREENING.

Section 1115A(b)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1315a(b)(2)) is amended—

(1) in the last sentence of subparagraph (A), by inserting '', and shall include the model described in subparagraph (D)'' before the period at the end; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(D) MEDICARE DEMONSTRATION PROJECT TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A PRE-OPERATIVE VISIT PRIOR TO SCREENING COLONOSCOPY AND HEPATITIS C SCREENING.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—The model described in this subparagraph is a demonstration project under title XVIII to evaluate the effectiveness of a pre-operative visit with the provider performing the procedure prior to screening colonoscopy to—

''(I) ease any patient concern or fears with respect to the procedure and answer any questions relating to the screening;

''(II) ensure quality examinations and avoid unnecessary repeat examinations by educating individuals on the importance of following pre-procedure instructions, such as bowel preparation, and addressing the individual's family history of or predisposition to colorectal cancer; and

''(III) increase Hepatitis C Virus (HCV) screening rates among Medicare beneficiaries by educating individuals about the importance of such screening during the pre-operative visit and having the pre-operative visit fulfill the referral requirement for such screening under title XVIII, allowing patients to be screened for colorectal cancer and HCV at the same time.

''(ii) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall consult with stakeholders who would be providing the pre-operative visit under the model described in this subparagraph on the implementation of such model, including payment for services furnished under the model.''.

SEC. 6. BUDGET NEUTRALITY.

(a) ADJUSTMENT OF PHYSICIAN FEE SCHEDULE CONVERSION FACTOR.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this section referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall reduce the conversion factor established under subsection (d) of section 1848 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4) for each year (beginning with 2016) to the extent necessary to reduce expenditures under such section for items and services furnished during the year in the aggregate by the net offset amount determined under subsection (c)(5) attributable to such section for the year.

(b) ADJUSTMENT OF HOPD CONVERSION FACTOR.—The Secretary shall reduce the conversion factor established under paragraph (3)(C) of section 1833(t) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395l(t)) for each year (beginning with 2016) to the extent necessary to reduce expenditures under such section for items and services furnished during the year in the aggregate by the net offset amount determined under subsection (c)(5) attributable to such section for the year.

(c) DETERMINATIONS RELATING TO EXPENDITURES.—For purposes of this section, before the beginning of each year (beginning with 2016) at the time conversion factors described in subsections (a) and (b) are established for the year, the Secretary shall determine—

(1) the amount of the gross additional expenditures under title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.) estimated to result from the implementation of sections 3 and 4 for items and services furnished during the year;

(2) the amount of any offsetting reductions in expenditures under such title (such as reductions in payments for inpatient hospital

services) for such year attributable to the implementation of such sections;

(3) the amount (if any) by which the amount of the gross additional expenditures determined under paragraph (1) for the year exceeds the amount of offsetting reductions determined under paragraph (2) for the year;

(4) of the gross additional expenditures determined under paragraph (1) for the year that are attributable to expenditures under sections 1848 and 1833(t) of such Act, the ratio of such expenditures that are attributable to each respective section; and

(5) with respect to section 1848 and section 1833(t) of such Act, a net offset amount for the year equal to the product of—

(A) the amount of the net additional expenditures for the year determined under paragraph (3); and

(B) the ratio determined under paragraph (4) attributable to the respective section.

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

S. 1084. A bill to promote transparency by permitting the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board to allow its disciplinary proceedings to be open to the public, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, today I am joined by Senator GRASSLEY in reintroducing the PCAOB Enforcement Transparency Act. This bill permits the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board, PCAOB, to make public the disciplinary proceedings it has brought against auditors and audit firms earlier in the process.

Over 10 years ago, our markets were victimized by a series of massive financial reporting frauds, including those involving Enron and WorldCom. These and other public companies had produced fraudulent and materially misleading financial statements, which artificially drove their stock prices up. Once the fraud was discovered, investor confidence plummeted.

In response to this crisis, the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs conducted a series of hearings, which produced consensus on a number of underlying causes, including weak corporate governance, a lack of accountability, and inadequate oversight of accountants charged with auditing public companies' financial statements.

In order to address the gaps and structural weaknesses revealed by the investigation and hearings, the Senate passed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 in a 99 to 0 vote.

The Sarbanes-Oxley Act ensured that corporate officers were directly accountable for their financial reporting and for the quality of their financial statements. This law also created a strong, independent board, the PCAOB, to oversee the conduct of the auditors of public companies.

The PCAOB is responsible for overseeing auditors of public companies in order to protect investors who rely on independent audit reports on the financial statements of public companies and operates under the oversight of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commissioner, SEC.

To conduct its duties, the PCAOB oversees more than 2,400 registered auditing firms, as well as the thousands of audit partners and staff who contribute to a firm's work on each audit. The Board's ability to commence proceedings to determine whether there have been violations of its auditing standards or rules of professional practice is an important component of its oversight.

However, unlike other oversight bodies, such as the SEC, the U.S. Department of Labor, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, and others, the Board's disciplinary proceedings are not allowed to be public without consent from the parties involved. Of course, parties subject to disciplinary proceedings have no incentive to consent to publicizing their alleged wrongdoing and thus these proceedings typically remain cloaked behind a veil of secrecy. In addition, the Board's decisions in disciplinary proceedings are not allowed to be publicized until after the complete exhaustion of an appeals process, which can often take several years.

The nonpublic nature of these PCAOB disciplinary proceedings creates a lack of transparency that invites abuse and undermines the Congressional intent behind the establishment of the PCAOB, which was to shine a bright light on auditing firms and practices, and to bolster the accountability of auditors of public companies to the investing public.

Over the last several years, some bad actors have taken advantage of the lack of transparency by using it to shield themselves from public scrutiny and accountability. PCAOB Chairman James Doty has repeatedly stated in testimony provided to both the Senate and House of Representatives over the past two years that the secrecy of the proceedings ''has a variety of unfortunate consequences'' and that such secrecy is harmful to investors, the auditing profession, and the public at large.

In one example, an accounting firm that was subject to a disciplinary proceeding continued to issue no fewer than 29 additional audit reports on public companies without any of those companies knowing about the PCAOB disciplinary proceedings. In other words, investors and the public company clients of that audit firm were deprived of relevant and material information about the proceedings against the firm and the substance of any violations.

There are several reasons why the Board's enforcement proceedings should be open and transparent. First, as I have already noted, the closed proceedings run counter to the public proceedings of other government oversight bodies. Indeed, nearly all administrative proceedings brought by the SEC against those it regulates, including public companies, brokers, dealers, investment advisers, and others, are open, public proceedings. The PCAOB's secret proceedings are not only shielded from the public, but also from Congress, making it difficult, if not impossible, to effectively evaluate the Board's oversight of auditors and audit firms, and its enforcement program.

Second, the incentive to litigate cases in order to continue to shield conduct from public scrutiny as long as possible frustrates the process and requires the expenditure of needless resources by both litigants and the PCAOB.

Third, agencies such as the SEC have found open and transparent disciplinary proceedings to be valuable because they inform peer audit firms of the type of activity that may give rise to enforcement action by the regulator. In effect, transparency of proceedings can serve as a deterrent to misconduct because of a perceived increase in the likelihood of ''getting caught.'' Accordingly, the audit industry as a whole would also benefit from timely, public, and non-secret enforcement proceedings.

Our bill will make hearings by the PCAOB, and all related notices, orders, and motions, transparent and available to the public unless otherwise ordered by the Board. This would more closely align the PCAOB's procedures with those of the SEC for analogous matters.

Increasing the transparency and accountability of audit firms subject to disciplinary proceedings instituted by the PCAOB is a critical component of efforts to bolster and maintain investor confidence in our financial markets, while better protecting companies from problematic auditors.

I hope our colleagues will join Senator GRASSLEY and me in supporting this legislation to enhance transparency in the PCAOB's enforcement process.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 148—CONDEMNING THE GOVERNMENT OF IRAN'S STATE-SPONSORED PERSECUTION OF ITS BAHA'I MINORITY AND ITS CONTINUED VIOLATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. WYDEN, Mr. DURBIN, and Mr. RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 148

Whereas, in 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2012, and 2013, Congress declared that it deplored the religious persecution by the Government of Iran of the Baha'i community and would hold the Government of Iran responsible for upholding the rights of all Iranian nationals, including members of the Baha'i Faith;

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2014 Report stated, ''The Baha'i community, the largest

non-Muslim religious minority in Iran, long has been subject to particularly severe religious freedom violations. The government views Baha'is, who number at least 300,000, as 'heretics' and consequently they face repression on the grounds of apostasy.'';

Whereas the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom 2014 Report stated that ''[s]ince 1979, authorities have killed or executed more than 200 Baha'i leaders, and more than 10,000 have been dismissed from government and university jobs'' and ''[m]ore than 700 Baha'is have been arbitrarily arrested since 2005'';

Whereas the Department of State 2013 International Religious Freedom Report stated that the Government of Iran ''prohibits Baha'is from teaching and practicing their faith and subjects them to many forms of discrimination not faced by members of other religious groups'' and ''since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, formally denies Baha'i students access to higher education'';

Whereas the Department of State 2013 International Religious Freedom Report stated, ''The government requires Baha'is to register with the police,'' and ''The government raided Baha'i homes and businesses and confiscated large amounts of private and commercial property, as well as religious materials.'';

Whereas the Department of State 2013 International Religious Freedom Report stated, ''Baha'is are regularly denied compensation for injury or criminal victimization and the right to inherit property.'';

Whereas, on August 27, 2014, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran issued a report (A/69/356), which stated, ''The human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran remains of concern. Numerous issues flagged by the General Assembly, the United Nations human rights mechanisms and the Secretary-General persist, and in some cases appear to have worsened, some recent overtures made by the Administration and the parliament notwithstanding.'';

Whereas, on December 18, 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (A/RES/69/190), which ''[e]xpresse[d] deep concern'' over ''[c]ontinued discrimination, persecution and human rights violations against persons belonging to unrecognized religious minorities, particularly members of the Baha'i [F]aith. . .and the effective criminalization of membership in the Baha'i [F]aith,'' and called upon the Government of Iran to ''emancipate the Baha'i community. . .and to accord all Baha'is, including those imprisoned because of their beliefs, the due process of law and the rights that they are constitutionally guaranteed'';

Whereas, since May of 2008, the Government of Iran has imprisoned the seven members of the former ad hoc leadership group of the Baha'i community in Iran, known as the Yaran-i-Iran, or ''friends of Iran''—Mrs. Fariba Kamalabadi, Mr. Jamaloddin Khanjani, Mr. Afif Naeimi, Mr. Saeid Rezaie, Mr. Behrouz Tavakkoli, Mrs. Mahvash Sabet, and Mr. Vahid Tizfahm—and these individuals are serving 20-year prison terms, the longest sentences given to any current prisoner of conscience in Iran, on charges including ''spying for Israel, insulting religious sanctities, propaganda against the regime and spreading corruption on earth'';

Whereas, beginning in May 2011, officials of the Government of Iran in 4 cities conducted sweeping raids on the homes of dozens of individuals associated with the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) and arrested and detained several educators associated with BIHE, and 12 BIHE educators are now serving 4- or 5-year prison terms;

Whereas scores of Baha'i cemeteries have been attacked, and, in April 2014, Revolutionary Guards began excavating a Baha'i cemetery in Shiraz, which is the site of 950 graves;

Whereas the Baha'i International Community reported that there has been a recent surge in anti-Baha'i hate propaganda in Iranian state-sponsored media outlets, noting that, in 2010 and 2011, approximately 22 anti-Baha'i articles were appearing every month, and, in 2014, the number of anti-Baha'i articles rose to approximately 401 per month—18 times the previous level;

Whereas there are currently 100 Baha'is in prison in Iran;

Whereas the Government of Iran is party to the International Covenants on Human Rights and is in violation of its obligations under the Covenants; and

Whereas the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (Public Law 111–195) authorizes the President and the Secretary of State to impose sanctions on individuals ''responsible for or complicit in, or responsible for ordering, controlling, or otherwise directing, the commission of serious human rights abuses against citizens of Iran or their family members on or after June 12, 2009'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) condemns the Government of Iran's state-sponsored persecution of its Baha'i minority and its continued violation of the International Covenants on Human Rights;

(2) calls on the Government of Iran to immediately release the 7 imprisoned Baha'i leaders, the 12 imprisoned Baha'i educators, and all other prisoners held solely on account of their religion;

(3) calls on the President and Secretary of State, in cooperation with responsible nations, to immediately condemn the Government of Iran's continued violation of human rights and demand the immediate release of prisoners held solely on account of their religion; and

(4) urges the President and Secretary of State to utilize available authorities, including the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010, to impose sanctions on officials of the Government of Iran and other individuals directly responsible for serious human rights abuses, including abuses against the Baha'i community of Iran.

SENATE RESOLUTION 149—RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE AND INSPIRATION OF THE HUBBLE SPACE TELESCOPE

Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 149

Whereas the launch of the Hubble Space Telescope on April 24, 1990, from the Kennedy Space Center marked a historic moment in space discovery and observation;

Whereas the National Aeronautics and Space Administration designed, built, and placed the Hubble Space Telescope into orbit;

Whereas the Space Shuttle Discovery transported the Hubble Space Telescope on the STS-31 mission and placed the Telescope into orbit at 380 statute miles;

Whereas the crew on the Space Shuttle Discovery consisted of Commander Loren J. Shriver, Pilot Charles F. Bolden, Jr., Mission Specialist Bruce McCandless II, Mission Specialist Kathryn D. Sullivan, and Mission Specialist Steven A. Hawley;

Whereas the Hubble Space Telescope weighed more than 24,000 pounds at launch, currently weighs 27,000 pounds following the final servicing mission in 2009, and measures more than 43 feet in length;

Whereas the Hubble Space Telescope orbits the Earth at 17,000 miles per hour and has completed more than 3,000,000,000 miles of orbit around the Earth;

Whereas the Hubble Space Telescope continues to provide more than 10 Terabytes of data annually and has been heralded as one of the most productive scientific instruments known to man;

Whereas the spirit of discovery, innovation, and exploration is enshrined in the productivity of the Hubble Space Telescope; and

Whereas the Hubble Space Telescope has made significant advancements and discoveries in planetary sciences, cosmology, and galactic sciences: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the National Aeronautics and Space Administration on the 25th anniversary of the Hubble Space Telescope launch;

(2) recognizes the scientists, crew, engineers, and staff who contributed to the success of the Hubble Space Telescope;

(3) notes the significance of the discoveries and contributions to science of the Hubble Space Telescope as well as the subsequent innovations that were derived from the data collected from the Hubble Space Telescope; and

(4) acknowledges that the Hubble Space Telescope has captured images from and answered questions about space and has inspired generations of young people to go into the fields of science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and research.

SENATE RESOLUTION 150—EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE CIVIC AND GOVERNMENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES

Mr. GRASSLEY (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 150

Whereas civic and government education is essential to the preservation and improvement of the constitutional government of the United States;

Whereas civic and government education programs foster understanding of the history and principles of the constitutional government of the United States, including principles that are embodied in certain fundamental documents and speeches, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Bill of Rights, the Federalist Papers, the Gettysburg Address, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s ''I Have a Dream'' speech;

Whereas research shows that too few people in the United States understand basic principles of the constitutional government of the United States, such as the natural rights set forth in the Declaration of Independence, the existence and functions of the 3 branches of the Federal Government, checks and balances, and other concepts fundamental to informed citizenship;

Whereas, since the founding of the United States, schools in the United States have had a strong civic mission to prepare students to be informed, rational, humane, and involved citizens who are committed to the values and principles of the constitutional government of the United States;

Whereas a free society relies on the knowledge, skills, and virtue of the citizens of the

society, particularly the individuals elected to public office to represent the citizens;

Whereas, while many institutions help to develop the knowledge and skills and shape the civic character of people in the United States, schools in the United States, including elementary schools, bear a special and historic responsibility for the development of civic competence and civic responsibility of students;

Whereas student learning is enhanced by well-designed classroom civic and government education programs that—

(1) incorporate instruction in government, history, law, and democracy;

(2) promote discussion of current events and controversial issues;

(3) link community service and the formal curriculum; and

(4) encourage students to participate in simulations of democratic processes; and

Whereas research shows that the knowledge and expertise of teachers are among the most important factors in increasing student achievement: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate that—

(1) civic and government education is essential to the well-being of the constitutional government of the United States;

(2) comprehensive and formal instruction in civic and government education would provide students a basis for understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizens in the constitutional government of the United States;

(3) elementary and secondary schools in the United States are encouraged to offer courses on the history and theories of the constitutional government of the United States, using programs and curricula with a demonstrated effectiveness in fostering civic competence, civic responsibility, and a reasoned commitment to the fundamental values and principles underlying the constitutional government of the United States; and

(4) all teachers of civics and government are well served by having access to adequate opportunities to enrich teaching through professional development programs that enhance the capacity of teachers to provide effective civic and government education in the classroom.

SENATE RESOLUTION 151—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL SAFE DIGGING MONTH

Mr. THUNE (for himself and Mr. BOOKER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 151

Whereas each year, the underground utility infrastructure of the United States, including pipelines, electric, gas, telecommunications, water, sewer, and cable television lines, is jeopardized by unintentional damage caused by those who fail to have underground lines located prior to digging;

Whereas some utility lines are buried only a few inches underground, making the lines easy to strike, even during shallow digging projects;

Whereas digging prior to locating underground utility lines often results in unintended consequences, such as service interruption, environmental damage, personal injury, and even death;

Whereas the month of April marks the beginning of the peak period during which excavation projects are carried out around the United States;

Whereas in 2002, Congress required the Department of Transportation and the Federal Communications Commission to establish a 3-digit, nationwide, toll-free number to be used by State ''One Call'' systems to provide information on underground utility lines;

Whereas in 2005, the Federal Communications Commission designated ''811'' as the nationwide ''One Call'' number for homeowners and excavators to use to obtain information on underground utility lines before conducting excavation activities;

Whereas ''One Call'' has helped reduce the number of digging damages caused by failure to call before digging from 48 percent in 2004 to 26 percent in 2013;

Whereas the 1,700 members of the Common Ground Alliance, who are dedicated to ensuring public safety, environmental protection, and the integrity of services, promote the national ''Call Before You Dig'' campaign to increase public awareness about the importance of homeowners and excavators calling 811 to find out the exact location of underground lines;

Whereas the Pipeline Safety, Regulatory Certainty, and Job Creation Act of 2011 (Public Law 112–90; 125 Stat. 1904) affirmed and expanded the ''One Call'' program by eliminating exemptions given to local and State government agencies and their contractors regarding notifying ''One Call'' centers before digging; and

Whereas the Common Ground Alliance has designated April as ''National Safe Digging Month'' to increase awareness of safe digging practices across the United States and to celebrate the anniversary of 811, the national ''Call Before You Dig'' number: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National 3 Safe Digging Month; and

(2) encourages all homeowners and excavators throughout the United States to call 811 before digging.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1132. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1133. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1134. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1135. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1136. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1137. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1138. Mr. RISCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1139. Mr. RISCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1140. Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1191, supra.

SA 1141. Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. KIRK, and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1142. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1143. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1144. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1145. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1146. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1147. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. RISCH, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1148. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1149. Mr. JOHNSON (for himself and Mr. RISCH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1150. Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1151. Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. COTTON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1152. Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1132. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 26, line 23, strike ''purpose.'' and insert the following: ''purpose; and

''(iii) the President determines Iran's leaders have publically accepted Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

SA 1133. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 30, strike line 15 and all that follows through page 34, line 11, and insert the following: ''any such sanctions or facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a).

''(4) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING PRESIDENTIAL CONSIDERATION OF A JOINT RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in paragraph (6), if a joint resolution of disapproval described in subsection (c)(2)(B) passes the Congress, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions or facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) for a period of 12 calendar days following the date of passage of the joint resolution of disapproval.

''(5) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING CONGRESSIONAL RECONSIDERATION OF A JOINT RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in paragraph (6), if a joint resolution of disapproval described in subsection (c)(2)(B) passes the Congress, and the President vetoes such joint resolution, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions or facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) for a period of 10 calendar days following the date of the President's veto.

''(6) EXCEPTION.—The prohibitions under paragraphs (3) through (5) do not apply to any new deferral, waiver, or other suspension of statutory sanctions pursuant to the Joint Plan of Action if that deferral, waiver, or other suspension is made—

''(A) consistent with the law in effect on the date of the enactment of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015; and

''(B) not later than 45 calendar days before the transmission by the President of an agreement, assessment report, and certification under subsection (a).

''(c) EFFECT OF CONGRESSIONAL ACTION WITH RESPECT TO NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.—

''(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

''(A) the sanctions regime imposed on Iran by Congress is primarily responsible for bringing Iran to the table to negotiate on its nuclear program;

''(B) these negotiations are a critically important matter of national security and foreign policy for the United States and its closest allies;

''(C) this section does not require a vote by Congress for the agreement to commence;

''(D) this section provides for congressional review, including, as appropriate, for approval, disapproval, or no action on statutory sanctions relief under an agreement; and

''(E) even though the agreement may commence, because the sanctions regime was imposed by Congress and only Congress can permanently modify or eliminate that regime, it is critically important that Congress have the opportunity, in an orderly and deliberative manner, to consider and, as appropriate, take action affecting the statutory sanctions regime imposed by Congress.

''(2) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, action involving any measure of statutory sanctions relief by the United States pursuant to an agreement subject to subsection (a) or the Joint Plan of Action—

''(A) may be taken, consistent with existing statutory requirements for such action, if, during the period for review provided in subsection (b), the Congress adopts, and there is enacted, a joint resolution stating in substance that the Congress does favor the agreement;

''(B) may not be taken if, during the period for review provided in subsection (b), the Congress adopts, and there is enacted, a joint resolution stating in substance that the Congress does not favor the agreement; or

''(C) may be taken, consistent with existing statutory requirements for such action, if, following the period for review provided in subsection (b), there is not enacted any such joint resolution.

''(3) DEFINITION.—For the purposes of this subsection, the phrase ''action involving any measure of statutory sanctions relief by the United States'' shall include waiver, suspension, reduction, or other effort to provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to, Iran or to facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran under

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SA 1134. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 26, line 23, strike ''purpose.'' and insert the following: ''purpose; and

''(iii) all United States citizens unjustly detained by Iran, including Jason Rezaian, Amir Hekmati, and Saeed Abedini, have been released from Iranian custody, and the Government of Iran is fully cooperating in efforts to locate Robert Levinson.

SA 1135. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 51, line 2, insert ''and any related agreements, including draft United Nations Security Council resolutions or agreed parameters for such resolutions'' after ''parties''.

SA 1136. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 42, line 7, insert '', and pursuing United Nations consideration of an agreement prior to Congress would undermine the appropriate role of Congress'' after ''Congress''.

SA 1137. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 26, line 23, strike ''purpose.'' and insert the following: ''purpose; and

''(iii) the President determines that no sanctions relief provided under the agreement will be provided from sanctions imposed by Congress or the Executive Branch due to Iran's support for terrorism, its ballistic missile programs, or its human rights abuses against the people of Iran or will undermine the effectiveness of such sanctions.''.

SA 1138. Mr. RISCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 9, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

''(7) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS BASED ON DETENTION OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) until the Government of Iran releases to the United States the following United States citizens:

''(A) Saeed Abedini of Idaho, who has been detained in Iran on charges related to his religious beliefs since September 2012.

''(B) Amir Hekmati of Michigan, who has been imprisoned in Iran on false espionage charges since August 2011.

''(C) Jason Rezaian of California, who, as an Iranian government credentialed reporter for the Washington Post, has been unjustly held in Iran on vague charges since July 2014.

''(D) Robert Levinson of Florida, who was abducted on Kish Island in March 2007.

SA 1139. Mr. RISCH submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 9, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following:

''(7) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS BASED ON DETENTION OF UNITED STATES CITIZENS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) until the Government of Iran releases to the United States the following United States citizens:

''(A) Saeed Abedini of Idaho, who has been detained in Iran on charges related to his religious beliefs since September 2012.

''(B) Amir Hekmati of Michigan, who has been imprisoned in Iran on false espionage charges since August 2011.

''(C) Jason Rezaian of California, who, as an Iranian government credentialed reporter for the Washington Post, has been unjustly held in Iran on vague charges since July 2014.

''(D) Robert Levinson of Florida, who was abducted on Kish Island in March 2007.

SA 1140. Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) proposed an amendment to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT OF AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN RELATING TO THE NUCLEAR PROGRAM OF IRAN.

The Atomic Energy Act of 1954 (42 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 134 the following new section:

''SEC. 135. CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW AND OVERSIGHT OF AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.

''(a) TRANSMISSION TO CONGRESS OF NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN AND VERIFICATION ASSESSMENT WITH RESPECT TO SUCH AGREEMENTS.—

''(1) TRANSMISSION OF AGREEMENTS.—Not later than 5 calendar days after reaching an agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran, the President shall transmit to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership—

''(A) the agreement, as defined in subsection (h)(1), including all related materials and annexes;

''(B) a verification assessment report of the Secretary of State prepared under paragraph (2) with respect to the agreement; and

''(C) a certification that—

''(i) the agreement includes the appropriate terms, conditions, and duration of the agreement's requirements with respect to Iran's nuclear activities and provisions describing any sanctions to be waived, suspended, or otherwise reduced by the United States, and any other nation or entity, including the United Nations; and

''(ii) the President determines the agreement meets United States non-proliferation objectives, does not jeopardize the common defense and security, provides an adequate framework to ensure that Iran's nuclear activities permitted thereunder will not be inimical to or constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security, and ensures that Iran's nuclear activities permitted thereunder will not be used to further any nuclear-related military or nuclear explosive purpose, including for any research on or development of any nuclear explosive device or any other nuclear-related military purpose.

''(2) VERIFICATION ASSESSMENT REPORT.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State shall prepare, with respect to an agreement described in paragraph (1), a report assessing—

''(i) the extent to which the Secretary will be able to verify that Iran is complying with its obligations and commitments under the agreement;

''(ii) the adequacy of the safeguards and other control mechanisms and other assurances contained in the agreement with respect to Iran's nuclear program to ensure Iran's activities permitted thereunder will not be used to further any nuclear-related military or nuclear explosive purpose, including for any research on or development of any nuclear explosive device or any other nuclear-related military purpose; and

''(iii) the capacity and capability of the International Atomic Energy Agency to effectively implement the verification regime required by or related to the agreement, including whether the International Atomic Energy Agency will have sufficient access to investigate suspicious sites or allegations of covert nuclear-related activities and whether it has the required funding, manpower, and authority to undertake the verification regime required by or related to the agreement.

''(B) ASSUMPTIONS.—In preparing a report under subparagraph (A) with respect to an agreement described in paragraph (1), the Secretary shall assume that Iran could—

''(i) use all measures not expressly prohibited by the agreement to conceal activities that violate its obligations and commitments under the agreement; and

''(ii) alter or deviate from standard practices in order to impede efforts to verify that Iran is complying with those obligations and commitments.

''(C) CLASSIFIED ANNEX.—A report under subparagraph (A) shall be transmitted in unclassified form, but shall include a classified annex prepared in consultation with the Director of National Intelligence, summarizing relevant classified information.

''(3) EXCEPTION.—

''(A) IN GENERAL.—Neither the requirements of subparagraphs (B) and (C) of paragraph (1), nor subsections (b) through (g) of this section, shall apply to an agreement described in subsection (h)(5) or to the EU–Iran Joint Statement made on April 2, 2015.

''(B) ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENT.—Notwithstanding subparagraph (A), any agreement as defined in subsection (h)(1) and any related materials, whether concluded before or after the date of the enactment of this section, shall not be subject to the exception in subparagraph (A).

''(b) PERIOD FOR REVIEW BY CONGRESS OF NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—During the 30-calendar day period following transmittal by the President of an agreement pursuant to subsection (a), the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives shall, as appropriate, hold hearings and briefings and otherwise obtain information in order to fully review such agreement.

''(2) EXCEPTION.—The period for congressional review under paragraph (1) shall be 60 calendar days if an agreement, including all materials required to be transmitted to Congress pursuant to subsection (a)(1), is transmitted pursuant to subsection (a) between July 10, 2015, and September 7, 2015.

''(3) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING INITIAL CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW PERIOD.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in paragraph (6), prior to and during the period for transmission of an agreement in subsection (a)(1) and during the period for congressional review provided in paragraph (1), including any additional period as applicable under the exception provided in paragraph (2), the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a).

''(4) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING PRESIDENTIAL CONSIDERATION OF A JOINT RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in paragraph (6), if a joint resolution of disapproval described in subsection (c)(2)(B) passes the Congress, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) for a period of 12 calendar days following the date of passage of the joint resolution of disapproval.

''(5) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING CONGRESSIONAL RECONSIDERATION OF A JOINT RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in paragraph (6), if a joint resolution of disapproval described in subsection (c)(2)(B) passes the Congress, and the President vetoes such joint resolution, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) for a period of 10 calendar days following the date of the President's veto.

''(6) EXCEPTION.—The prohibitions under paragraphs (3) through (5) do not apply to any new deferral, waiver, or other suspension of statutory sanctions pursuant to the Joint Plan of Action if that deferral, waiver, or other suspension is made—

''(A) consistent with the law in effect on the date of the enactment of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015; and

''(B) not later than 45 calendar days before the transmission by the President of an agreement, assessment report, and certification under subsection (a).

''(c) EFFECT OF CONGRESSIONAL ACTION WITH RESPECT TO NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.—

''(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

''(A) the sanctions regime imposed on Iran by Congress is primarily responsible for bringing Iran to the table to negotiate on its nuclear program;

''(B) these negotiations are a critically important matter of national security and foreign policy for the United States and its closest allies;

''(C) this section does not require a vote by Congress for the agreement to commence;

''(D) this section provides for congressional review, including, as appropriate, for approval, disapproval, or no action on statutory sanctions relief under an agreement; and

''(E) even though the agreement may commence, because the sanctions regime was imposed by Congress and only Congress can permanently modify or eliminate that regime, it is critically important that Congress have the opportunity, in an orderly and deliberative manner, to consider and, as appropriate, take action affecting the statutory sanctions regime imposed by Congress.

''(2) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, action involving any measure of statutory sanctions relief by the United States pursuant to an agreement subject to subsection (a) or the Joint Plan of Action—

''(A) may be taken, consistent with existing statutory requirements for such action, if, during the period for review provided in subsection (b), the Congress adopts, and there is enacted, a joint resolution stating in substance that the Congress does favor the agreement;

''(B) may not be taken if, during the period for review provided in subsection (b), the Congress adopts, and there is enacted, a joint

resolution stating in substance that the Congress does not favor the agreement; or

''(C) may be taken, consistent with existing statutory requirements for such action, if, following the period for review provided in subsection (b), there is not enacted any such joint resolution.

''(3) DEFINITION.—For the purposes of this subsection, the phrase 'action involving any measure of statutory sanctions relief by the United States' shall include waiver, suspension, reduction, or other effort to provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to, Iran under any provision of law or any other effort to refrain from applying any such sanctions.

''(d) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF IRANIAN COMPLIANCE WITH NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall keep the appropriate congressional committees and leadership fully and currently informed of all aspects of Iranian compliance with respect to an agreement subject to subsection (a).

''(2) POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT BREACHES AND COMPLIANCE INCIDENTS.—The President shall, within 10 calendar days of receiving credible and accurate information relating to a potentially significant breach or compliance incident by Iran with respect to an agreement subject to subsection (a), submit such information to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership.

''(3) MATERIAL BREACH REPORT.—Not later than 30 calendar days after submitting information about a potentially significant breach or compliance incident pursuant to paragraph (2), the President shall make a determination whether such potentially significant breach or compliance issue constitutes a material breach and, if there is such a material breach, whether Iran has cured such material breach, and shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership such determination, accompanied by, as appropriate, a report on the action or failure to act by Iran that led to the material breach, actions necessary for Iran to cure the breach, and the status of Iran's efforts to cure the breach.

''(4) SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 calendar days after entering into an agreement described in subsection (a), and not less frequently than once every 180 calendar days thereafter, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership a report on Iran's nuclear program and the compliance of Iran with the agreement during the period covered by the report, including the following elements:

''(A) Any action or failure to act by Iran that breached the agreement or is in noncompliance with the terms of the agreement.

''(B) Any delay by Iran of more than one week in providing inspectors access to facilities, people, and documents in Iran as required by the agreement.

''(C) Any progress made by Iran to resolve concerns by the International Atomic Energy Agency about possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program.

''(D) Any procurement by Iran of materials in violation of the agreement or which could otherwise significantly advance Iran's ability to obtain a nuclear weapon.

''(E) Any centrifuge research and development conducted by Iran that—

''(i) is not in compliance with the agreement; or

''(ii) may substantially enhance the breakout time of acquisition of a nuclear weapon by Iran, if deployed.

''(F) Any diversion by Iran of uranium, carbon-fiber, or other materials for use in Iran's nuclear program in violation of the agreement.

''(G) Any covert nuclear activities undertaken by Iran, including any covert nuclear weapons-related or covert fissile material activities or research and development.

''(H) An assessment of whether any Iranian financial institutions are engaged in money laundering or terrorist finance activities, including names of specific financial institutions if applicable.

''(I) Iran's advances in its ballistic missile program, including developments related to its long-range and inter-continental ballistic missile programs.

''(J) An assessment of—

''(i) whether Iran directly supported, financed, planned, or carried out an act of terrorism against the United States or a United States person anywhere in the world;

''(ii) whether, and the extent to which, Iran supported acts of terrorism, including acts of terrorism against the United States or a United States person anywhere in the world;

''(iii) all actions, including in international fora, being taken by the United States to stop, counter, and condemn acts by Iran to directly or indirectly carry out acts of terrorism against the United States and United States persons;

''(iv) the impact on the national security of the United States and the safety of United States citizens as a result of any Iranian actions reported under this paragraph; and

''(v) all of the sanctions relief provided to Iran, pursuant to the agreement, and a description of the relationship between each sanction waived, suspended, or deferred and Iran's nuclear weapon's program.

''(K) An assessment of whether violations of internationally recognized human rights in Iran have changed, increased, or decreased, as compared to the prior 180-day period.

''(5) ADDITIONAL REPORTS AND INFORMATION.—

''(A) AGENCY REPORTS.—Following submission of an agreement pursuant to subsection (a) to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership, the Department of State, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Defense shall, upon the request of any of those committees or leadership, promptly furnish to those committees or leadership their views as to whether the safeguards and other controls contained in the agreement with respect to Iran's nuclear program provide an adequate framework to ensure that Iran's activities permitted thereunder will not be inimical to or constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security.

''(B) PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON NUCLEAR INITIATIVES WITH IRAN.—The President shall keep the appropriate congressional committees and leadership fully and currently informed of any initiative or negotiations with Iran relating to Iran's nuclear program, including any new or amended agreement.

''(6) COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION.—After the review period provided in subsection (b), the President shall, not less than every 90 calendar days—

''(A) determine whether the President is able to certify that—

''(i) Iran is transparently, verifiably, and fully implementing the agreement, including all related technical or additional agreements;

''(ii) Iran has not committed a material breach with respect to the agreement or, if Iran has committed a material breach, Iran has cured the material breach;

''(iii) Iran has not taken any action, including covert action, that could significantly advance its nuclear weapons program; and

''(iv) suspension of sanctions related to Iran pursuant to the agreement is—

''(I) appropriate and proportionate to the specific and verifiable measures taken by Iran with respect to terminating its illicit nuclear program; and

''(II) vital to the national security interests of the United States; and

''(B) if the President determines he is able to make the certification described in subparagraph (A), make such certification to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership.

''(7) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

''(A) United States sanctions on Iran for terrorism, human rights abuses, and ballistic missiles will remain in place under an agreement, as defined in subsection (h)(1);

''(B) issues not addressed by an agreement on the nuclear program of Iran, including fair and appropriate compensation for Americans who were terrorized and subjected to torture while held in captivity for 444 days after the seizure of the United States Embassy in Tehran, Iran, in 1979 and their families, the freedom of Americans held in Iran, the human rights abuses of the Government of Iran against its own people, and the continued support of terrorism worldwide by the Government of Iran, are matters critical to ensure justice and the national security of the United States, and should be expeditiously addressed;

''(C) the President should determine the agreement in no way compromises the commitment of the United States to Israel's security, nor its support for Israel's right to exist; and

''(D) in order to responsibly implement any long-term agreement reached between the P5+1 countries and Iran, it is critically important that Congress have the opportunity to review any agreement and, as necessary, take action to modify the statutory sanctions regime imposed by Congress.

''(e) EXPEDITED CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event the President does not submit a certification pursuant to subsection (d)(6) or has determined pursuant to subsection (d)(3) that Iran has materially breached an agreement subject to subsection (a) and the material breach has not been cured, Congress may initiate within 60 calendar days expedited consideration of qualifying legislation pursuant to this subsection.

''(2) QUALIFYING LEGISLATION DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term 'qualifying legislation' means only a bill of either House of Congress—

''(A) the title of which is as follows: 'A bill reinstating statutory sanctions imposed with respect to Iran.'; and

''(B) the matter after the enacting clause of which is: 'Any statutory sanctions imposed with respect to Iran pursuant to _____ that were waived, suspended, reduced, or otherwise relieved pursuant to an agreement submitted pursuant to section 135(a) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 are hereby reinstated and any action by the United States Government to facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran pursuant to such agreement, or provide any further waiver, suspension, reduction, or other relief pursuant to such agreement is hereby prohibited.', with the blank space being filled in with the law or laws under which sanctions are to be reinstated.

''(3) INTRODUCTION.—During the 60-calendar day period provided for in paragraph (1), qualifying legislation may be introduced—

''(A) in the House of Representatives, by the majority leader or the minority leader; and

''(B) in the Senate, by the majority leader (or the majority leader's designee) or the minority leader (or the minority leader's designee).

''(4) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

''(A) REPORTING AND DISCHARGE.—If a committee of the House to which qualifying legislation has been referred has not reported such qualifying legislation within 10 legislative days after the date of referral, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration thereof.

''(B) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—Beginning on the third legislative day after each committee to which qualifying legislation has been referred reports it to the House or has been discharged from further consideration thereof, it shall be in order to move to proceed to consider the qualifying legislation in the House. All points of order against the motion are waived. Such a motion shall not be in order after the House has disposed of a motion to proceed on the qualifying legislation with regard to the same agreement. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion. The motion shall not be debatable. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is disposed of shall not be in order.

''(C) CONSIDERATION.—The qualifying legislation shall be considered as read. All points of order against the qualifying legislation and against its consideration are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the qualifying legislation to final passage without intervening motion except two hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the sponsor of the qualifying legislation (or a designee) and an opponent. A motion to reconsider the vote on passage of the qualifying legislation shall not be in order.

''(5) CONSIDERATION IN THE SENATE.—

''(A) COMMITTEE REFERRAL.—Qualifying legislation introduced in the Senate shall be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

''(B) REPORTING AND DISCHARGE.—If the Committee on Foreign Relations has not reported such qualifying legislation within 10 session days after the date of referral of such legislation, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration of such legislation and the qualifying legislation shall be placed on the appropriate calendar.

''(C) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—Notwithstanding Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, it is in order at any time after the committee authorized to consider qualifying legislation reports it to the Senate or has been discharged from its consideration (even though a previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to) to move to proceed to the consideration of qualifying legislation, and all points of order against qualifying legislation (and against consideration of the qualifying legislation) are waived. The motion to proceed is not debatable. The motion is not subject to a motion to postpone. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration of the qualifying legislation is agreed to, the qualifying legislation shall remain the unfinished business until disposed of.

''(D) DEBATE.—Debate on qualifying legislation, and on all debatable motions and appeals in connection therewith, shall be limited to not more than 10 hours, which shall be divided equally between the majority and minority leaders or their designees. A motion to further limit debate is in order and not debatable. An amendment to, or a motion to postpone, or a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business, or a motion to recommit the qualifying legislation is not in order.

''(E) VOTE ON PASSAGE.—The vote on passage shall occur immediately following the conclusion of the debate on the qualifying legislation and a single quorum call at the conclusion of the debate, if requested in accordance with the rules of the Senate.

''(F) RULINGS OF THE CHAIR ON PROCEDURE.—Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the rules of the Senate, as the case may be, to the procedure relating to qualifying legislation shall be decided without debate.

''(G) CONSIDERATION OF VETO MESSAGES.—Debate in the Senate of any veto message with respect to qualifying legislation, including all debatable motions and appeals in connection with such qualifying legislation, shall be limited to 10 hours, to be equally divided between, and controlled by, the majority leader and the minority leader or their designees.

''(6) RULES RELATING TO SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

''(A) COORDINATION WITH ACTION BY OTHER HOUSE.—If, before the passage by one House of qualifying legislation of that House, that House receives qualifying legislation from the other House, then the following procedures shall apply:

''(i) The qualifying legislation of the other House shall not be referred to a committee.

''(ii) With respect to qualifying legislation of the House receiving the legislation—

''(I) the procedure in that House shall be the same as if no qualifying legislation had been received from the other House; but

''(II) the vote on passage shall be on the qualifying legislation of the other House.

''(B) TREATMENT OF A BILL OF OTHER HOUSE.—If one House fails to introduce qualifying legislation under this section, the qualifying legislation of the other House shall be entitled to expedited floor procedures under this section.

''(C) TREATMENT OF COMPANION MEASURES.—If, following passage of the qualifying legislation in the Senate, the Senate then receives a companion measure from the House of Representatives, the companion measure shall not be debatable.

''(D) APPLICATION TO REVENUE MEASURES.—The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply in the House of Representatives to qualifying legislation which is a revenue measure.

''(f) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—Subsection (e) is enacted by Congress—

''(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, and as such are deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of legislation described in those sections, and supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent with such rules; and

''(2) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

''(g) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in the section shall be construed as—

''(1) modifying, or having any other impact on, the President's authority to negotiate, enter into, or implement appropriate executive agreements, other than the restrictions on implementation of the agreements specifically covered by this section;

''(2) allowing any new waiver, suspension, reduction, or other relief from statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law, or allowing the President to refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) during the period for review provided in subsection (b);

''(3) revoking or terminating any statutory sanctions imposed on Iran; or

''(4) authorizing the use of military force against Iran.

''(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

''(1) AGREEMENT.—The term 'agreement' means an agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran that includes the United States, commits the United States to take action, or pursuant to which the United States commits or otherwise agrees to take action, regardless of the form it takes, whether a political commitment or otherwise, and regardless of whether it is legally binding or not, including any joint comprehensive plan of action entered into or made between Iran and any other parties, and any additional materials related thereto, including annexes, appendices, codicils, side agreements, implementing materials, documents, and guidance, technical or other understandings, and any related agreements, whether entered into or implemented prior to the agreement or to be entered into or implemented in the future.

''(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term 'appropriate congressional committees' means the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on Financial Services, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

''(3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES AND LEADERSHIP.—The term 'appropriate congressional committees and leadership' means the Committee on Finance, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, the Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Majority and Minority Leaders of the Senate and the Committee on Ways and Means, the Committee on Financial Services, the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and the Committee on Foreign Affairs, and the Speaker, Majority Leader, and Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

''(4) IRANIAN FINANCIAL INSTITUTION.—The term 'Iranian financial institution' has the meaning given the term in section 104A(d) of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8513b(d)).

''(5) JOINT PLAN OF ACTION.—The term 'Joint Plan of Action' means the Joint Plan of Action, signed at Geneva November 24, 2013, by Iran and by France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom, and the United States, and all implementing materials and agreements related to the Joint Plan of Action, including the technical understandings reached on January 12, 2014, the extension thereto agreed to on July 18, 2014, the extension agreed to on November 24, 2014, and any materially identical extension that is agreed to on or after the date of the enactment of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015.

''(6) EU-IRAN JOINT STATEMENT.—The term 'EU-Iran Joint Statement' means only the Joint Statement by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini and Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif made on April 2, 2015, at Lausanne, Switzerland.

''(7) MATERIAL BREACH.—The term 'material breach' means, with respect to an agreement described in subsection (a), any breach

of the agreement, or in the case of non-binding commitments, any failure to perform those commitments, that substantially—

''(A) benefits Iran's nuclear program;

''(B) decreases the amount of time required by Iran to achieve a nuclear weapon; or

''(C) deviates from or undermines the purposes of such agreement.

''(8) NONCOMPLIANCE DEFINED.—The term 'noncompliance' means any departure from the terms of an agreement described in subsection (a) that is not a material breach.

''(9) P5+1 COUNTRIES.—The term 'P5+1 countries' means the United States, France, the Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China, the United Kingdom, and Germany.

''(10) UNITED STATES PERSON.—The term 'United States person' has the meaning given that term in section 101 of the Comprehensive Iran Sanctions, Accountability, and Divestment Act of 2010 (22 U.S.C. 8511).''.

SA 1141. Mr. RUBIO (for himself, Mr. KIRK, and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 15, strike ''purpose.'' and insert the following: ''purpose; and

''(iii) the President determines Iran's leaders have publically accepted Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

SA 1142. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 19, line 7, insert '', and pursuing United Nations consideration of an agreement prior to Congress would undermine the appropriate role of Congress'' after ''Congress''.

SA 1143. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 28, line 11, insert ''and any related agreements, including draft United Nations Security Council resolutions or agreed parameters for such resolutions'' after ''parties''.

SA 1144. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 7, line 10, strike ''any such sanctions'' and all that follows through ''under'' on page 11, line 7, and insert the following: ''any such sanctions or facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a).

''(4) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING PRESIDENTIAL CONSIDERATION OF A JOINT RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in paragraph (6), if a joint resolution of disapproval described in subsection (c)(2)(B) passes the Congress, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions or facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) for a period of 12 calendar days following the date of passage of the joint resolution of disapproval.

''(5) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS DURING CONGRESSIONAL RECONSIDERATION OF A JOINT RESOLUTION OF DISAPPROVAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in paragraph (6), if a joint resolution of disapproval described in subsection (c)(2)(B) passes the Congress, and the President vetoes such joint resolution, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions or facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a) for a period of 10 calendar days following the date of the President's veto.

''(6) EXCEPTION.—The prohibitions under paragraphs (3) through (5) do not apply to any new deferral, waiver, or other suspension of statutory sanctions pursuant to the Joint Plan of Action if that deferral, waiver, or other suspension is made—

''(A) consistent with the law in effect on the date of the enactment of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015; and

''(B) not later than 45 calendar days before the transmission by the President of an agreement, assessment report, and certification under subsection (a).

''(c) EFFECT OF CONGRESSIONAL ACTION WITH RESPECT TO NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.—

''(1) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

''(A) the sanctions regime imposed on Iran by Congress is primarily responsible for bringing Iran to the table to negotiate on its nuclear program;

''(B) these negotiations are a critically important matter of national security and foreign policy for the United States and its closest allies;

''(C) this section does not require a vote by Congress for the agreement to commence;

''(D) this section provides for congressional review, including, as appropriate, for approval, disapproval, or no action on statutory sanctions relief under an agreement; and

''(E) even though the agreement may commence, because the sanctions regime was imposed by Congress and only Congress can permanently modify or eliminate that regime, it is critically important that Congress have the opportunity, in an orderly and deliberative manner, to consider and, as appropriate, take action affecting the statutory sanctions regime imposed by Congress.

''(2) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, action involving any measure of statutory sanctions relief by the United States pursuant to an agreement subject to subsection (a) or the Joint Plan of Action—

''(A) may be taken, consistent with existing statutory requirements for such action, if, during the period for review provided in subsection (b), the Congress adopts, and there is enacted, a joint resolution stating in substance that the Congress does favor the agreement;

''(B) may not be taken if, during the period for review provided in subsection (b), the Congress adopts, and there is enacted, a joint resolution stating in substance that the Congress does not favor the agreement; or

''(C) may be taken, consistent with existing statutory requirements for such action, if, following the period for review provided in subsection (b), there is not enacted any such joint resolution.

''(3) DEFINITION.—For the purposes of this subsection, the phrase ''action involving any measure of statutory sanctions relief by the United States'' shall include waiver, suspension, reduction, or other effort to provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to, Iran or to facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran under

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SA 1145. Mr. RUBIO (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 15, strike ''purpose.'' and insert the following: ''purpose; and

''(iii) all United States citizens unjustly detained by Iran, including Jason Rezaian, Amir Hekmati, and Saeed Abedini, have been released from Iranian custody, and the Government of Iran is fully cooperating in efforts to locate Robert Levinson.

SA 1146. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 3, line 15, strike ''purpose.'' and insert the following: ''purpose; and

''(iii) the President determines that no sanctions relief provided under the agreement will be provided from sanctions imposed by Congress or the Executive Branch due to Iran's support for terrorism, its ballistic missile programs, or its human rights abuses against the people of Iran or will undermine the effectiveness of such sanctions.''.

SA 1147. Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. RISCH, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. SULLIVAN, and Mr. LEE) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient

Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 17, between lines 21 and 22, insert the following:

''(v) Iran has not directly supported or carried out an act of terrorism against the United States or a United States person anywhere in the world; and

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SA 1148. Mr. RUBIO submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end, add the following:

SEC. 3. PROHIBITION ON PROVIDING SANCTIONS RELIEF.

The President, the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of State, and any other Executive branch officer or agency may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described under section 135(a) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as added by section 2 of this Act, until the President certifies to Congress that the Government of Iran has fully and verifiably—

(1) reduced by approximately two-thirds its installed centrifuges, with the remaining 6,104 centrifuges being IR-1s, Iran's first-generation centrifuge;

(2) halted any uranium enrichment over 3.67 percent and agreed to continue to do so for at least 15 years;

(3) reduced its stockpile of low-enriched uranium to 300 kilograms of 3.67 percent low-enriched uranium (LEU);

(4) placed all excess centrifuges and enrichment infrastructure in International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) monitored storage to be used only as replacements for operating centrifuges and equipment;

(5) agreed to not build any new facilities for the purpose of enriching uranium for 15 years;

(6) halted enrichment of uranium at the Fordow facility and agreed to continue this moratorium for 15 years;

(7) converted the Fordow facility into a nuclear, physics, technology, and research center for peaceful purposes only;

(8) halted research and development associated with uranium enrichment at Fordow and agreed to continue this moratorium for 15 years;

(9) removed almost two-thirds of Fordow's centrifuges and infrastructure, ensured that the remaining centrifuges are not enriching uranium, and placed all centrifuges and related infrastructure under IAEA monitoring;

(10) removed advanced centrifuges at Natanz, and is only enriching uranium using IR-1 models and has agreed to continue this arrangement for 10 years;

(11) removed the 1,000 IR-2M centrifuges currently installed at Natanz and placed them in IAEA-monitored storage and agreed to keep them there for 10 years;

(12) halted use of its IR-2, IR-4, IR-5, IR-6, or IR-8 models to produce enriched uranium and committed to continue this for at least ten years.

(13) begun to abide by the schedule and parameters for limited centrifuge research and development agreed to by the P5+1 countries;

(14) provided regular access to all of Iran's nuclear facilities, including to Iran's enrichment facility at Natanz and its former enrichment facility at Fordow, and is allowing the use of the most up-to-date, modern monitoring technologies;

(15) provided inspectors with access to the supply chain that supports Iran's nuclear program;

(16) provided access to uranium mines and continuous surveillance at uranium mills, where Iran produces yellowcake, and has committed to continue to do so for 25 years;

(17) provided inspectors with access to allow continuous surveillance of Iran's centrifuge rotors and bellows production and storage facilities, and has committed to continue to do so for 20 years;

(18) placed all centrifuges and enrichment infrastructure removed from Fordow and Natanz under continuous monitoring by the IAEA;

(19) begun to use only the dedicated procurement channel for Iran's nuclear program to monitor and approve, on a case by case basis, the supply, sale, or transfer to Iran of certain nuclear-related and dual use materials and technology;

(20) implemented the Additional Protocol of the IAEA and committed to adhere to the Additional Protocol permanently;

(21) committed to grant access to the IAEA to investigate any suspicious sites or allegations of a covert enrichment facility, conversion facility, centrifuge production facility, or yellowcake production facility anywhere in the country, including at military sites;

(22) implemented Modified Code 3.1 requiring early notification of construction of new facilities;

(23) redesigned and rebuilt the heavy water research reactor in Arak based on a design agreed to by the P5+1 countries and ensured that the reactor will not produce weapons grade plutonium;

(24) destroyed or removed from the country the original core of the Arak reactor;

(25) committed to ship all spent fuel from the Arak reactor out of the country;

(26) halted any reprocessing or reprocessing research and development on spent nuclear fuel;

(27) committed to not accumulate heavy water in excess of the needs of the modified Arak reactor, and to sell any remaining heavy water on the international market for 15 years; and

(28) halted building of any additional heavy water reactors and committed to continue this moratorium for 15 years.

SA 1149. Mr. JOHNSON (for himself and Mr. RISCH) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. CONGRESSIONAL-EXECUTIVE AGREEMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Any agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran is a congressional-executive agreement to be considered under expedited procedure in both houses of Congress.

(b) EXPEDITED CONSIDERATION OF JOINT RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event the President transmits to the appropriate congressional committees an agreement with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran, Congress may initiate within 60 days expedited consideration of a joint resolution of approval pursuant to this paragraph.

(2) JOINT RESOLUTION OF APPROVAL DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ''joint resolution of approval'' means only a joint resolution introduced after the date on which the President transmits to the appropriate congressional committees an agreement described in paragraph (1) the sole matter after the resolving clause of which is as follows: ''That Congress approves the agreement submitted to Congress related to the nuclear program of Iran on _____.'', with the blank space being filled with the appropriate date.

(3) INTRODUCTION.—During the 60-day period provided for in paragraph (1), a joint resolution of approval may be introduced—

(A) in the House of Representatives, by any member of the House of Representatives; and

(B) in the Senate, by any member of the Senate.

(4) COMMITTEE REFERRAL.—A joint resolution of approval introduced in the Senate shall be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations and in the House of Representatives to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

(5) DISCHARGE.—If the committee of either House to which a joint resolution of approval has been referred has not reported such resolution within 10 session days after the date of referral of such resolution, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration of such resolution and the joint resolution of approval shall be placed on the appropriate calendar.

(6) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

(A) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—After each committee authorized to consider a joint resolution of approval reports it to the House of Representatives or has been discharged from its consideration, it shall be in order to move to proceed to consider the joint resolution of approval in the House. All points of order against the motion are waived. Such a motion shall not be in order after the House has disposed of a motion to proceed on the joint resolution of approval. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion. The motion shall not be debatable. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is disposed of shall not be in order.

(B) CONSIDERATION.—The joint resolution of approval shall be considered as read. All points of order against the joint resolution of approval and against its consideration are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the joint resolution of approval to its passage without intervening motion except 2 hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent. A motion to reconsider the vote on passage of the joint resolution of approval shall not be in order. No amendment to, or motion to recommit, a joint resolution of approval shall be in order.

(C) APPEALS.—All appeals from the Chair relating to the application of the Rules of the House of Representatives to the procedure relating to the joint resolution of approval shall be decided without debate.

(7) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN THE SENATE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, it is in order at any time after the committee authorized to consider a joint resolution of approval reports it to the Senate or has been discharged from its consideration (even though a previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to) to move to proceed to the consideration of the joint resolution of

approval, and all points of order against the joint resolution of approval (and against consideration of the joint resolution of approval) are waived. The motion to proceed is not debatable. The motion is not subject to a motion to postpone. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration of the joint resolution of approval is agreed to, the joint resolution of approval shall remain the unfinished business until disposed of.

(B) DEBATE.—Debate on a joint resolution of approval, and on all debatable motions and appeals in connection therewith, shall be limited to not more than 10 hours, which shall be divided equally between the majority and minority leaders or their designees. A motion to further limit debate is in order and not debatable. An amendment to, or a motion to postpone, or a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business, or a motion to recommit the joint resolution of approval is not in order.

(C) VOTE ON PASSAGE.—The vote on passage shall occur immediately following the conclusion of the debate on the joint resolution of approval and a single quorum call at the conclusion of the debate, if requested in accordance with the rules of the Senate.

(D) RULINGS OF THE CHAIR ON PROCEDURE.—Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the rules of the Senate, as the case may be, to the procedure relating to a joint resolution of approval shall be decided without debate.

(E) CONSIDERATION OF VETO MESSAGES.—Debate in the Senate of any veto message with respect to a joint resolution of approval, including all debatable motions and appeals in connection with such joint resolution of approval, shall be limited to 10 hours, to be equally divided between, and controlled by, the majority leader and the minority leader or their designees.

(8) RULES RELATING TO SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

(A) COORDINATION WITH ACTION BY OTHER HOUSE.—If, before the passage by one House of a joint resolution of approval of that House, that House receives a joint resolution of approval from the other House, then the following procedures shall apply:

(i) The joint resolution of approval of the other House shall not be referred to a committee.

(ii) With respect to a joint resolution of approval in of the House receiving the resolution—

(I) the procedure in that House shall be the same as if no joint resolution of approval had been received from the other House; but

(II) the vote on passage shall be on the joint resolution of approval of the other House.

(B) TREATMENT OF JOINT RESOLUTION OF OTHER HOUSE.—If one House fails to introduce or consider a joint resolution of approval under this paragraph, the joint resolution of approval of the other House shall be entitled to expedited floor procedures under this paragraph.

(C) TREATMENT OF COMPANION MEASURES.—If, following passage of the joint resolution of approval in the Senate, the Senate then receives a companion measure from the House of Representatives, the companion measure shall not be debatable.

(c) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—subsection (b) is enacted by Congress—

(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, and as such are deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of legislation described in those sections, and supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent with such rules; and

(2) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON SANCTIONS RELIEF.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions imposed under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran that includes the United States, commits the United States to take action, or pursuant to which the United States commits or otherwise agrees to take action, regardless of the form it takes, whether a political commitment or otherwise, and regardless of whether it is legally binding or not, including any joint comprehensive plan of action entered into or made between Iran and any other parties, and any additional materials related thereto, including annexes, appendices, codicils, side agreements, implementing materials, documents, and guidance, technical or other understandings, and any related agreements, whether entered into or implemented prior to the agreement or to be entered into or implemented in the future, unless a joint resolution of approval is passed by Congress under section 1(b).

SA 1150. Mr. JOHNSON (for himself, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. TREATY SUBJECT TO ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE SENATE.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any agreement reached by the President with Iran relating to the nuclear program of Iran is deemed to be a treaty that is subject to the requirements of article II, section 2, clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States requiring that the treaty is subject to the advice and consent of the Senate, with two-thirds of Senators concurring.

SEC. 2. LIMITATION ON SANCTIONS RELIEF.

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of sanctions under any other provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement related to the nuclear program of Iran that includes the United States, commits the United States to take action, or pursuant to which the United States commits or otherwise agrees to take action, regardless of the form it takes, whether a political commitment or otherwise, and regardless of whether it is legally binding or not, including any joint comprehensive plan of action entered into or made between Iran and any other parties, and any additional materials related thereto, including annexes, appendices, codicils, side agreements, implementing materials, documents, and guidance, technical or other understandings, and any related agreements, whether entered into or implemented prior to the agreement or to be entered into or implemented in the future, subject to the advice and consent of the Senate as a treaty, receives the concurrence of two thirds of the Senators.

SA 1151. Mr. GARDNER (for himself and Mr. COTTON) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 17, between lines 21 and 22, insert the following:

''(v) the Government of Iran and the Government of North Korea are not sharing or transferring any information or technology related to ballistic missile development or nuclear weapons capability; and

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SA 1152. Mr. CRUZ (for himself and Mr. TOOMEY) submitted an amendment intended to be proposed by him to the bill H.R. 1191, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

Beginning on page 6, strike line 6 and all that follows through page 27, line 21, and insert the following:

''(b) REVIEW BY CONGRESS OF NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—After the President transmits an agreement pursuant to subsection (a), the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives shall, as appropriate, hold hearings and briefings and otherwise obtain information in order to fully review such agreement.

''(2) LIMITATION ON ACTIONS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, except as provided in paragraph (3) and subsection (c), the President may not waive, suspend, reduce, provide relief from, or otherwise limit the application of statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law or refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a).

''(3) EXCEPTION.—The prohibition under paragraph (2) does not apply to any deferral, waiver, or other suspension of statutory sanctions pursuant to the Joint Plan of Action if that deferral, waiver, or other suspension is made—

''(A) consistent with the law in effect on the date of the enactment of the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act of 2015; and

''(B) not later than 45 days before the transmission by the President of an agreement, assessment report, and certification under subsection (a).

''(c) EFFECT OF CONGRESSIONAL ACTION WITH RESPECT TO NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS WITH IRAN.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, action involving any measure of statutory sanctions relief by the United States pursuant to an agreement subject to subsection (a) or the Joint Plan of Action may be taken, consistent with existing statutory requirements for such action, only if the Congress adopts, and there is enacted, a joint resolution stating in substance that the Congress does favor the agreement.

''(d) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT OF IRANIAN COMPLIANCE WITH NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—The President shall keep the appropriate congressional committees and leadership fully and currently informed of all aspects of Iranian compliance with respect to an agreement subject to subsection (a).

''(2) POTENTIALLY SIGNIFICANT BREACHES AND COMPLIANCE INCIDENTS.—The President shall, within 10 calendar days of receiving credible and accurate information relating to a potentially significant breach or compliance incident by Iran with respect to an agreement subject to subsection (a), submit such information to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership.

''(3) MATERIAL BREACH REPORT.—Not later than 30 calendar days after submitting information about a potentially significant breach or compliance incident pursuant to paragraph (2), the President shall make a determination whether such potentially significant breach or compliance issue constitutes a material breach and, if there is such a material breach, whether Iran has cured such material breach, and shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership such determination, accompanied by, as appropriate, a report on the action or failure to act by Iran that led to the material breach, actions necessary for Iran to cure the breach, and the status of Iran's efforts to cure the breach.

''(4) SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 180 calendar days after entering into an agreement described in subsection (a), and not less frequently than once every 180 calendar days thereafter, the President shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership a report on Iran's nuclear program and the compliance of Iran with the agreement during the period covered by the report, including the following elements:

''(A) Any action or failure to act by Iran that breached the agreement or is in noncompliance with the terms of the agreement.

''(B) Any delay by Iran of more than one week in providing inspectors access to facilities, people, and documents in Iran as required by the agreement.

''(C) Any progress made by Iran to resolve concerns by the International Atomic Energy Agency about possible military dimensions of Iran's nuclear program.

''(D) Any procurement by Iran of materials in violation of the agreement or which could otherwise significantly advance Iran's ability to obtain a nuclear weapon.

''(E) Any centrifuge research and development conducted by Iran that—

''(i) is not in compliance with the agreement; or

''(ii) may substantially enhance the breakout time of acquisition of a nuclear weapon by Iran, if deployed.

''(F) Any diversion by Iran of uranium, carbon-fiber, or other materials for use in Iran's nuclear program in violation of the agreement.

''(G) Any covert nuclear activities undertaken by Iran, including any covert nuclear weapons-related or covert fissile material activities or research and development.

''(H) An assessment of whether any Iranian financial institutions are engaged in money laundering or terrorist finance activities, including names of specific financial institutions if applicable.

''(I) Iran's advances in its ballistic missile program, including developments related to its long-range and inter-continental ballistic missile programs.

''(J) An assessment of—

''(i) whether Iran directly supported, financed, planned, or carried out an act of terrorism against the United States or a United States person anywhere in the world;

''(ii) whether, and the extent to which, Iran supported acts of terrorism, including acts of terrorism against the United States or a United States person anywhere in the world;

''(iii) all actions, including in international fora, being taken by the United States to stop, counter, and condemn acts by Iran to directly or indirectly carry out acts of terrorism against the United States and United States persons;

''(iv) the impact on the national security of the United States and the safety of United States citizens as a result of any Iranian actions reported under this paragraph; and

''(v) all of the sanctions relief provided to Iran, pursuant to the agreement, and a description of the relationship between each sanction waived, suspended, or deferred and Iran's nuclear weapon's program.

''(K) An assessment of whether violations of internationally recognized human rights in Iran have changed, increased, or decreased, as compared to the prior 180-day period.

''(5) ADDITIONAL REPORTS AND INFORMATION.—

''(A) AGENCY REPORTS.—Following submission of an agreement pursuant to subsection (a) to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership, the Department of State, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Defense shall, upon the request of any of those committees or leadership, promptly furnish to those committees or leadership their views as to whether the safeguards and other controls contained in the agreement with respect to Iran's nuclear program provide an adequate framework to ensure that Iran's activities permitted thereunder will not be inimical to or constitute an unreasonable risk to the common defense and security.

''(B) PROVISION OF INFORMATION ON NUCLEAR INITIATIVES WITH IRAN.—The President shall keep the appropriate congressional committees and leadership fully and currently informed of any initiative or negotiations with Iran relating to Iran's nuclear program, including any new or amended agreement.

''(6) COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION.—After the President transmits an agreement pursuant to subsection (a), the President shall, not less than every 90 calendar days—

''(A) determine whether the President is able to certify that—

''(i) Iran is transparently, verifiably, and fully implementing the agreement, including all related technical or additional agreements;

''(ii) Iran has not committed a material breach with respect to the agreement or, if Iran has committed a material breach, Iran has cured the material breach;

''(iii) Iran has not taken any action, including covert action, that could significantly advance its nuclear weapons program; and

''(iv) suspension of sanctions related to Iran pursuant to the agreement is—

''(I) appropriate and proportionate to the specific and verifiable measures taken by Iran with respect to terminating its illicit nuclear program; and

''(II) vital to the national security interests of the United States; and

''(B) if the President determines he is able to make the certification described in subparagraph (A), make such certification to the appropriate congressional committees and leadership.

''(7) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

''(A) United States sanctions on Iran for terrorism, human rights abuses, and ballistic missiles will remain in place under an agreement, as defined in subsection (h)(1);

''(B) issues not addressed by an agreement on the nuclear program of Iran, including fair and appropriate compensation for Americans who were terrorized and subjected to torture while held in captivity for 444 days after the seizure of the United States Embassy in Tehran, Iran, in 1979 and their families, the freedom of Americans held in Iran, the human rights abuses of the Government of Iran against its own people, and the continued support of terrorism worldwide by the Government of Iran, are matters critical to ensure justice and the national security of the United States, and should be expeditiously addressed;

''(C) the President should determine the agreement in no way compromises the commitment of the United States to Israel's security, nor its support for Israel's right to exist; and

''(D) in order to responsibly implement any long-term agreement reached between the P5+1 countries and Iran, it is critically important that Congress have the opportunity to review any agreement and, as necessary, take action to modify the statutory sanctions regime imposed by Congress.

''(e) EXPEDITED CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATION.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—In the event the President does not submit a certification pursuant to subsection (d)(6) or has determined pursuant to subsection (d)(3) that Iran has materially breached an agreement subject to subsection (a) and the material breach has not been cured, Congress may initiate within 60 calendar days expedited consideration of qualifying legislation pursuant to this subsection.

''(2) QUALIFYING LEGISLATION DEFINED.—For purposes of this subsection, the term ''qualifying legislation'' means only a bill of either House of Congress—

''(A) the title of which is as follows: ''A bill reinstating statutory sanctions imposed with respect to Iran.''; and

''(B) the matter after the enacting clause of which is: ''Any statutory sanctions imposed with respect to Iran pursuant to _____ that were waived, suspended, reduced, or otherwise relieved pursuant to an agreement submitted pursuant to section 135(a) of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 are hereby reinstated and any action by the United States Government to facilitate the release of funds or assets to Iran pursuant to such agreement, or provide any further waiver, suspension, reduction, or other relief pursuant to such agreement is hereby prohibited.'', with the blank space being filled in with the law or laws under which sanctions are to be reinstated.

''(3) INTRODUCTION.—During the 60-calendar day period provided for in paragraph (1), qualifying legislation may be introduced—

''(A) in the House of Representatives, by the majority leader or the minority leader; and

''(B) in the Senate, by the majority leader (or the majority leader's designee) or the minority leader (or the minority leader's designee).

''(4) FLOOR CONSIDERATION IN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

''(A) REPORTING AND DISCHARGE.—If a committee of the House to which qualifying legislation has been referred has not reported such qualifying legislation within 10 legislative days after the date of referral, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration thereof.

''(B) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—Beginning on the third legislative day after each committee to which qualifying legislation has been referred reports it to the House

or has been discharged from further consideration thereof, it shall be in order to move to proceed to consider the qualifying legislation in the House. All points of order against the motion are waived. Such a motion shall not be in order after the House has disposed of a motion to proceed on the qualifying legislation with regard to the same agreement. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the motion to its adoption without intervening motion. The motion shall not be debatable. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is disposed of shall not be in order.

''(C) CONSIDERATION.—The qualifying legislation shall be considered as read. All points of order against the qualifying legislation and against its consideration are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the qualifying legislation to final passage without intervening motion except two hours of debate equally divided and controlled by the sponsor of the qualifying legislation (or a designee) and an opponent. A motion to reconsider the vote on passage of the qualifying legislation shall not be in order.

''(5) CONSIDERATION IN THE SENATE.—

''(A) COMMITTEE REFERRAL.—Qualifying legislation introduced in the Senate shall be referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

''(B) REPORTING AND DISCHARGE.—If the Committee on Foreign Relations has not reported such qualifying legislation within 10 session days after the date of referral of such legislation, that committee shall be discharged from further consideration of such legislation and the qualifying legislation shall be placed on the appropriate calendar.

''(C) PROCEEDING TO CONSIDERATION.—Notwithstanding Rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, it is in order at any time after the committee authorized to consider qualifying legislation reports it to the Senate or has been discharged from its consideration (even though a previous motion to the same effect has been disagreed to) to move to proceed to the consideration of qualifying legislation, and all points of order against qualifying legislation (and against consideration of the qualifying legislation) are waived. The motion to proceed is not debatable. The motion is not subject to a motion to postpone. A motion to reconsider the vote by which the motion is agreed to or disagreed to shall not be in order. If a motion to proceed to the consideration of the qualifying legislation is agreed to, the qualifying legislation shall remain the unfinished business until disposed of.

''(D) DEBATE.—Debate on qualifying legislation, and on all debatable motions and appeals in connection therewith, shall be limited to not more than 10 hours, which shall be divided equally between the majority and minority leaders or their designees. A motion to further limit debate is in order and not debatable. An amendment to, or a motion to postpone, or a motion to proceed to the consideration of other business, or a motion to recommit the qualifying legislation is not in order.

''(E) VOTE ON PASSAGE.—The vote on passage shall occur immediately following the conclusion of the debate on the qualifying legislation and a single quorum call at the conclusion of the debate, if requested in accordance with the rules of the Senate.

''(F) RULINGS OF THE CHAIR ON PROCEDURE.—Appeals from the decisions of the Chair relating to the application of the rules of the Senate, as the case may be, to the procedure relating to qualifying legislation shall be decided without debate.

''(G) CONSIDERATION OF VETO MESSAGES.—Debate in the Senate of any veto message with respect to qualifying legislation, including all debatable motions and appeals in connection with such qualifying legislation, shall be limited to 10 hours, to be equally divided between, and controlled by, the majority leader and the minority leader or their designees.

''(6) RULES RELATING TO SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.—

''(A) COORDINATION WITH ACTION BY OTHER HOUSE.—If, before the passage by one House of qualifying legislation of that House, that House receives qualifying legislation from the other House, then the following procedures shall apply:

''(i) The qualifying legislation of the other House shall not be referred to a committee.

''(ii) With respect to qualifying legislation of the House receiving the legislation—

''(I) the procedure in that House shall be the same as if no qualifying legislation had been received from the other House; but

''(II) the vote on passage shall be on the qualifying legislation of the other House.

''(B) TREATMENT OF A BILL OF OTHER HOUSE.—If one House fails to introduce qualifying legislation under this section, the qualifying legislation of the other House shall be entitled to expedited floor procedures under this section.

''(C) TREATMENT OF COMPANION MEASURES.—If, following passage of the qualifying legislation in the Senate, the Senate then receives a companion measure from the House of Representatives, the companion measure shall not be debatable.

''(D) APPLICATION TO REVENUE MEASURES.—The provisions of this paragraph shall not apply in the House of Representatives to qualifying legislation which is a revenue measure.

''(f) RULES OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND SENATE.—Subsection (e) is enacted by Congress—

''(1) as an exercise of the rulemaking power of the Senate and the House of Representatives, respectively, and as such are deemed a part of the rules of each House, respectively, but applicable only with respect to the procedure to be followed in that House in the case of legislation described in those sections, and supersede other rules only to the extent that they are inconsistent with such rules; and

''(2) with full recognition of the constitutional right of either House to change the rules (so far as relating to the procedure of that House) at any time, in the same manner, and to the same extent as in the case of any other rule of that House.

''(g) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in the section shall be construed as—

''(1) modifying, or having any other impact on, the President's authority to negotiate, enter into, or implement appropriate executive agreements, other than the restrictions on implementation of the agreements specifically covered by this section;

''(2) allowing any new waiver, suspension, reduction, or other relief from statutory sanctions with respect to Iran under any provision of law, or allowing the President to refrain from applying any such sanctions pursuant to an agreement described in subsection (a);

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 23, 2015, at 11 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON BANKING, HOUSING, AND URBAN AFFAIRS

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 23, 2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Surface Transportation Reauthorization: Building on the Successes of MAP–21 To Deliver Safe, Efficient and Effective Public Transportation Services and Projects.''

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. COTTON. 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 April 23, 2015, at 9:45 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a Subcommittee hearing entitled ''FAA Reauthorization: Airport Issues and Infrastructure Financing.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 23, 2015, at 2 p.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 23, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 23, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room 428A of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 23, 2015, at 2:30 p.m.

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA AND GLOBAL HEALTH POLICY

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health Policy be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 23,

2015, at 10 a.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Subcommittee on Health Care of the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 23, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''A Fresh Look at the Impact of the Medical Device Tax on Jobs, Innovation, and Patients.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AND NATIONAL INTEREST

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Immigration and the National Interest, be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 23, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Eroding the Law and Diverting Taxpayer Resources: An Examination of the Administration's Central American Minors Refugee/Parole Program.''

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

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Destiny Whitehead, an intern in my office, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the session today.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that on Monday, April 27, at 5 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Executive Calendar No. 75; that there be 30 minutes for debate equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote without intervening action or debate on the nomination, and that following disposition of the nomination, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that no further motion be in order to the nomination; that any statements related to the nomination be printed in the RECORD; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action, and the Senate then resume legislative session.

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

AUTHORIZING USE OF THE CAPITOL GROUNDS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 21, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 21) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 21) was agreed to.

AUTHORIZING USE OF THE CAPITOL GROUNDS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H. Con. Res. 25, which is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 25) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the National Peace Officers Memorial Service and the National Honor Guard and Pipe Band Exhibition.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 25) was agreed to.

AUTHORIZING USE OF EMANCIPATION HALL

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Rules and Administration be discharged from further consideration of S. Con. Res. 3 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

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

The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 3) authorizing the use of Emancipation Hall in the Capitol Visitor Center for an event to celebrate the birthday of King Kamehameha I.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the concurrent resolution be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 3) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in the RECORD of February 5, 2015, under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now proceed to the en bloc consideration of the following Senate resolutions, which were submitted earlier today: S. Res. 149, Hubble Space Telescope; S. Res. 150, Civic and Government Education; and S. Res. 151, National Safe Digging Month.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I ask unanimous consent that the resolutions be agreed to, the preambles be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table en bloc.

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

The resolutions were agreed to.

The preambles were agreed to.

(The resolutions, with their preambles, are printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2015

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 3 p.m., Monday, April 27; 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 then resume consideration of H.R. 1191 for debate only.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, APRIL 27, 2015, AT 3 P.M.

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 5:48 p.m., adjourned until Monday, April 27, 2015, at 3 p.m.

CONFIRMATION

Executive nomination confirmed by the Senate April 23, 2015:

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

LORETTA E. LYNCH, OF NEW YORK, TO BE ATTORNEY GENERAL.