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House of Representatives

The House was not in session today. Its next meeting will be held on Friday, May 8, 2015, at 11 a.m.

Senate

WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2015

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Holy God, thank You for daily blessings and mercies, for You fill the void of our spirits with Your abiding presence. Lord, You provide us with strength for each day and hope for each tomorrow. Your ways are just and true.

Supply all the needs of our Senators. Give them wisdom to solve the complex problems of our time. Help them to express their gratitude to You with deeds of faith and compassion. Lord, use them to call us out of the night of selfish living to the sunrise of sacrifice and service. Continue to be their refuge and strength, a very present help for every trial.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

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

PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, we have all heard the legal maxim ''Justice delayed is justice denied,'' and it is really applicable to what is going on in the Senate today. Here in this body, justice is being delayed by the Republican majority. The refusal of the Senate Republicans to heed their constitutional duty to provide advice and consent on judicial nominations is an injustice to the American people.

So far this year, the Senate has confirmed two judicial nominations—just two—in more than 4 months. By contrast, in 2007, my first year as majority leader during the Bush administration, we had already confirmed 16 nominations. If the Republican majority keeps up their current trend of ignoring judicial nominees, by the end of this year we will have confirmed five for an entire year. The last time the Senate confirmed so few Presidential nominations was, unsurprisingly, when we had a Republican majority here in the Senate under the Clinton administration. It is funny how history repeats itself.

The Federal courts depend on the Senate to do its job so justice can be dispensed in courtrooms all across the country. As of today, there are 55 Federal court vacancies, 24 of which are classified as emergencies. At the beginning of the year, there were only 12 judicial emergencies, but now it is double that—24. These vacancies create a backlog of cases, effectively delaying justice for plaintiffs and defendants, for prosecutors and the accused, and for the sitting judges who are trying their best to administer justice, but they can't do their work because they are so overwhelmed with work.

This is about more than judges and lawyers. This is about the people who come before the courts, people who have cases that have been waiting and waiting. This is about a prosecutor who is going after somebody who, in their opinion, has done something really bad. We have all heard the expression ''They are trying to make a Federal case out of it.'' The reason they say that is because Federal prosecutors do such a great job. But if they have to wait and wait until there is availability in the courtroom, witnesses disappear and it makes it much more difficult.

What has happened to our judicial system is, because of the Republicans, we are having justice delayed. This is unconscionable.

It is no wonder Republicans are scrambling for cover on judicial nominations. They are scrambling because they have been ignoring their constitutional duty.

This afternoon, the courts are going to be looked at by the Judiciary Committee. In fact, the committee is going to hold a hearing on several delayed judicial nominations. But everyone should look at Felipe Restrepo, the President's nominee to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. That is in Pennsylvania and other places—a very important circuit. Despite being nominated by the President 6 months ago, this man is not even going to be on the calendar. And this is what was done previously. The man, my friend, who is chair of the Committee on Finance, was chair of the Judiciary Committee

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

back in those days, and he did the same thing—just ignored them, didn't even schedule them for a hearing. Senator LEAHY has been to the floor many times—our past chair of the Judiciary Committee, now ranking member of the Judiciary Committee—talking about how bad that used to be, and now he is talking about how bad it is even today.

So Restrepo and others will not be on the agenda. Despite the fact that this Philadelphia-based seat is a judicial emergency, they just ignore people like Restrepo. They say: We only have a few people on the calendar. Why aren't there more on the calendar?

Because they won't schedule hearings. It is so unfair.

Now Restrepo won't be on the agenda in spite of the fact that the junior Senator from Pennsylvania said Restrepo would be a ''superb addition to the third circuit.'' Why doesn't the junior Senator from Pennsylvania talk about this man being held up by his own party? There is no reason he has been held up for 6 months other than the Republicans simply want to do everything they can to create problems for President Obama. But it is not a problem for President Obama. President Obama is doing just fine. It is a problem for the people I have talked about—the prosecutors, those who are accused of crimes, plaintiffs and defendants in civil cases, and, of course, the judges.

After having heard the statement from the junior Senator from Pennsylvania, I wonder what Pennsylvanians are thinking. Are they left wondering why this qualified judicial candidate is not moving forward and not a word from the junior Senator from Pennsylvania? Not a word.

It appears Republicans are heeding calls from the far right to retaliate against President Obama by blocking judges. Republicans couldn't defend their trying to shut down the Department of Homeland Security. They tried. They tried to block Loretta Lynch's nomination, and they couldn't get that done. So now they want to block President Obama's judges.

Our courts should be above political gamesmanship. Qualified judicial nominees such as Mr. Restrepo deserve a vote in the Senate.

President Bush's judges were considered fairly when I was the majority leader, and there is no one who can say that nominees are now being handled fairly. It is certainly not unreasonable for Democrats to expect the same measure of cooperation and fairness from Republicans that I gave them. The American judicial system should not be taking a backseat to Republican politics here in the Senate, in our Nation's Capitol. If it were only the judges they are holding up, that would be one thing, but Republican Senators are holding up basically all his nominations, with rare exception. For example, the chief law enforcement officer of this country, Loretta Lynch, who is well qualified in every way—experience, education, and character—was held up for 6 months. If what they did in her case wasn't bad enough, they now are not allowing her to have the people she needs around her. They are not allowing a vote on her No. 1 assistant. It is unfair and just too bad that justice delayed is justice denied. I am sorry to say that is where we find ourselves today.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT AND BIPARTISAN CONGRESSIONAL TRADE PRIORITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, the Senate is now nearing completion of the bipartisan Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. This is a bipartisan bill which is based on an important principle: that the American people, through the Congress they elect, deserve a say on one of the most important issues of our time.

This act would require that any agreement reached with Iran be submitted to Congress for a review. It would require that Congress be given time to hold hearings and to take a vote to approve or disapprove of the agreement before congressional sanctions could be lifted. It would give Congress more power to rapidly impose sanctions if Iran does cheat.

Many wish the bill were stronger. I don't disagree with them. But this is a piece of legislation worthy of our support. It offers the best chance we have to provide the American people and the Congress they elect with the power to weigh in on a vital issue. We will pursue other opportunities to address Iran's full-spectrum campaign to increase its sphere of influence in the broader Middle East as well.

I look forward to Senators of both parties coming together to pass this bipartisan Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act soon. Once we do, the Senate will take up another measure designed to hold the administration accountable: the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act. This bipartisan bill is about a lot more than just expanding Congress's oversight authority. It is about delivering prosperity for the middle class and supporting jobs. It is about helping American workers sell more of what they make and farmers sell more of what they grow. It is about eliminating unfair rules in other countries that discriminate against American workers and American jobs. Remember, the United States already has one of the most open markets in the world, but other countries maintain unfair barriers against American goods and services—barriers that trade agreements can reduce or even eliminate to make things fairer for America.

That is why the United States is currently involved in negotiations with Europe and several nations in the Pacific such as Japan—in order to break down barriers to goods stamped ''Made in America.'' That is the main point here. We want to knock down barriers to our goods stamped with ''Made in America'' to be sold in other countries.

One estimate shows that trade agreements with Europe and the Pacific could support as many as 1.4 million additional jobs in our country, including over 18,000 in Kentucky alone. But in order to get there, we will first need to lay down some clear and fair rules of the road for our trade negotiators. That is what the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act would do.

First, it would make Congress's priorities clear, issuing specific objectives for the administration's trade negotiators.

Second, it would mandate transparency, forcing the administration to consult regularly with Congress and stakeholders.

And it would reaffirm the supremacy of this body and require our exclusive approval before trade agreements are enacted.

The Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act is good bipartisan legislation that was endorsed overwhelmingly in the Finance Committee 20 to 6. It is good for the middle class, it is good for manufacturers, and, yes, it is very good for farmers.

Here is what one Kentucky constituent—a corn, wheat, and soybean farmer from Spencer County—recently wrote to say on the issue:

> We need free trade to compete with grain farms in South America. Dozens of people have jobs as a direct result of our small business: Input suppliers, truckers, mechanics and traders, just to name a few.

He went on.

> Help me and all these people by expanding trade and consumption globally. Our future depends on it.

Well, I couldn't agree more with that farmer from Spencer County. Our future does depend on cultivating better opportunities for American goods, American crops, and American workers in the 21st century.

I look forward to the Senate turning to the Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act very soon.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled

between the two leaders or their designees, with the majority controlling the first half.

The Senator from Iowa.

FIGHT AGAINST ISIS

Mrs. ERNST. Mr. President, as we continue to fight against ISIS and those radicalized by them, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join efforts to provide direct assistance to a critical partner in that fight—the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Yesterday, I joined Senator BARBARA BOXER of California to do just that. We introduced bipartisan legislation to provide temporary authority for the President to provide weapons directly to Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces in the fight against ISIS. This legislation builds upon a similar bipartisan House effort led by House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman ED ROYCE and Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL. The bill's 3-year authorization seeks to reduce delays in arming Peshmerga forces to fight ISIS, while still maintaining consultation with the Iraqi Government.

Beginning in the first gulf war, the Iraqi Kurds and their Peshmerga forces have played a vital role in supporting U.S. interests and a free Iraq, despite limited means of doing so.

Since August 2014, the Kurds have provided sanctuary to nearly 2 million ethnic and religious minorities in Iraqi Kurdistan, and they have been the only force to hold its ground against ISIS in northern Iraq.

Currently, by law, the United States must provide support to the Iraqi Kurds through the Iraqi central government in Baghdad, which has often not been timely or adequate in the past. This has had a negative impact on the Kurds' ability to defend Iraqi territory and provide security for those Iraqis and Syrians who have sought refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Last November, Secretary of State John Kerry said that if Chairman ROYCE wanted to change current law—to ''fix it''—that he invited him to do so. Well, that is exactly what this legislation does.

It makes it the policy of the United States to provide direct assistance to the Kurdistan Regional Government to combat ISIS. We do that because we believe that defeating ISIS is critical to maintaining an inclusive and unified Iraq and that the Iraqi Kurds are key in that goal, as well as to help to end the humanitarian crisis in Iraq through their support of over 1.6 million displaced persons from Iraq and Syria.

The legislation preserves the President's ability to notify the Iraqi Government before weapons, equipment, defense services or related training is provided to Iraqi Kurdish forces.

It ensures this emergency authorization does not construct a precedent of providing direct support to organizations other than a country or an international organization. Finally, it works toward accountability by requiring a report to Congress on U.S. weapons provided to the Iraqi Government which have ended up in the hands of Iranian controlled and supported Shia militias or foreign terrorist groups.

ISIS is deadly and determined, and Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces—our critical partner in the fight against ISIS—need U.S. weapons as quickly as possible.

This 3-year authorization would bolster efforts against ISIS, which are critical to maintaining a unified and stable Iraq and imperative to our national security interests. We simply cannot afford to have future delays at this critical moment in the battle.

I urge my colleagues to join us in supporting this much-needed legislation to arm the Iraqi Kurds in the fight against ISIS.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

AFRICAN GROWTH AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, Thursday a week ago I had the privilege, as a member of the Finance Committee, to serve on the markup of the African Growth and Opportunity Act, trade promotion authority, and trade adjustment and assistance.

This past Saturday, I was given the opportunity to give the Republican response on the radio, and I talked about trade promotion authority. I have been privileged to be ranking member and chairman at one time of the African Affairs Subcommittee. I have traveled back and forth to the continent of Africa, seen the opportunities for trade, business, and exchange with the African people.

I came to the Congress in 1999. In that year, I voted for trade promotion authority for President Bill Clinton, a Democrat. Later, I voted for trade promotion authority for President Bush, a Republican. And I proudly will vote for trade promotion authority for President Obama, a Democrat, because trade is not a partisan issue. It should not be nor should it ever be a partisan issue. It should be an issue of the American people's employment opportunities and jobs in the future. Trade is the cement that holds together the diplomacy and the agreements between countries to work together, play together, and not fight together and not have armed conflict. Trade is important to the security of the United States of America and, in fact, the rest of the world.

But I don't want to talk about trade promotion authority today. I want to talk about the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

Africa is the continent of the 21st century for the United States of America, with 1.5 billion mouths to feed, a number of votes at the United Nations, in terms of the African countries, but most importantly, it has the rarest earth minerals and the natural resources so important to us and the rest of the world. Africa is a gold mine waiting to be mined. But it is not one that we abuse, like the Chinese are abusing it. It is one where we share in prosperity.

When China goes into Africa, they bring their own workers, pay their own workers with Chinese currency, extract the rarest minerals—oil and petroleum and natural resources—and then leave.

When America goes, we invest in the human capital with PEPFAR to reduce the rate of AIDS, and we invest in the Millennium Challenge Corporation to bring jobs, opportunities, and a lack of corruption to the African people.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act is a godsend for the continent of Africa, but it is a godsend to the country of the United States of America. In the future, Africa will become our greatest trading partner if we handle it right.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act that will be before us, along with TPA, is a 10-year extension of our goal. That is important, because it gives predictability to the African countries and the United States. But, more importantly, it gives us the opportunity to file cases with the Trade Representative against those countries that are not playing by the rules.

South Africa is a perfect example. They have blocked access to their market to poultry from the United States of America, with arbitrary and capricious blockades to keep our poultry from going in.

Senator COONS from Delaware and I from Georgia, two big poultry States, have confronted the South Africans. We know that under the new AGOA, when it is passed and ratified by this Congress and by the African countries as well, it will give us the opportunity to file a petition to ask the Trade Representative to file a case to open up the South African practices. And if they are found to be not right—or wrong or corrupt—then we can block South Africa's participation in parts of the AGOA or all of the AGOA. In other words, the AGOA is going to have consequences, much as the Millennium Challenge account does.

Today, when America makes an investment in a foreign country in Africa for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, there are consequences if they don't end corruption, if they don't have private sector participation, if they don't have the rule of law governing their project. We pull the Millennium Challenge Corporation out, and they don't get another grant.

Look at the nation of Ghana, which is now working on its third grant, or the nation of Benin, which is working on its second. Both are improving their infrastructure and their ability to trade and produce with America because of a joint venture between our country and those countries.

I urge all my colleagues in the House and the Senate to adopt the African

Growth and Opportunity Act for three reasons.

No. 1, it is a 10-year predictable extension of a relationship we need to grow and prosper.

No. 2, it gives us the tools not to be abused, and it makes sure that if one of the African countries is abusing American access to their market, we can stop it and file a case with the Trade Representative.

But No. 3, it offers hope and prosperity for America in the 21st century—with 1.5 billion mouths to feed, rare earth minerals, natural resources, the power of the people and the power of the purse of the people. Africa is the continent of the 21st century for our country. Having a trade agreement with Africa is essential to seeing to it that we have a prosperous and free future.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

REBUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, yesterday, along with Senator MIKULSKI and Congressmen CUMMINGS and RUPPERSBERGER and SARBANES, I was in Baltimore with Attorney General Lynch meeting with our faith-based leaders. Attorney General Lynch also met with the mayor of Baltimore as well as the family of Freddie Gray. She also met with our Baltimore City Police Department. I wish to thank the Attorney General for her personal presence in Baltimore.

For those of us who live in Baltimore, the events over these last couple of weeks have been heartbreaking. The city we love has gone through a very difficult time. I wish to thank my colleagues who have contacted Senator MIKULSKI and me for offering their help, for offering their understanding, and for their willingness to work together so we can deal with the issues that have been raised in Baltimore—and other cities, quite frankly—in other places around the country. It is our responsibility to move forward, and the people of Baltimore understand that. We understand the national spotlight will be leaving and we are going to need to deal with the issues that are left behind.

To me, there are two pillars for the rebuilding of Baltimore and restoring confidence; one deals with public safety and justice and the other deals with rebuilding as a result of the damages that were caused and dealing with the core problems that led up to the violence in Baltimore. I believe that we in Baltimore can serve as a model for the country as to how we can make our community and our Nation stronger.

On the public safety and justice pillar, let me make some suggestions to my colleagues. I have spoken to several of my colleagues about areas where I hope we can work together in order to restore public safety and justice in our community. One of those issues is a bill I filed that would end racial profiling in America. We should have passed this bill a long time ago.

Racial profiling—profiling because of the race of a community or the ethnic background or a religion—is just wrong. It is against the values we believe in in this country. It turns communities against law enforcement. We saw that in Baltimore and we have seen it in other communities around the country where the local community just does not have confidence that the police department is working on their behalf. We heard examples of that yesterday in the roundtable discussion we had with the faith-based leaders. We have to restore that confidence. One way to do it is to make it clear that our national policy is against profiling by police.

Now, let me make it clear that if a person has some specific information about a particular crime and identifies who is responsible, that is not profiling. That is not what we are talking about. We are talking about communities in Baltimore and around the country where a person is African American and they have a much better chance of being stopped by police just because of the color of their skin. That is wrong, and it has to end in America. We need to take action in this body, the U.S. Senate, to make it clear that we will not permit racial profiling. It is not only wrong and counterproductive to neighborhoods working with police; it is costly. We have limited resources to spend in law enforcement. It is not productive in keeping communities safe, and as we have seen around the country, it can be deadly. We need to do more in this area.

I have spoken to some of my colleagues about some of the sentencing guidelines we have in this country. They are certainly discriminatory against certain communities in America. We need to take a look at our criminal justice system and at the sentencing guidelines to recognize that if a person is of a certain race or a certain religion or ethnic background, that person is much more likely to end up in prison today, even though the incidents of the violations of the law are no different in their community than in other communities in this country. We have to deal with it. This country has to deal with that.

Lastly, I have introduced legislation that would restore voting privileges for those who have completed their prison sentences, and we need to pass it. I know I have support on both sides of the aisle. We had a vote on that not too long ago, where we had almost a majority willing to move forward. I hope we can come to an agreement. I remember the opposition said it is the wrong bill. Well, let's get a bill that is the right bill to restore voting privileges to those who complete their sentences.

They can then again become a part of the community. They know we believe they have a future. They should be able to serve on our juries. There is not a person who is serving in the U.S. Senate who didn't have a second chance sometime in their life. All of us need a second chance. We can't give up on people. I think the experiences we have seen in Baltimore and around the rest of the country indicate that we all have a stake in rebuilding and giving opportunities to every person in our community.

I talked about rebuilding and dealing with the core issues that led up to the violence in Baltimore. There was a letter written to the Baltimore Sun this week that said we need a Marshall Plan for America's cities. That sort of struck me because I thought back to World War II, when Europe was burning and the United States came to the rescue of Europe and put out the fire. But we didn't stop there. We then planted the seeds for the rebuilding of Europe. We were not alone. Other countries helped us, the private community helped us, businesses helped us, and Europe was rebuilt.

So it is not enough just to restore public order on the streets of Baltimore. We have to rebuild in a way that we give opportunities for jobs for all the people in the community. We talked about what is going to happen this summer. Will there be summer jobs for our young people? Will we have permanent jobs for them? We have to work on that.

We have to work on rebuilding. We can do this. We have come together in the past. We are the strongest country in the world. The United States has been there to help people around the world. We said we would pursue efforts about ending HIV/AIDS under President Reagan, and the PEPFAR Program has changed the dynamics around the world on the spread of HIV/AIDS. It is time we used that energy here in America to help the people of this country.

So I hope we will all come together and look at the core problems and help rebuild America. It is appropriate that we talk about it the day after we passed our budget. I hope, as we get to the individual appropriations bills, that we understand the Federal Government, in partnership with the private sector, in partnership with State and local governments, can do a better job.

Today, Secretary Perez, the Secretary of Labor, is going to be in Baltimore meeting with local officials to figure out how the Federal Government can partner with us to provide resources to energize the private sector, to energize the rebirth of Baltimore. I heard a request from groups I met with about the new markets tax credit. We

need to extend those types of credits that can make a difference in our urban centers. I visited with Pastor Hickman whose church was torched—the senior housing project next door to his church was on fire last Monday night. He is rebuilding that senior housing project, but he clearly knows he needs partners from the Federal Government.

We can do a better job. I urge my colleagues to understand we can do this. We must do this. We must rebuild our cities and our communities for a better Baltimore and for the betterment of America's future.

With that, 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. 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.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 1191, which the clerk will report.

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.

Pending:

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1140, in the nature of a substitute.

Corker/Cardin amendment No. 1179 (to amendment No. 1140), to require submission of all Persian text included in the agreement.

Blunt amendment No. 1155 (to amendment No. 1140), to extend the requirement for annual Department of Defense reports on the military power of Iran.

Vitter modified amendment No. 1186 (to amendment No. 1179), to require an assessment of inadequacies in the international monitoring and verification system as they relate to a nuclear agreement with Iran.

Cotton amendment No. 1197 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 1140), of a perfecting nature.

Cotton (for Rubio) amendment No. 1198 (to amendment No. 1197), to require a certification that Iran's leaders have publically accepted Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

ENSURING TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 58, H.R. 1314, the bill we will use for trade promotion authority.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 58, H.R. 1314, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide for a right to an administrative appeal relating to adverse determinations of tax-exempt status of certain organizations.

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. SULLIVAN assumed the Chair.)

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

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

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, as were most Americans, I was very disturbed by the scenes from Baltimore that unfolded on our TV sets across America—a place not too far away from here—during the last couple of weeks. The whole idea of a young man dying in police custody, followed by the confrontations with police and the looting and burning of innocent minority-owned businesses in their own neighborhoods—these are all scenes we would expect perhaps in other countries, somewhere else around the world, but certainly not here at home. But that is what we saw and not just last week but also last summer in Ferguson, MO.

So the question arises: What can we do? What can we do about it? What can we do as individual citizens? What can we do as parents? What can we do as neighbors? And then: What can we do as Members of the U.S. Congress? Perhaps more fundamentally, how can we as a nation unite to address injustice when it occurs? What steps can we take today to help the diverse fabric of this great Nation mend for future generations?

As I indicated, I am somewhat skeptical that Washington, DC, and particularly the U.S. Congress, can wave a magic wand and solve these problems. A lot of this is going to have to be worked out at the local level by communities, by families, by houses of faith, and by civic organizations as well. Obviously, they are closest to the situation. But the Federal Government does, I believe, have a role to play that I will speak about in just a moment. I will just conclude in speaking about Baltimore by saying that our prayers, I know, are with those involved, and I know they are carefully considering how best to move forward and heal as well. But we are doing a great disservice to ourselves and to everyone else so clearly frustrated by the status quo if we isolate Baltimore or Ferguson as just individual instances of civil unrest and if we don't step back and see how they fit into the broader issue of our entire criminal justice system.

I sometimes call myself a recovering judge. I was a district judge for 6 years, which is our main trial court in Texas, and I was on the Texas Supreme Court for 7 years after that. I also served as attorney general. I mention all of that just to say that I have had some exposure in my professional life and in my adult life with our criminal justice system. I have seen how it should work, and I have seen areas where we need to get to work to reform what is broken.

I believe Congress can and must play a role—even a small role; I say small but in a significant way—by correcting injustice where we can and making it less likely that situations such as those we have seen in Ferguson or Baltimore are repeated. While we cannot singlehandedly fix broken families or broken communities or deal with situations at the local level around the country, we can contribute to efforts to remedy the basic instability of those communities and particularly we can start to make real progress in our criminal justice system to lessen the burden on those communities that are struggling with these issues.

I know the chairman of the Committee on the Judiciary, Senator GRASSLEY, is committed to doing what he can, through the Committee on the Judiciary, to pursue criminal justice reform. I am happy to say that under the leadership of Senator GRASSLEY, many efforts are already underway to consider how we can do a better job of rehabilitating offenders, increase public safety, save taxpayers some money, and help rebuild that all-important relationship between law enforcement and local communities.

One example of how we are doing that is a piece of legislation I introduced in February with the junior Senator from Rhode Island, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, called the CORRECTIONS Act, which stands for the Corrections Oversight, Recidivism Reduction, and Eliminating Costs for Taxpayers In Our National System Act. That is why we call it CORRECTIONS, because that is such a long title, but I think it says a lot about what we are trying to achieve.

With about 30 percent of the Department of Justice budget spent on detaining Federal inmates and the costs of Federal prisons skyrocketing, this bill would actually take a number of constructive steps to reform our Federal prison system and would also make better use of taxpayers' money.

For example, the CORRECTIONS Act would allow eligible offenders—mainly low-risk or medium-risk offenders; certainly not high-risk offenders—to earn additional days of good time credit by participating in programs that will help equip them for life outside of prison. Texas is sometimes considered a tough-on-crime State, and that is true. After awhile, though, we realized we

also need to be smart on crime because virtually all of the people incarcerated in our prisons will eventually someday be released. We need to begin to focus on what we can do to help them—those who want help and who will accept that help—and how we can do a better job of equipping them so they don't end up recommitting, reoffending, and ending up back in prison again. That is what this piece of legislation tries to do.

So the CORRECTIONS Act allows offenders to earn additional days of earned time credit by participating in programs that will prepare them for life outside of prison. Low-risk offenders, for example, could earn up to 10 days of earned time credit for every month in which they are successfully completing programs such as drug rehab, education, work programs, faith-based training, and life skills courses. It is astonishing. I was in East Texas at one part of the Texas prison system where I got to observe some of the prisoners, some of the inmates there attending some of these types of courses. It is shocking how poorly equipped so many of these inmates are for life outside of prison and why it is so important that we try to help those who will accept the help and who want the help to prepare for life outside so they don't end up back inside.

This legislation would allow these eligible prisoners to use this good time credit to spend the final portion of their sentences in home confinement or a halfway house. Half-way houses have worked over time as a transition from prison to life in communities, and they work very well. Also, technology can even allow home confinement for nonviolent, low-risk prisoners who have earned the right to a less confining circumstance on the backhand of their sentence. This may sound like a little thing, but it is important for several reasons.

First of all, inmates need to learn valuable skills that can transfer to a lifetime of community engagement, instead of returning to a lifetime of crime. Second, it allows them to reconnect sooner with their families and the communities that need them most. Finally, this makes financial sense. It costs about $5,000 a year to keep a low-risk prisoner in home confinement, and it cost $30,000 a year to keep them in prison.

I am not one of those who say, well, we just need to save money, so let's throw public safety to the wind. That is not what this does. We focus first on public safety as we must, but we also try to be smart about it—not just tough on crime. We try to be smart on crime. The great thing is that we actually have States such as my State that have experimented with this sort of approach with great success. Texas has actually, over recent years, closed three prison systems. Crime has not spiked, and, in fact, many inmates who have taken advantage of this program have become resocialized and integrated back into society. So we actually know. Rather than the Federal Government trying to mandate for the entire Nation and adhering to some new experiment, we actually have the laboratories of democracy—otherwise known as the States—under our Federal system, trying things out to see if they will work, and we learn from that if we can. This is an area where we can learn, and we should.

So I look forward to working with Chairman GRASSLEY and our members of the Judiciary Committee to get the CORRECTIONS Act passed. The last time it was considered, last year, it passed overwhelmingly on a bipartisan basis through the Judiciary Committee.

As I said, fortunately, Chairman GRASSLEY has made this a priority, and he has put together a bipartisan effort to look at some other consensus ideas that we might add to this prison reform bill, such as sentencing reform. Honestly, that is a little bit more controversial, because I am not one for just cutting sentences on the front-end indiscriminately or arbitrarily. We need to make sure we are smart about sentencing reform. I think this consensus-building effort that Chairman GRASSLEY has undertaken will help us get in the right place. There are a number of targeted sentencing reforms I think we could all support to help address failures in our criminal justice system.

So we should not let the divisive, controversial proposals stand in the way of making real bipartisan progress on the issue of criminal justice reform. But this is sort of a chronic problem we have had around here when we try to do comprehensive everything. When we try to do comprehensive everything, we make mistakes. We also make it almost impossible to do, because there are so many different moving parts. It is complicated, and many people remain skeptical about its chances of succeeding. But when you have something such as the CORRECTIONS Act, which brings to the Federal level the successful pilot programs that have been undertaken in the States, it just makes sense that this should be the place we should start. Indeed, that is why it has such broad bipartisan support.

In order to make sure that the conversation about criminal justice reform extends to issues beyond prison reform and sentencing, there is another step the junior Senator from Michigan, the senior Senator from South Carolina, and I introduced just last week. This is another idea, because we realize the time that Congress has in our capacity, both on the floor and in committee, to deal with this complex topic in a thoughtful and deliberate way. So we need some help, and what we have introduced is something we call the National Criminal Justice Commission Act, which would create a commission to provide a top-down review of our entire criminal justice system.

After completing a review of the system, this bipartisan commission would work for a unanimous recommendation on how to strengthen it. Congress could—much as it did with the 9/11 Commission—take bits and pieces of it. We wouldn't need to embrace all of it—or any of it, for that matter. But at least we would have the good and thoughtful work product of some experts who would be able to make recommendations to us in a number of areas.

I was just at a meeting where somebody asked about the overcriminalization of a regulatory state, and that is a real problem. The fact that you can commit a crime without even intending to commit a crime if you happen to violate some regulation is a real problem. There are a number of areas I think we need to look at. As our attention was riveted by what happened in Baltimore and Ferguson, I think those incidents are symptoms of a much bigger challenge, and I think this commission would help us focus on building consensus and producing actionable results.

Importantly, the continuing dialogue and commission process will help us strengthen the relationship between law enforcement and communities and help us to build on consensus items such as the CORRECTIONS Act. I think the CORRECTIONS Act is a good place to start, and the National Criminal Justice Act, the consensus-based sentencing reform—all of these measures will help us improve our criminal justice system. It will help bring down some of the tension we witnessed across the Nation, and help us, again, be smart when it comes to dealing with our criminal justice system.

I hope my colleagues will join me in this important effort. I think this is the kind of big idea of a big challenge which will resonate with the people we represent in our States and across the country. When they see us coming together on a bipartisan basis and actually trying to solve problems, I think they feel that we are finally listening to them and doing what we should be doing here in the Senate.

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

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

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

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

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, for the past couple of weeks, we have been talking about very important things on the floor of the Senate. One of the most

important has been the possible deal with Iran over the country's nuclear program. I believe an agreement that could stop Iran's efforts to get nuclear weapons would be enormously significant. Making sure the American people are involved in this process is also extremely important. There is bipartisan agreement on both of those things. We are still debating the Iran sanctions review act simply because it is so important. The debate has been going on.

This bill goes a long way toward protecting the right of the American people to have a say on any deal and the right of Congress to review the specifics of that deal. I know there are Senators who have ideas for how to make this bill even better. I had an amendment last week, and I appreciated the chance to debate the amendment and to have a vote on it. That is the important part of this process. It is a big reason why the Senate has been so much more productive, I believe, this year than it was under the previous majority leader.

Under Republican leadership, Senators of both parties have gotten back the right to really represent our constituents—something we were elected to do. We have gotten back the right to work through committees, the right to offer amendments and to make our case on the floor.

Republicans and Democrats agree that the bill before us right now is important. Congressional review of any Iranian deal is absolutely essential. We also agree that a nuclear-armed Iran would be a global threat to everyone everywhere. Republicans and Democrats in the Senate know it would be better to have no deal at all than to have a bad deal. Even President Obama has said that.

The concern many Americans have right now is that the deal the President seems prepared to sign is nowhere near strong enough. When I go home to Wyoming every weekend, as I did this past weekend, the people I talk with don't believe Iran has earned the right to be trusted. They are very concerned that the President is ready to sign a very bad deal. I think those concerns are absolutely justified. Iran has avoided scrutiny of its nuclear program for years. What has happened to make the President think all of a sudden that Iran will come clean? I have not seen anything happen out there.

President Obama and his team have been too willing to negotiate without conditions and too hesitant to take the strong stand that I believe must be taken. The President never wanted these economic sanctions in the first place. He said the sanctions would ruin his chances of negotiating a deal at all. Remember that? Well, Congress insisted anyway. Those sanctions did not drive Iran away; it is the sanctions themselves that brought Iran to the negotiating table. Now the President admits that the sanctions, which he opposed, were a good idea. He still wanted to get rid of them as quickly as possible.

The President wanted members of his administration to do all of the negotiating in private, and he wanted to decide by himself what is best. Republicans and Democrats both said that Congress needs to review any deal before getting rid of the sanctions—the sanctions imposed by Congress. We said that he does not have the right to make such important decisions about sanctions imposed by Congress. He does not have the right to eliminate them by himself.

It is very important that we keep asking questions about any potential deal, questions such as, what exactly is the Obama administration agreeing to on sanctions relief? I mean, it is interesting. Iran has said that the final deal must remove all of the economic sanctions on day No. 1. The administration has said that the sanctions will be lifted in phases and only if Iran complies with different steps along the way. Well, which is it? There is a big difference between what the President is saying and what Iran is saying.

The administration already gave Iran sanction relief from sanctions under the interim agreement in 2013. We saw how that turned out. It has given Iran access to $12 billion in much needed hard currency since then. The Obama administration has been unclear on exactly how much actual additional currency it plans to release under the final agreement. Tens of billions? I heard a number as high as over $100 billion with sanctions relief. Well, once the rest of the sanctions are lifted, how can we make sure Iran does not use the money to support terrorists who want to attack us, who want to attack America? Iran has a long history of supporting terrorists such as Hamas and Hezbollah. Is that where the money is going to go? I do not believe Iran is going to use the money to build roads or hospitals or schools.

What about Iran's plans for their nuclear program? Now Iran says they want to do nuclear research for peaceful purposes. Have our negotiators made any progress on holding Iran to its word on that specific point?

Back in November of 2013, Iran signed a framework agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency that was supposed to address the possible military aspects of Iran's nuclear program. It named 12 specific areas where Iran was going to address those concerns. The Director General of that organization, the International Atomic Energy Agency, now says that Iran has addressed only 1 of the 12 it promised to address—only 1 of 12 things it was supposed to do under the last deal from 2013. What has changed since then to make President Obama and the Obama administration think Iran is going to comply with this deal? Why should we suddenly trust Iran now? What is there in the agreement that will force Iran to do what it says it will do?

Congress needs to keep a very close eye on any final agreement. Whatever happens, a deal with Iran must be enforceable, it must be verifiable, and it must be accountable.

We know President Obama is looking to finish out his time by polishing his legacy. Congress needs to make sure this deal is about protecting America and protecting Americans, not protecting the President's diplomatic legacy. The stakes are too high. So far, there are too many unanswered questions.

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

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

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I rise to speak on my amendment to the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, to bolster Congress's role in monitoring Iran's ballistic missile and defensive weapons activity. I hope this amendment is agreed to. It has been written, rewritten, and rewritten again to try to fit the concerns of the majority, the minority, everybody concerned.

My amendment simply requires the President to make an addition in his semiannual report to Congress, including to the Finance Committee, of which I am a senior member, on any weapons sold, leased or lent by any country to Iran, which are currently prohibited under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929—and sophisticated air defense systems.

In 2010, the United Nations Security Council, including Russia, a permanent member of the security council, passed a new round of sanctions on Iran's nuclear program. Resolution 1929 prohibits Iran from investing abroad in uranium mining, related nuclear technologies or nuclear-capable ballistic missile technology, and prohibits Iran from launching ballistic missiles, including on its own territory.

That same year, Russia finalized a weapons sale with Iran on the S–300, much publicized today—the S–300 air defense system, which is not currently sanctioned by the United Nations. However, to provide a working partnership and cooperation, then-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev placed a halt on the sale. Unfortunately, the situation and agreement has now changed dramatically. Today, we are contending with President Vladimir Putin.

Sophisticated air defense systems, such as the Russian-produced S–300, have the capability of shielding Iranian missile facilities from oversight and airstrikes. This poses a real threat to global security, not to mention peace in the Middle East and, as a consequence, all throughout the world.

To prevent this threat, we must ensure our intelligence community is doing everything in its power and capability to ensure the greatest threat in

an unstable region, Iran, is not getting help from nations looking to boost their economy through weapons sales, regardless of the impact.

News reports now confirm Russia is preparing to sell Iran billions in sophisticated weaponry. News reports are one thing. However, it is imperative our intelligence community keeps the administration and the Congress briefed fully and on a timely basis on this national security threat.

One month ago, reports revealed Russia's intention to sell the S–300 to Iran. I was alarmed when I asked my colleagues what they knew about the immediacy of this sale before it was made public in news reports—more specifically, members of the Select Committee on Intelligence—and it was apparent no one in the Senate had been fully briefed.

I cannot imagine any of my colleagues not wanting to know who is and who may be planning to arm Iran or why the administration would not be willing to share this information with the Congress—and know it themselves. Our intelligence community can and surely must do better.

By requiring President Obama, and future Presidents as well, to provide Congress with timely, actionable intelligence on Iran's weapons systems, my amendment ensures that Congress can make informed decisions with regard to our national security.

For Congress to support an agreement, Congress must be kept informed. If a nuclear agreement with Iran has even the slightest chance of preventing a nuclear Iran, then we must be vigilant, at least to ensure that other nations are not arming Iran and putting our allies in the region—Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, and, more especially, Israel—at increased risk.

My amendment strengthens this bill by ensuring Congress obtains oversight and intelligence on every country, especially Russia, regarding weapons sales to Iran.

So I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to consider this amendment and to join me in supporting increased oversight on all of Iran's weapons activities.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for up to 20 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I am here for the 98th time to urge this body to stop sleepwalking through history. Climate change is real, it is already harming the United States, and it is time for the Senate to wake up and address this threat.

The science that links carbon pollution to global warming is nothing new. It dates back to President Lincoln. In the century and a half since, we have measured changes in the climate that scientists virtually unanimously say are caused by our burning of fossil fuels. Atmospheric carbon is now measured at 400 parts per million—higher than ever in our species' history. Our oceans are warming and acidifying. Those are measurements again. We are experiencing the warmest years ever recorded. More measurements. And rising seas are lapping at our shores. In Rhode Island, we measure nearly 10 inches of sea level rise since the 1930s. These are all measurements, not projections. These are facts, not theories.

If we do not act soon to cut carbon pollution, we can reasonably expect the consequences to be dire. Yet, the fossil fuel industry continues its crafty, cynical campaign of denial and delay. Big Coal, Oil and Natural Gas, and related industries, such as the Koch brothers' companies, profit by offloading the costs of their carbon pollution onto the rest of us. They traffic in products that put health and safety at risk, and they don't tell the truth about their products. Sound familiar? Well, it should because the fossil fuel industry is using a familiar playbook, one perfected by the tobacco industry. Following this same playbook, Big Tobacco fought for more than four decades to bury the truth about the health effects of its product.

Well, the government has a playbook, too. It is called RICO, the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act. The elements of a civil racketeering case are simple. The government must allege four things: The defendants No. 1 conducted No. 2 an enterprise No. 3 through a pattern No. 4 of racketeering activity. Conducting means everything from directing to aiding and abetting the activity. An enterprise can be any form of association or a common scheme. Pattern means continuity of the scheme and—for civil RICO particularly—the prospect of ongoing conduct. Racketeering activity simply means a violation of designated Federal laws, including the Federal mail fraud and wire fraud statutes.

In 1999, the U.S. Department of Justice filed a civil RICO lawsuit against the major tobacco companies and their associated industry groups. The government's complaint was clear: The tobacco companies ''have engaged in and executed—and continue to engage in and execute—a massive 50-year scheme to defraud the public, including consumers of cigarettes, in violation of RICO.''

Big Tobacco spent millions of dollars and years of litigation fighting the government, but finally, through discovery, government lawyers were able to peel back the layers of deceit and see what the big tobacco companies really knew all along about cigarettes.

In 2006, Judge Gladys Kessler of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia decided the case. In a nearly 1,700-page opinion, she found the tobacco companies' fraudulent campaign amounted to a racketeering enterprise. According to the court:

> Defendants coordinated significant aspects of their public relations, scientific, legal, and marketing activity in furtherance of the shared objective—to . . . maximize industry profits by preserving and expanding the market for cigarettes through a scheme to deceive the public.

The parallels between what the tobacco industry did and what the fossil fuel industry is doing now are striking. In fact, we can go back and reread those judicial findings about tobacco, substitute the words ''fossil fuel,'' and exactly describe what the fossil fuel industry is up to. That is without the benefit of discovery, where litigants get to demand the production of documents and take the depositions of potential witnesses and require answers under oath. What a treasure trove that would produce.

We know that the prospect of action on climate change is a business risk for fossil fuel companies. Serious action on climate—a transition to clean, low-carbon energy—threatens to cut into polluters' market and profits. The match between the fossil fuel industry and Big Tobacco is pretty good in terms of the business risk presented if the public were to be really aware of the harm. They have a motive to deceive.

We know that in the case of both tobacco and fossil fuels, the industry joined together in a common enterprise and coordinated strategy. Remember the finding in the tobacco case that defendants coordinated significant aspects of their public relations, scientific, legal and marketing activity in furtherance of the shared objective. How about the fossil fuel industry?

In 1998, as the Clinton administration was building support for international climate action under the Kyoto Protocol, another group was up to something else. That group was the fossil fuel industry, its trade associations, and the conservative policy institutes that often do the industry's dirty work with clean faces. They met at the Washington office of the American Petroleum Institute. Their plan? To organize a scheme to create doubt about climate change and to undermine public support for American participation in the Kyoto agreement.

A memo from that meeting was leaked to the New York Times. The memo documented the polluters' plans for a multimillion-dollar public relations campaign to undermine climate science. What was the project's goal? To ensure that—and I will quote the memo here—''a majority of the American Public, including industry leadership, recognizes that significant uncertainties exist in climate science, and

therefore raises questions among those (e.g. Congress) who chart the future U.S. course on global climate change.''

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have the memo printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

If anything, the fossil fuel industry's climate denial scheme has grown even bigger and more complex than Big Tobacco's. The shape of the fossil fuel industry's denial operation has been documented by, among others, Drexel University Professor Robert Brulle. Brulle's follow-the-money analysis shows how the fossil fuel industry perpetuates climate denial through a complex network of organizations and funding that is designed to obscure the fossil fuel industry's fingerprints. It is quite a beast.

This is the climate denial beast. Polluter money and dark money are its lifeblood. PR front groups are its organs, and lies and obfuscation are its work. Look at the complex interconnection of the beast's major players. The green diamonds are the big funders—the Koch-affiliated foundations, the Scaife-affiliated Foundations, the American Petroleum Institute. The blue circles are the who's who of tea party, libertarian, and front groups who have wittingly or not become the flacks for the fossil fuel industry—the Heartland Institute, the Hoover Institution, the Heritage Foundation, the Cato Institute, and the Mercatus Center, to name just a few. Think how much trouble someone must have gone to to set all this in play. Think how important the purpose would have to be to them to take all that trouble.

What was the purpose of this network? To quote directly from Dr. Brulle's report, it was ''a deliberate and organized effort to misdirect the public discussion and distort the public's understanding of climate.'' That sounds a lot like the judge's findings in the tobacco racketeering case: ''Defendants have intentionally maintained and coordinated their fraudulent position on addiction and nicotine as an important part of their overall efforts to influence public opinion and persuade people that smoking is not dangerous.''

The coordinated tactics of this network, Dr. Brulle's report states, ''span a wide range of activities, including political lobbying, contributions to political candidates, and a large number of communication and media efforts that aim at undermining climate science.'' Compare that to the findings in the tobacco case: ''Defendants coordinated significant aspects of their public relations, scientific, legal, and marketing activity in furtherance of the shared objective.''

So that is the beast, and big money flows through it.

Brulle's report chronicles that from 2003 to 2010, 140 foundations made 5,299 grants totaling $558 million to 91 organizations that actively oppose climate action. For decades, the tobacco industry did the same thing. In the tobacco case, Judge Kessler found that the ''defendants took steps to fund research designed and controlled to generate industry favorable results, and to suppress adverse research results.''

Look at the recent affair with Dr. Willie Soon, a scientist who consistently publishes papers downplaying the role of carbon dioxide emissions in causing climate change. Through the Freedom of Information Act, we know that Dr. Soon has received more than half of his funding from oil and electric utility coal interests. His fossil fuel backers include the American Petroleum Institute, ExxonMobil, the Charles G. Koch Foundation, and the Southern Company. Most recently, he has been getting his funding through Donors Trust, the dark money identity-laundering operation that anonymizes corporate and polluter money. By the way, the biggest mark in the whole beast is right there, and that is Donors Trust.

The manipulation of science is pretty egregious. Some of Dr. Soon's research contracts gave his industry backers a chance to see what he was doing before he published it. Some of these contracts even had clauses that promised Dr. Soon's fossil fuel backers would receive ''an advance written copy of proposed publications...for comment and input.'' The New York Times reported that in correspondence with his fossil fuel funders, Dr. Soon referred to the scientific papers he produced as ''deliverables.'' Deliverable, indeed.

The fossil fuel industry has had to work against mounting evidence to cover up the risks for as long as possible; The same with Big Tobacco. Again, to quote Judge Kessler's decision in the tobacco case, ''Despite overwhelming evidence from a wide range of disciplines including statistics and epidemiology, pathology and chemistry, clinical observation and animal experimentation, as well as their own internal research, Defendants continued to claim 'no proof' and continued to attempt to create doubt about the scientific findings.''

The Federal racketeering complaint opened up discovery into the files of the tobacco companies and showed finally and unequivocally that for decades the tobacco industry knew about smoking's harm while it continued public relations campaigns to deny that smoking was harmful. Discovery is a powerful tool. Sanctions for hiding evidence from a court are steep. So time and again, it is discovery that finds the real smoking guns in corporate records. Remember when New York's attorney general discovered internal emails from analysts at Merrill Lynch that showed the company promoting stocks to its customers that they internally described as ''junk''?

The fossil fuel industry is engaged in a massive effort to deny climate science and deceive the American public. They have been at it for years, and the clearer the science becomes, the harder the polluters fight. Gary Wills used to work for William F. Buckley at the National Review and recently described this effort as ''their kept scientists, their rigged conferences, their sycophantic beneficiaries [and] and their bought publicists.'' Imagine what a little discovery into the beast would reveal about the schemes and mischief of the climate denial apparatus, about what they are telling each other in private while they scheme to deceive the public.

The truth will eventually come to light. It always does. But here in the Senate, we should not wait for a court case before taking action. The evidence is clear. We have a legislative responsibility to address climate change and to do that now. The facts are clear as day right before our eyes, despite the fossil fuel industry's efforts to deceive and deny, despite their persistent big political spending and bullying. We just have to wake up to the facts and to our duty.

I yield the floor.

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

The material below contains a memo by the API from April 1998.

MEMO

From: Joe Walker
To: Global Climate Science Team
Cc: Michelle Ross; Susan Moya
Subject: Draft Global Climate Science Communications plan

As promised, attached is the draft Global Climate Science Communications Plan that we developed during our workshop Last Friday. Thanks especially to those of you who participated in the workshop, and In particular to John Adams for his very helpful thoughts following up our meeting, and Alan Caudill for turning around the notes from our workshop so quickly.

Please review the pan and get back to me with your comments as soon as possible.

As those of you who were at the workshop know, we have scheduled a follow-up team meeting to review the plan in person on Friday, April 17, form 1 to 3 p.m. at the API headquarters. After that, we hope to have a ''Plan champion'' help us move it forward to potential funding sources, perhaps starting with the global climate ''Coordinating Council.'' That will be an item for discussion on April 17.

Again, thanks for your hard work on this project. Please e-mail me, call or fax me with your comments. Thanks.

Regards,

JOE WALKER.

GLOBAL CLIMATE SCIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

ACTION PLAN

SITUATION ANALYSIS

In December 1997, the Clinton Administration agreed in Kyoto, Japan, to a treaty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to prevent what it purports to be changes in the global climate caused by the continuing release of such emissions. The so-called green house gases have many sources. For example, water vapor is a greenhouse gas. But the Clinton Administration's action, if eventually approved by the U.S. Senate, will mainly affect emissions from fossil fuel (gasoline, coal, natural gas, etc.) combustion.

As the climate change debate has evolved, those who oppose action have argued mainly

that signing such a treaty will place the U.S. at a competitive disadvantage with most other nations, and will be extremely expensive to implement. Much of the cost will be borne by American consumers who will pay higher prices for most energy and transportation.

The climate change theory being advanced by the treaty supporters is based primarily on forecasting models with a very high degree of uncertainty. In fact, its not known for sure whether (a) climate change actually is occurring, or (b) if it is, whether humans really have any influence on it.

Despite these weaknesses in scientific understanding, those who oppose the treaty have done little to build a case against precipitous action on climate change based on the scientific uncertainty. As a result, The Clinton Administration and environmental groups essentially have had the field to themselves. They have conducted an effective public relations program to convince the American public that the climate is changing, we humans are at fault, and we must do something about it before calamity strikes.

The environmental groups know they have been successful. Commenting after the Kyoto negotiations about recent media coverage of climate change, Tom Wathen, executive vice president of the National Environmental Trust, wrote:

''. . . As important as the extent of the coverage was the tone and tenor of it. In a change from just six months ago, most media stories no longer presented global warming as just a theory over which reasonable scientists could differ. Most stories described predictions of global warming as the position of the overwhelming number of mainstream scientists. That the environmental community had, to a great extent, settled the scientific issue with the U.S. media is the other great success that began perhaps several months earlier but became apparent during Kyoto.''

Because the science underpinning the global climate change theory has not been challenged effectively in the media or through other vehicles reaching the American public, there is widespread ignorance, which works in favor of the Kyoto treaty and against the best interests of the United States. Indeed, the public has been highly receptive to the Clinton Administrations plans. There has been little, if any, public resistance or pressure applied to Congress to reject the treaty, except by those ''inside the Beltway'' with vested interests.

Moreover, from the political viewpoint, it is difficult for the United States to oppose the treaty solely on economic grounds, valid as the economic issues are. It makes it too easy for others to portray the United States as putting preservation of its own lifestyle above the greater concerns of mankind. This argument, in turn, forces our negotiators to make concessions that have not been well thought through, and in the end may do far more harm than good. This is the process that unfolded at Kyoto, and is very likely to be repeated in Buenos Aires in November 1998.

The advocates of global warming have been successful on the basis of skillfully misrepresenting the science and the extent of agreement on the science, while industry and its partners ceded the science and fought on the economic issues. Yet if we can show that science does not support the Kyoto treaty—which most true climate scientists believe to be the case—this puts the United States in a stronger moral position and frees its negotiators from the need to make concessions as a defense against perceived selfish economic concerns.

Upon this tableau, the Global Climate Science Communications Team (GCSCT) developed an action plan to inform the American public that science does not support the precipitous actions Kyoto would dictate, thereby providing a climate for the right policy decisions to be made. The team considered results from a new public opinion survey in developing the plan.

Charlton Research's survey of 1,100 ''informed Americans'' suggests that while Americans currently perceive climate change to be a great threat, public opinion is open enough to change on climate science. When informed that ''some scientists believe there is not enough evidence to suggest that [what is called global climate change] is a long-term change due to human behavior and activities,'' 58 percent of those surveyed said they were more likely to oppose the Kyoto treaty. Moreover, half the respondents harbored doubts about climate science.

GCSCT members who contributed to the development of the plan are A. John Adams, John Adams Associates; Candace Crandall, Science and Environmental Policy Project; David Rothbard, Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow; Jeffrey Salmon, The Marshall Institute; Lee Garrigan, environmental issues Council; Lynn Bouchey and Myron Ebell, Frontiers of Freedom; Peter Cleary, Americans for Tax Reform; Randy Randol, Exxon Corp.; Robert Gehri, The Southern Company; Sharon Kneiss, Chevron Corp; Steve Milloy, The Advancement of Sound Science Coalition; and Joseph Walker, American Petroleum Institute.

The action plan is detailed on the following pages.

PROJECT GOAL

A majority of the American public, including industry leadership, recognizes that significant uncertainties exist in climate science, and therefore raises questions among those (e.g. Congress) who chart the future U.S. course on global climate change.

Progress will be measured toward the goal. A measurement of the public's perspective on climate science will be taken before the plan is launched, and the same measurement will be taken at one or more as-yet-to-be-determined intervals as the plan is implemented.

VICTORY WILL BE ACHIEVED WHEN

Average citizens ''understand'' (recognize) uncertainties in climate science; recognition of uncertainties becomes part of the ''conventional wisdom''

Media ''understands'' (recognizes) uncertainties in climate science

Media coverage reflects balance on climate science and recognition of the validity of viewpoints that challenge the current ''conventional wisdom''

Industry senior leadership understands uncertainties in climate science, making them stronger ambassadors to those who shape climate policy

Those promoting the Kyoto treaty on the basis of extent science appears to be out of touch with reality.

CURRENT REALITY

Unless ''climate change'' becomes a nonissue, meaning that the Kyoto proposal is defeated and there are no further initiatives to thwart the threat of climate change, there may be no moment when we can declare victory for our efforts. It will be necessary to establish measurements for the science effort to track progress toward achieving the goal and strategic success.

STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

I. National Media Relations Program: Develop and implement a national media relations program to inform the media about uncertainties in climate science; to generate national, regional and local media coverage on the scientific uncertainties, and thereby educate and inform the public, stimulating them to raise questions with policy makers.

Tactics: These tactics will be undertaken between now and the next climate meeting in Buenos Aires/Argentina, in November 1998, and will be continued thereafter, as appropriate. Activities will be launched as soon as the plan is approved, funding obtained, and the necessary resources (e.g., public relations counsel) arranged and deployed. In all cases, tactical implementation will be fully integrated with other elements of this action plan, most especially Strategy II (National Climate Science Data Center).

Identify, recruit and train a team of five independent scientists to participate in media outreach. These will be individuals who do not have a long history of visibility and/or participation in the climate change debate. Rather, this team will consist of new faces who will add their voices to those recognized scientists who already are vocal.

Develop a global climate science information kit for media including peer-reviewed papers that undercut the ''conventional wisdom'' on climate science. This kit also will include understandable communications, including simple fact sheets that present scientific uncertainties in language that the media and public can understand.

Conduct briefings by media-trained scientists for science writers in the top 20 media markets, using the information kits. Distribute the information kits to daily newspapers nationwide with offer of scientists to brief reporters at each paper. Develop, disseminate radio news releases featuring scientists nationwide, and offer scientists to appear on radio talk shows across the country.

Produce, distribute a steady stream of climate science information via facsimile and e-mail to science writers around the country.

Produce, distribute via syndicate and directly to newspapers nationwide a steady stream of op-ed columns and letters to the editor authored by scientists.

Convince one of the major news national TV journalists (e.g., John Stossel) to produce a report examining the scientific underpinnings of the Kyoto treaty.

Organize, promote and conduct through grassroots organizations a series of campus/community workshops/debates on climate science in 10 most important states during the period mid-August through October, 1998.

Consider advertising the scientific uncertainties in select markets to support national, regional and local (e.g., workshops/debates), as appropriate.

NATIONAL MEDIA PROGRAM BUDGET—$600,000 PLUS PAID ADVERTISING

II. Global Climate Science Information Source: Develop and implement a program to inject credible science and scientific accountability into the global climate debate, thereby raising questions about and undercutting the ''prevailing scientific wisdom.'' The strategy will have the added benefit of providing a platform for credible, constructive criticism of the opposition's position on the science.

Tactics: As with the National Media Relations Program, these activities will be undertaken between now and the next climate meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in November 1998, and will continue thereafter. Initiatives will be launched as soon as the plan is approved, funding obtained, and the necessary resources arranged and deployed.

Establish a Global Climate Science Data Center. The GCSDC will be established in Washington as a non-profit educational foundation with an advisory board of respected climate scientists. It will be staffed initially with professionals on loan from various companies and associations with a major interest in the climate issue. These executives

will bring with them knowledge and experience in the following areas.

Overall history of climate research and the IPCC process;

Congressional relations and knowledge of where individual Senators stand on the climate issue;

Knowledge of key climate scientists and where they stand;

Ability to identify and recruit as many as 20 respected climate scientists to serve on the science advisory board;

Knowledge and expertise in media relations and with established relationships with science and energy writers, columnists and editorial writers;

Expertise in grassroots organization; and

Campaign organization and administration.

The GCSDC will be led by dynamic senior executive with a major personal commitment to the goals of the campaign and easy access to business leaders at the CEO level. The Center will be run on a day-to-day basis by an executive director with responsibility for ensuring targets are met. The Center will be funded at a level that will permit it to succeed, including funding for research contracts that may be deemed appropriate to fill gaps in climate science (e.g., a complete scientific critique of the IPCC research and its conclusions).

The GCSDC will become a one-stop resource on climate science for members of Congress, the media, industry and all others concerned. It will be in constant contact with the best climate scientists and ensure that their findings and views receive appropriate attention. It will provide them with the logistical and moral support they have been lacking. In short, it will be a sound scientific alternative to the IPCC. Its functions will include:

Providing as an easily accessible database (including a website) of all mainstream climate science information.

Identifying and establishing cooperative relationships with all major scientists whose research in this field supports our position.

Establishing cooperative relationships with other mainstream scientific organizations (e.g., meteorologists, geophysicists) to bring their perspectives to bear on the debate, as appropriate.

Developing opportunities to maximize the impact of scientific views consistent with ours with Congress, the media and other key audiences.

Monitoring and serving as and early warning system for scientific developments with the potential to impact on the climate science debate, pro and con.

Responding to claims from the scientific alarmists and media.

Providing grants for advocacy on climate science, as deemed appropriate.

GLOBAL CLIMATE SCIENCE DATA CENTER BUDGET—$5,000,000 (SPREAD OVER TWO YEARS MINIMUM)

III. National Direct Outreach and Education: Develop and implement a direct outreach program to inform and educate members of Congress, state officials, industry leadership, and school teachers/students about uncertainties in climate science. This strategy will enable Congress, state officials and industry leaders will be able to raise such serious questions about the Kyoto treaty's scientific underpinnings that American policy-makers not only will refuse to endorse it, they will seek to prevent progress toward implementation at the Buenos Aires meeting in November or through other ways. Informing teachers/students about uncertainties in climate science will begin to erect a barrier against further efforts to impose Kyoto-like measures in the future.

Tactics: Informing and educating members of Congress, state officials and industry leaders will be undertaken as soon as the plan is approved, funding is obtained, and the necessary resources are arrayed and will continue through Buenos Aires and for the foreseeable future. The teachers/students outreach program will be developed and launched in early 1999. In all cases, tactical implementation will be fully integrated with other elements of this action plan.

Develop and conduct through the Global Climate Science Data Center science briefings for Congress, governors, state legislators, and industry leaders by August 1998.

Develop information kits on climate science targeted specifically at the needs of government officials and industry leaders, to be used in conjunction with and separately from the in-person briefings to further disseminate information on climate science uncertainties and thereby arm these influentials to raise serious questions on the science issue.

Organize under the GCSDC a ''Science Education Task Group'' that will serve as the point of outreach to the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) and other influential science education organizations. Work with NSTA to develop school materials that present a credible, balanced picture of climate science for use in classrooms nationwide.

Distribute educational materials directly to schools and through grassroots organizations of climate science partners (companies, organizations that participate in this effort).

NATIONAL DIRECT OUTREACH PROGRAM BUDGET—$300,000

IV. Funding/Fund Allocation: Develop and implement program to obtain funding, and to allocate funds to ensure that the program is carried out effectively.

Tactics: This strategy will be implemented as soon as we have the go-ahead to proceed.

Potential funding sources were identified as American Petroleum Institute (API) and its members; Business Round Table (BRT) and its members, Edison Electric Institute (EEI) and its members; Independent Petroleum Association of America (IPAA) and its members; and the National Mining Association (NMA) and its members.

Potential fund allocators were identified as the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow (CFACT), Competitive Enterprise Institute, Frontiers of Freedom and The Marshall Institute.

TOTAL FUNDS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT PROGRAM THROUGH NOVEMBER 1998—$2,000,000 (A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF FUNDING FOR THE GCSDC WILL BE DEFERRED UNTIL 1999 AND BEYOND)

MEASUREMENTS

Various metrics will be used to track progress. These measurements will have to be determined in fleshing out the action plan and may include:

Baseline public/government official opinion surveys and periodic follow-up surveys on the percentage of Americans and government officials who recognize significant uncertainties in climate science.

Tracking the percent of media articles that raise questions about climate science.

Number of Members of Congress exposed to our materials on climate science.

Number of communications on climate science received by Members of Congress from their constituents.

Number of radio talk show appearances by scientists questioning the ''prevailing wisdom'' on climate science.

Number of school teachers/students reached with our information on climate science.

Number of science writers briefed and who report upon climate science uncertainties.

Total audience exposed to newspaper, radio, television coverage of science uncertainties.

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

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AMENDMENT NO. 1186

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, I have an amendment to the Iran sanctions bill which is pending. This is amendment No. 1186. I come to the floor to attempt to modify my own amendment simply by taking out section 2 of the amendment. I have given this proposed modification of my own amendment to all of the managers of the bill, majority and minority. They have had it for several hours, and I have discussed it with the managers. All I am seeking is to be able to modify the language of my own amendment, which is already pending. With that in mind, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of H.R. 1191, the Iran sanctions bill, that I be allowed to modify my amendment No. 1186 with the changes that are at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. CARDIN. Reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, as Senator VITTER has pointed out, right now we are on the motion to proceed to the trade bill. We are not on the Iran sanctions bill. There are continuing discussions taking place on the Iran sanctions bill between Senator CORKER and me in an effort to try to get as many of the amendments that we have been working on cleared as possible. Senator VITTER's request could very well at this point interfere with the maximum number of amendments being considered, and for that reason I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, my request is not going to interfere with anything. That is a bunch of bull. My request is that I be allowed to modify the language of my own amendment which is pending, and it is not going to interfere with any other amendment.

Let's be upfront about what is going on here. It is not an open amendment process. We have been talking about this bill for 2 weeks. We have had two votes on amendments. They are not even talking about amendment votes. What Senator CARDIN is describing is negotiating the language and changing the language of certain amendments so it is agreeable to everyone, including him. That is not an open amendment process. Those are not votes. That is not voting up or down. That is not giving everyone their say and their ability to have votes. That is blocking the gate, blocking the door, and returning to the practices of the HARRY REID

Senate and then holding everybody hostage and demanding the language you want, Senator CARDIN wants, everybody wants, in order for that amendment to even possibly be considered. That is as far from an open amendment process as you can get.

If that is what they are discussing, they might as well stop now because I will object. I want a vote on my amendment. I want votes on other significant amendments. If this is just a game to come to some unanimous consent agreement, some managers' package which they bless, they can stop those discussions right now because I will object.

Again, Mr. President, I think it is reasonable that a Senator get to modify his own amendment. I think that is a pretty minimal request. I will repeat it.

I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of H.R. 1191, that I be allowed to modify amendment No. 1186 with the changes that are at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object, let me point out that but for the fact that Senator COTTON filed an amendment—he had every right to do so, and I am not saying he did not—without Senator CORKER or the leadership or my knowing that he was going to go through that process, Senator VITTER could have modified his amendment. He is being blocked and needs consent because of actions taken by a Republican Senator.

Prior to that action being taken, Senator CORKER and I, working with—I think there were somewhere around 60 amendments filed by Republicans and none by Democrats. This is a bill which passed the Senate Foreign Relations Committee 19 to 0, one which incorporated many amendments of the members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, including the Presiding Officer, who is working with us on this. We worked those out. We are in the process of presenting an additional four amendments for floor action.

When that action was taken by a Senator—who had every right to do it because he was trying to get his amendment considered on the floor—in effect, it blocked other amendments from being considered on the floor. When you have one party filing all of the amendments, it is necessary to have an orderly process for these considerations. We were in the process of doing that, and that was blocked.

Senator CORKER and I regret that we did not have a chance to bring more amendments in an orderly way for consideration on the floor. But the request made by Senator VITTER is to try to get his amendment in a different position than other amendments, and for that reason, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Louisiana.

Mr. VITTER. Mr. President, this is not being blocked by Senator COTTON. Everybody knows that. Senator COTTON made it clear that he would happily agree to get amendments up for a vote. This has been a determined, choreographed effort to close the door during an open amendment process and to demand leverage so that every amendment has to be worked out. Do you know what ''worked out'' means? That means they get a veto and we don't get a vote. That is unreasonable, and that is the exact opposite of an open amendment process.

I am not being blocked by Senator COTTON. I know that. Everybody knows that. We are being blocked by the managers of this bill. I think it is highly regrettable.

As I said, if the end game here is to work out amendments to Senator CARDIN's or anyone else's satisfaction, and they get a veto, they can stop their work on that right now because I am objecting, and I will object. I want a vote.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I will point out in response to Senator VITTER that we had two record votes on the floor on this bill, and both were amendments that were overwhelmingly rejected. They were not amendments I wanted on the bill. I opposed both of those amendments and Senator CORKER opposed both of those amendments.

When the amendment was offered by Senator COTTON, we were in the process of scheduling another vote on the floor of an amendment that I equally opposed. I have indicated that I will oppose several of the other amendments Members have tried to make pending, but I did not object to votes on those amendments.

I just want to respond to Senator VITTER. Senator CORKER and I did not attempt to block votes on amendments that we don't agree with. We were seeking an orderly way to proceed because, quite frankly, this bill is critically important to our country.

Let's not lose sight of what we are trying to achieve, and that is to block Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. The best way for us to do that is for this body and the House and the President to speak with a united voice, to give us the strongest possible position in negotiations, and for Congress to carry out its responsibility to review this agreement because it was Congress that imposed the sanctions that brought Iran to the negotiating table. We have a responsibility—in an orderly way—to review that agreement.

The legislation we brought forward—and the Presiding Officer was very helpful in bringing it forward—allows us, in an orderly way, to consider that agreement, if one is reached, so that we can have open hearings in a deliberative way to determine how Congress should act, and that is what this bill does.

I regret that my friend from Louisiana—and he is my friend—feels that any amendment he wants to offer—and there are 60-some other amendments to be offered—that he should be able to bring them up at any time he wants. Quite frankly, this bill is too important for us to use anything but an orderly way to consider amendments. That is what this bill does for the consideration of a potential agreement.

I thank Senator CORKER for his leadership, and the two of us will work together to make sure we complete this bill in an orderly way.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am surely going to make a unanimous consent request, and I have notified the Republican leader of this, but before I do, I wish to make a statement on this issue. I am talking about the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2015. That is a lot of words, but it is basically talking about the bulletproof vest bill Republican Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and I first put together 17 years ago. It is a lifesaving grant program.

Senator Nighthorse Campbell and I both had the privilege of serving in various forms of law enforcement. We knew how things had changed. We knew a number of police officers, men and women, who died, were shot to death, who would have lived had they had bulletproof vests. We also knew a lot of them—especially small departments such as those in my State and many in Senator Nighthorse Campbell's State—could not afford them. That could be said of virtually every single State.

The partnership we put together has provided 13,000 State and local law enforcement agencies with nearly 1.2 million bulletproof vests for their officers. When we pass it today, the Senate will move a step closer to ensuring that for the next 5 years thousands of agencies can purchase bulletproof vests for officers serving in their communities.

These are not just empty words or an empty gesture. It is probably the most tangible support Congress can provide to law enforcement officers. It will help put vests on the backs of more than 200,000 police officers and it will save lives.

Just ask the chief of the Woodway, TX, police department, Yost Zakhary. Chief Zakhary testified at a Senate judiciary hearing last year. He brought

this vest with him to the hearing. The officer wearing it was shot at almost pointblank range during a roadside stop. The officer lost a lot of blood—we can see it on his vest—but he did not lose his life because this vest, purchased through this partnership grant program, caught the bullet aimed at his heart.

Officer Ann Carrizales of the Stafford, TX, police department also testified at the hearing last year. She told us that her vest—because we are now beginning to buy vests that recognize the obvious differences between male and female officers—was uniquely fitted for her body. It saved her life when she was shot twice during a routine traffic stop. Her testimony was some of the most moving testimony I have heard in 40 years in the Senate. She brought with her nearly 200 letters from her daughter's elementary school. They saw how a daughter's mother's life was saved, and they all called for the Senate to act.

This bill is important to law enforcement around the Nation. It is certainly important to my little State of Vermont. Vermont law enforcement agencies have received nearly 4,400 protective vests from this program, and those officers throughout Vermont, as well as around the Nation, are better protected and better able to do their jobs. I am proud to share that recent recipients in Vermont include agencies in Addison County, Barre City, Barre Town, Bennington County, Berlin, Brattleboro, Burlington, Caledonia County, Chester, Dover, Essex County, Essex Junction, Franklin County, Grand Isle County, Hardwick, Hartford, Ludlow, Middlebury, Milton, Montpelier, Morristown, Newport, Northfield, Norwich, Orange County, Orleans County, Richmond, Rutland, Shelburne, South Burlington, Springfield, St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, Stowe, Waterbury Village, Weathersfield, Williston, Windsor County, Windsor, and Winooski.

It has helped to make protective vests standard equipment for law enforcement agencies across the country. Yet, for far too many jurisdictions—especially smaller and rural agencies such as those in Vermont—they know the vests still cost too much and wear out too soon. They actually work.

I remember to this day a young police officer who was in and testified before our Senate Judiciary Committee. He had his mother and his father, his wife and his children lined up behind him. He said to us: I love police work. The only thing I love more than that is my family. He said: There was a day when I thought I would never see my family again. Again, it was a routine traffic stop, but the man stepped out and shot him twice, pointblank. He reached under and pulled up the bulletproof vest, and we could see the two slugs embedded in the vest.

He said: My mother and father and my wife and my children came to the hospital to see me. I had cracked ribs that day, but they knew they could bring me home to be with them the next day.

They are not going to save every officer, of course, but they have saved more than 3,000 law enforcement officers since 1987. I have met with police officers such as the one I just described, who are alive today because of vests purchased through this program. They will tell us the program saves lives. But it is also for the members of their families, seeing them going off to work knowing they have put it on. That makes a difference.

This bill also contains a number of improvements to the grant program. I want to thank Senator FEINSTEIN for helping to improve the bill so that it provides incentives for agencies to provide uniquely fitted vests for female officers. The bill also ensures that agencies have mandatory-wear policies to ensure that the vests are used regularly.

This is not a partisan issue. I remember walking down the street in Denver, CO, where Ben Nighthorse Campbell and I first started this. A police officer walked up to me and said: Are you PATRICK LEAHY of Vermont? And I said: Yes. He tapped his chest and said thank you and moved on.

Senator GRAHAM is a lead cosponsor of this legislation. I wish to thank Senator GRAHAM for his important efforts to help pass this legislation.

I am also thankful to the law enforcement community. They have long spoken with a single voice on this issue. They don't care whether we are Republicans or Democrats; they just care about this issue.

So if we pass this bill today and move it to the House of Representatives, I would urge the Speaker to quickly take up the bill so the President can sign it next week as we approach National Police Week. Now is the time to honor the brave men and women of law enforcement who have lost their lives serving their communities. Let's put real meaning behind our words and tributes. It is time to pass this bill.

I see my friend from Oklahoma on the floor.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 32, S. 125; that a Lee amendment which is at the desk be agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the bill.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 125) to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the request of the Senator from Vermont?

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. LANKFORD. Mr. President, this is a great bill in many ways. There is a tremendous need. I have family members who are police officers, actually, in small, rural police forces. I have staff members who are former police officers. I understand the situation very well, how much of a difference it makes to so many people. But we have two different programs dealing with bulletproof vests, two different systems of actually distributing bulletproof vests from the Federal Government that in many ways are complementary and in some ways competing. We have two sets of applications with two different sets of personnel to actually approve those applications and two different processes to apply.

My goal is that where we find duplication of effort, even if it is a good effort, that we as the Federal Government find ways to be able to streamline that process. Every dollar we spend on bureaucracy here, on a duplicative program, is a dollar less that we actually spend to buy the bulletproof vests and be able to get them out the door.

I have had multiple conversations that have been very productive with Senator LEAHY and with Senator GRAHAM to talk about this particular issue of how we can combine the application process, how we can combine the administrative process to make sure a good program doesn't lose dollars. We have numerous reports all over the Federal Government on duplication in government.

I look forward to the ongoing conversations. I have some assurances that we will deal with some of these issues as we go through the appropriations process in the days ahead, so I am willing to withdraw my objection. I know that we will resolve some of these issues in the days ahead to allow us to be able to move forward.

So with that, I withdraw my objection.

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

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

The amendment(No. 1214) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To modify the authorization of appropriations)

On page 2, line 11, strike ''$30,000,000'' and insert ''$25,000,000''.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. If there is no further debate, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall it pass?

The bill (S. 125), as amended, was passed, as follows:

S. 125

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 ''Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program Reauthorization Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. EXTENSION OF AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM.

Section 1001(a)(23) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3793(a)(23)) is amended to read as follows:

''(23) There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out part Y, $25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.''.

SEC. 3. EXPIRATION OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS.

Section 2501 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796ll) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(h) EXPIRATION OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS.—

''(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term 'appropriated funds' means any amounts that are appropriated for any of fiscal years 2016 through 2020 to carry out this part.

''(2) EXPIRATION.—All appropriated funds that are not obligated on or before December 31, 2022 shall be transferred to the General Fund of the Treasury not later than January 31, 2023.''.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON 2-YEAR LIMITATION ON FUNDS.

It is the sense of Congress that amounts made available to carry out part Y of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796ll et seq.) should be made available through the end of the first fiscal year following the fiscal year for which the amounts are appropriated and should not be made available until expended.

SEC. 5. MATCHING FUNDS LIMITATION.

Section 2501(f) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796ll(f)) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (3) as paragraph (4); and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (2) the following:

''(3) LIMITATION ON MATCHING FUNDS.—A State, unit of local government, or Indian tribe may not use funding received under any other Federal grant program to pay or defer the cost, in whole or in part, of the matching requirement under paragraph (1).''.

SEC. 6. APPLICATION OF BULLETPROOF VEST PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS TO ANY ARMOR VEST OR BODY ARMOR PURCHASED WITH FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS.

Section 521 of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3766a) is amended by adding at the end the following:

''(c)(1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a grantee that uses funds made available under this part to purchase an armor vest or body armor shall—

''(A) comply with any requirements established for the use of grants made under part Y;

''(B) have a written policy requiring uniformed patrol officers to wear an armor vest or body armor; and

''(C) use the funds to purchase armor vests or body armor that meet any performance standards established by the Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance.

''(2) In this subsection, the terms 'armor vest' and 'body armor' have the meanings given such terms in section 2503.''.

SEC. 7. UNIQUELY FITTED ARMOR VESTS.

Section 2501(c) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. 3796ll(c)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (2), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(2) in paragraph (3), by striking ''; or'' and inserting ''; and'';

(3) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5); and

(4) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

''(4) provides armor vests to law enforcement officers that are uniquely fitted for such officers, including vests uniquely fitted to individual female law enforcement officers; or''.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I thank all of the Senators who have cosponsored this bill. I thank the Senator from Oklahoma for withdrawing his objection. I am hoping the other body will soon take this up so that we can try to have it passed before the police meet here at the Capitol for a memorial to fallen police officers and we can move forward.

This has been underfunded over the years, and we have not been able to fill all of the requests. We have filled a lot of them, and we have saved a lot of lives. Of course, I will be willing to work with the Senator from Oklahoma or with any other Senator on this or any other law enforcement program. But I have always considered my years in law enforcement in many ways the high point of my career. I want to make sure we approve it as soon as we can.

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

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

ENSURING TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL ACT—MOTION TO PROCEED—Continued

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I rise to sound a note of warning about the nation of Iran. Consider the following facts: The Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, has accused America of lying. We learned that the Iranian regime has been actively arming and supporting the anti-American Houthi rebels in Yemen since 2009. The Iranian regime held a parade of military equipment that featured chants of ''Death to America'' and ''Death to Israel.'' The Iranian regime unjustly detained American citizen, Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian and charged him with espionage and other crimes, including ''propaganda against the establishment.'' The Defense Minister of Iran declared that IAEA inspectors would be barred from all military sites, even those known to have nuclear facilities. The Iranian Navy threatened a cargo ship sailing under the flag of the United States in the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranian Navy seized another cargo ship in the Strait of Hormuz sailing under the flag of our ally, the Marshall Islands. The Foreign Minister of Iran accused the United States and our allies of being the biggest danger to the international community. Great Britain informed a U.N. sanctions panel that Iran has an active nuclear procurement network linked to two blacklisted firms. The Iranian Navy harassed a U.S. warship and military plane off the coast of Yemen.

These are not events from 1979 or 1983 or 1996. These are, in chronological order, the aggressive anti-American actions of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the last month. Every one of those occurred in the last month, at least these are the ones we know of that have been covered in the media.

This relentless drumbeat of hostility has gone on unabated for 36 years, and it makes the legislation before this body, the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act, all the more critical. The bill's supporters insist it is the only way to ensure that Congress has its due say over President Obama's proposed Iran deal.

I agree that it is of paramount importance to give Congress its proper role in an international agreement of this magnitude and to make clear that President Obama must persuade Congress and the American people to support his deal if he wants it to be binding, which is why I have been supportive of this process so far. But I am here to tell you that as the legislation stands, this legislation is unlikely to stop a bad Iran deal.

The problem is an all-too-familiar one here in Washington, DC, which is that the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act contains a provision inserted at the insistence of Senate Democrats which will allow Congress to appear to vote against the deal while tacitly allowing it to go into effect. The bill allows Congress to adopt a ''resolution of disapproval'' of President Obama's Iran deal. On the surface that sounds reasonable.

From what we know publicly of the deal, I certainly disapprove of it strongly. But a resolution of disapproval under this legislation, even if it passed a 60-vote threshold, with grand claims of bipartisanship, would not be the end of the matter.

The President would certainly veto it. Once he did, it would require 67 votes in the Senate and 290 votes in the House to override that veto. No wonder the White House has lifted its objection to this legislation. All the President would have to do to force a bad Iran deal on America is hold 34 Senators in the Democratic Party or 145 Members of Congress.

If he could do that, a bad deal that undermines the national security of this country, that endangers our friend and ally, the nation of Israel, would go into effect. He could claim he was simply following the process Congress required. That is not an oversight. That

is not an accident. This bill, as drafted, will provide some political cover to Senate Democrats to say they have voted to provide strict scrutiny and congressional approval of an Iran deal.

Yet, as currently drafted, it is a virtual certainty that no matter how terrible this deal is, it will go into effect and this legislation is unlikely to stop it. Our first priority should be stopping a bad Iran deal that jeopardizes the lives of millions of Americans and millions of our allies. There is nothing more important this body can consider, not trade, not the budget. There is nothing more important.

The first responsibility of this body is to protect the national security of this country, to protect the lives and safety of men, women, and children across this country. The President's Iran deal deeply jeopardizes the safety of Americans. From what we know publicly—and the details are still shrouded in considerable secrecy—but from what we know publicly, under this deal, Iran will be allowed to keep its enriched uranium. It will be allowed to keep its centrifuges and reactors. It will continue its ICBM Program, the only purpose of which is to deliver a nuclear weapon to the United States of America.

Tehran will receive even more economic relief, reportedly including a $50 billion signing bonus. Who in their right mind would give a $50 billion signing bonus to Iran? It is worth noting that even under one of the strictest regimes of international sanctions, Iran was still able to marshall the resources to become one of the world's leading state sponsors of terrorism. We can only imagine what Iran will do with this new source of funding, which will certainly flow to Hamas, to Hezbollah, and to the Houthis, as well as to their proxies in Latin America.

I would note, if this deal goes into effect, and tens or hundreds of billions of dollars flow into Iran, including a $50 billion signing bonus, and that money is given directly to radical Islamic terrorists, the blood of the men and women and children who will be murdered by those terrorists will be directly on the hands of this administration. If we allow tens and hundreds of billions of dollars to flow into the hands of terrorists, it places complicity for that terrorism on this administration.

There is no topic more serious this body could consider than preventing the murder of Americans. The Iranians' behavior speaks for itself. They are, right now today, unlawfully imprisoning multiple American citizens—Pastor Saeed Abedini, Amir Hekmati, as well as Jason Rezaian—under brutal conditions. They are withholding information on the whereabouts of Robert Levinson.

They have killed Americans across the globe and they have plotted to kill us here at home. They are explicitly threatening to wipe our ally, the nation of Israel, off the map. Indeed, in the midst of this negotiation, the senior Iranian general said: The annihilation of Israel is ''non-negotiable''. Given that, there is no way on Earth we should be allowing billions of dollars to flow into a radical terrorist organization that has declared its object destroying Israel, which they call the ''Little Satan,'' and ultimately destroying America, which they call us the ''Great Satan.'' They are telling us they want to kill us, not 10 years ago or 20 years ago—they are telling us this right now. If history teaches any principle with abundant clarity, it is that if somebody tells you they want to kill you, believe them. They are not being subtle. Those are the people the Obama administration are putting on a path to having nuclear weaponry, the most fearsome weaponry known to man. Make no mistake. That is what this deal would do unless Congress steps in to stop it—not to have a show vote, not to pretend to disapprove but to actually stop a bad deal that jeopardizes our safety.

To see how this scenario is likely to play out, we do not have to speculate. We need to look no further than to the recent history of North Korea. In October 1994, the Clinton administration reached another agreed framework with North Korea over that nation's nuclear program. Then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright insisted she had gotten a deal that would freeze the military components of the program and, through economic incentives and diplomatic outreach, entice the hermit kingdom to join the international community and reject their pursuit of nuclear weapons.

At first, all seemed to go well as North Korea eagerly accepted the influx of hard currency, as well as the promised civilian nuclear reactors. Secretary Albright, accompanied by then-Policy Coordinator for North Korea Wendy Sherman, even visited North Korea in 2000 to celebrate the progress. Despite all of the diplomatic initiatives, despite all of the champagne toasts, the North Koreans were cheating, we now know, they were cheating on the framework from the get-go.

When the George W. Bush administration figured it out, economic sanctions were reimposed. But they had no effect, neither did yet more additional rounds of negotiations while they continued and continued and continued to enrich.

Kim Jong-il had gotten the resources he needed because the Clinton administration relaxed sanctions and allowed billions of dollars to flow into his hands. In 2006, North Korea tested its first nuclear weapon—two more tests to follow.

In 2012, when Kim Jong Un came to power, then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton suggested that Kim Jong Un might be a transformative leader. The State Department reportedly assured the President that he would be more concerned with economic improvements than with his inherited nuclear program. In less than 2 years, this, too, was proven wrong. Kim Jong Un has demonstrated no interest in reform. He has, instead, resolutely pursued his father's policy. Just last week, we learned from the Chinese that North Korea is well on its way to having some 40 nuclear weapons by 2016, as their ability to enrich uranium is significantly more sophisticated than had been believed.

In addition, they are hard at work at their ICBM Program and may soon be able not only to threaten our regional allies but also to strike the west coast of the United States. With so many weapons in their arsenal, it seems only logical that this rogue regime may, in turn, offer some of those weapons for sale to the highest bidder.

All of this proves the fallacy of the Clinton administration's repeated basic assumption; that the North Koreans would act in their best interests economically, for which, for Albright and Sherman, meant reaching a diplomatic agreement to achieve economic relief. Unfortunately, they were dead wrong. The result is the United States faces an escalating strategic threat in the Pacific.

We are now in grave danger of history repeating itself with Iran. Wendy Sherman, the very same person who negotiated the failed North Korea deal, the Obama administration brought her back from the Clinton administration to be our lead negotiator with Iran. Think about that. The person who led the failed North Korea talks, the talks that led to North Korea getting nuclear weapons, is President Obama's lead negotiator with Iran, and her negotiations will certainly lead to the same outcome.

Indeed, when Secretary Clinton brought Wendy Sherman back, Wendy Sherman promptly followed the exact same playbook for the negotiations that she had followed under the Clinton administration with respect to North Korea. You know, Albert Einstein famously said: ''The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.'' If we negotiate the same failed deal, we will get the same failed outcome.

Iran has already enjoyed significant economic relief and legitimization on the international stage, while America's demands have dwindled from dismantling Iran's nuclear program to now merely curbing it around the edges temporarily and unverifiably. It may only be a matter of time before Secretary John Kerry, no doubt accompanied by Under Secretary Wendy Sherman, pays a courtesy call on Tehran to echo history and to show the world how ''civilized'' the whole arrangement is and only a matter of time until the Iranians cheat—just like the North Koreans—their way to a bomb.

Yet the grim reality is that, as bad as the situation is with North Korea, with Iran it is qualitatively worse. The

Kim dynasty are brutal, megalomaniacal dictators, but they do seem to be motivated, at least to some extent, by self-preservation, and so to some form, there is at least a possibility of rational deterrence. And therein lies the fundamental difference with Iran.

The mullahs in Tehran are radical, Islamist zealots, for whom the eradication of the little Satan, Israel, and the great Satan, America, is a solemn religious duty. And with radical religious zealots, ordinary cost-benefit analysis doesn't apply the same way. With zealots who glorify death and suicide, deterrence doesn't work the way it works elsewhere.

''Death to America'' is not just a slogan; it is a religious promise.

The risk that the Ayatolla will use the economic windfall of billions of dollars, courtesy of the United States, to pursue nuclear weapons that he would either use himself or give to terrorist surrogates to use is intolerably high.

The consequences of this deal could very well be an Iranian nuclear weapon used in the skies of Tel Aviv, New York or Los Angeles. The consequence of this deal could very well be millions of Americans murdered. There is no more serious topic we could be addressing.

Now, President Obama and his two Secretaries of State have had their chance to negotiate with Iran, and they have squandered it on the same approach that was so spectacularly unsuccessful with North Korea. They changed very little. They just replayed the same failed plan.

Once again, assuming they can reason with a rogue regime, they are on the verge of sealing a deal that could result in the most significant threat to our Nation in the 21st century.

The administration's claim that Tehran will not use their economic windfall to pursue a nuclear program or to support terrorism and that if they do, ''snapback'' sanctions will fix the problem are hardly reassuring, especially, as we know from the example of North Korea that the opposite result is far more likely. Having gotten what they wanted, the mullahs will string out the economic benefits for as long as they want and then, when they are ready, test a nuclear bomb.

The Iranians know perfectly well what a very good deal this is for them. And they are doing what they can to prevent Congress from disrupting it.

In March, I was proud to join with 46 of my colleagues in signing a letter written by Senator TOM COTTON of Arkansas that explained the constitutional role of the Senate in approving a treaty—or of both Houses of Congress—passing legislation into law, for any deal to be binding on the United States of America.

Judging from their reaction, Tehran does not appreciate our free system of government. Foreign Minister Mohammed Zarif responded that:

> The authors [of the letter] may not fully understand that in international law, governments represent the entirety of their respective states, are responsible for the conduct of foreign affairs, are required to fulfill the obligations they undertake with other states and may not invoke their internal law as justification for failure to perform their international obligations.

Speaking last week to an audience at NYU, Mr. Zarif reiterated his opinion that as a matter of international law, President Obama would have to abide by the dictates of whatever deal is struck and that Congress is powerless to stop it.

He also said that he ''does not deal with Congress.'' As a matter of U.S. law, Mr. Zarif is wrong. It is true that in the nation of Iran, when you have a supreme leader, an ayatolla, with the ability to string you up or shoot you if you disagree, the word of the Supreme Leader is binding. But we have no supreme leader in the United States of America.

We are bound by a Constitution and rule of law that keeps sovereignty in we the people. If Mr. Zarif wants a sanctions agreement, the only way to make that binding is to deal with Congress pursuant to the Constitution of the United States. But if we pass the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act as it stands right now, he won't have to.

It is time to tell the American people the truth—enough games. This legislation is not a victory of Congress. This legislation, at best, will slow down, slightly, a terrible deal from being put into place. That is the very best outcome—a slight delay in the President's putting into effect a terrible deal that jeopardizes American security.

It is not a guarantee that President Obama will have to submit this deal and honor the will of Congress. In fact, it provides a back-door path for a minority in Congress, one-third of Congress, to ensure that the deal goes into effect over the bipartisan will of the majority. And even worse, the President will be able to claim that he satisfied the terms that Congress itself set.

That is hardly the message we want to send on Iran's nuclear program. And this issue is far too important to pass a bad bill simply to send a message. By prioritizing bipartisan compromise over our national security, we are endangering the safety and lives of Americans across this country.

Now, I will note there is a silver lining. In 20 months, Mr. Obama will no longer occupy the Oval Office.

In January of 2017, when a new President enters the White House, he or she will have full authority to rescind any international agreement with Iran that has not been ratified by the Senate or passed into law by both Houses of Congress.

Any man or woman who is fit to be Commander in Chief of the United States of America should be prepared to rescind a bad deal with Iran on day one. No President of the United States should jeopardize the lives of millions of Americans or millions of our allies.

Congress could act right now to stop a bad deal. We could come together and assert our constitutional role, and we can do so through a very simple mechanism. Right now, the current bill provides that if Congress doesn't override President Obama's veto, a terrible Iran deal goes into effect.

I have joined with Senator PAT TOOMEY of Pennsylvania in filing an amendment that simply reverses that default, which simply says: The President cannot lift sanctions on Iran unless the deal is affirmatively approved by Congress. That is the constitutional structure.

That ought to be a provision supported—not by 51 Senators or even 60 Senators or even 67 Senators—by all 100 Senators.

What a strange development in our modern polity that the Congress of the United States is content to effectively neuter itself.

The Presiding Officer and I are both Members of the Republican Party. I feel quite confident that if a Republican President were in office, we would not be content to give up the constitutional authority and responsibility that is given to this body to ratify treaties or to pass law. And yet I am sorry to say, on the Democratic side of the aisle, our friends are perfectly content to forfeit their constitutional authority to the President.

If this deal is a good deal on the substance—it most assuredly is not, but if it is—the President should be able to get congressional approval.

Yet the reason that Senate Democrats are terrified of requiring congressional approval is they know full well you cannot defend a deal that allows Iran to keep tens of thousands of centrifuges, to keep enriched uranium, to keep developing their ICBM program, to keep remaining the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism, and to keep working to annihilate the nation of Israel. That is not defensible on the merits.

One simple change would turn this legislation into something meaningful. One simple change that would say: The President is free to negotiate any deal he likes, but before it goes into effect, bring it to Congress and get the affirmative agreement of Congress. Don't have a fig-leaf vote and let the President's bad deal go into effect. That undermines our national security. Have a meaningful vote that requires the affirmative approval of Congress.

I urge my colleagues to adopt the Cruz-Toomey amendment, which is a commonsense fix that will give this bill real teeth by removing the resolution of disapproval and, instead, would allow an Iran deal to go into effect only if Congress approves it. In the spirit of this legislation, it is purely procedural, and so it is germane to this bill.

Yet Senate Democrats have blocked a vote on it. They have refused even to vote on this amendment. All this amendment does is ensure that the burden is on President Obama to persuade Congress and the American people that the deal is a good one or, at a

very minimum, is not a terrible threat to the national security of the United States of America.

This should be something on which we come together—not as Republicans, not as Democrats, but as Senators who have a responsibility to protect our constituents, to protect the American people, and to defend the Constitution. We should come together with one voice and say: We will not allow a bad Iran deal that ensures that Iran will acquire nuclear weapons that could be used to murder millions of Americans or millions of our allies.

This should be unanimous.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—AMENDMENT NO. 1152

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate resumes consideration of H.R. 1191, that I be allowed to offer my amendment No. 1152.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). Is there objection?

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, first I thank my friend from Texas. He and I share the same goal, and that is to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapon State.

There are three basic problems with my friend's amendment, if it were to be adopted.

One, it would either defeat the bill—which is very possible, because it changes the fundamentals of this bill. We are looking at reviewing an agreement that does not require consent, because Congress may, in fact, decide it does not want to take up this issue. That is one of the options.

Second, if it were adopted, it could very well affect our ability to negotiate with Iran. They may say: Gee, we have to negotiate with the President, and then we have to negotiate with the Congress.

And our negotiating partners, who don't have those circumstances, might very well say: That is the end of negotiations.

Then the United States is blamed, and we are isolated as the country that prevented a diplomatic solution to this very difficult problem.

Or, third, it puts our negotiators in a tough position because they don't have a united position. Therefore, we won't negotiate, and we won't have the strength to negotiate the strongest possible deal.

And for my friend who says it is just simple for Congress to pass a bill in order to implement this, we have been on this bill for 2 weeks. It came out of the committee 19 to 0, and I don't yet see an end in sight. So at the same time, this bill prevents the President from exercising his waiver authority under the sanctions regime while Congress is reviewing it.

So, in effect, delay tactics could be used by a minority to prevent the agreement from being considered on the floor of the Senate.

So for all those reasons the well-intended amendment would have, I think it could have the reverse effect. But, from a procedural point of view, as I have explained earlier, we have been working to try to get amendments up.

For all those reasons, I do object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am a little confused about our scheduling. I know I was supposed to be speaking at 5:05 p.m. We do want to get back to where we are going back and forth.

I know my good friend from Ohio wishes to be recognized next for a short period of time.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that he be recognized now and that he be followed by my good friend from Delaware to be recognized for his time, and then I be recognized at the end of his remarks for such time as I would consume as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas still has the floor.

Is there objection to the request?

Mr. INHOFE. I am sorry about that.

Mr. CRUZ. Mr. President, I will wrap up momentarily and then will be happy to yield to my friend from Oklahoma for his very reasonable time allocation suggestion.

I would note that the Senator from Maryland suggested the problem of Congress affirmatively approving this is that it could be subject to delay; that Congress might not take it up. I would note for my friend from Maryland that I would certainly be amenable to a friendly amendment to my amendment that required expedited consideration of an Iran deal without the ability to filibuster but with the requirement that it receive the affirmative approval of both Houses of Congress.

So the specific problems my friend from Maryland suggested could be avoided. We could put in a short but expedited time period, if necessary, but what is critical, I would suggest, is that Congress has to ultimately approve this; that we take responsibility. If the deal is a good one, then the majority of Congress should support it. If it is not a good one, then it will not receive the approval of the majority of Congress.

So I would ask my friend from Maryland if that would be a friendly amendment that he would be open to in reaching a compromise.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. I appreciate the friendliness of my friend from Texas, but I must tell him we have this bill balanced. There is an expedited process in regard to Congress taking action if there is a violation of the agreement by Iran. We do have an expedited process in the bill currently before us so that we can snap back sanctions quickly, and Congress receives not only certification but notices from the administration as to whether there are material breaches. So we already have that process in the bill to deal with any violation of any agreement.

The balance here is that Congress does not know what process it uses: We impose the sanctions. We might want to take up modifications to the sanctions. We may want to take up an approval resolution. We may want to take up a disapproval resolution. We might want to take up something totally different with Iran. Those are our options. So it would be difficult now to predict an expedited process when we don't know what the action of the Congress is going to be in regard to the agreement being submitted by the President of the United States.

So even though it is a very friendly suggestion, I can't take the Senator up on it.

Mr. CRUZ. I would note, Mr. President, the result of this amendment not being taken up is that Congress is abrogating our authority and responsibility to approve this deal. Because of the result of this bill as drafted, we can look in a crystal ball and know exactly what is going to happen. In a couple of months, the administration will come forward with the details of its terrible deal with Iran. This summer we are going to have debates in this body. A resolution of disapproval will be introduced, and it will not get 67 votes in this body. There will be enough Members of the President's own party who will stand with him no matter how terrible the deal is for our national security.

Right now, with this legislation, the bad deal will go into effect—a deal that has the potential to result in the murder of millions of Americans. There are very few topics we address that come anywhere close to the gravity of this topic, and it is disappointing to see Democratic Senators putting partisan politics above our national security. We should stand together to protect America.

The next 20 months are going to be very dangerous in this Nation. Yet I am encouraged that in 20 months America is going to embark on a different path. America is going to return to defending our Nation and defending our Constitution and defending the men and women across this country.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, before I propound my unanimous consent request, let me just applaud my friend from Texas.

I had a hard time believing it when they said they were going to be negotiating with a terrorist, they were going to negotiate with Iran. Have these people forgotten our unclassified intelligence way back in 2007 said that by 2015 Iran was expected to have a weapon and a delivery system that could actually reach the United States of America? Here it is—what year is it, 2015—and they are talking about negotiating.

I happened to be out on the USS *Carl Vinson* during this negotiation just a couple of weeks ago, and at the same time we were out there, Iran was sending to Yemen the different weapons, and our sister ship, the USS *Roosevelt*, had to go down and turn them around. At the same time that they are negotiating with Iran, we had Putin sending down to Iran the S–300 rocket. That S–300 rocket—and it is not even classified—it can go up and kill something 98,000 feet above the ground. Yet here we have Israel and the United States, and if the time would come that we would want to take out some of the nuclear activity in Iran, our proven enemy, we would perhaps be unable to do that.

So I do applaud my friend for bringing this up. Not many people are talking about this. I remember so well, though it has been several years ago now, when President Bush was first elected and he talked about the triad, those dangers, and he put at the top of that Iran. How much do they have to do before we realize that is the greatest threat facing America today.

With that, I ask unanimous consent—to straighten out the confusion in the order of things—that my friend from Ohio be recognized for a short presentation; after that, my friend from Delaware would be recognized; and that I be recognized at the conclusion of the remarks of my friend from Delaware for such time as I shall use.

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

The Senator from Ohio.

IRAN AND FEDERAL PERMITTING REFORM

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on a couple of issues, one with regard to Iran. I would just make one point that I think is pretty obvious to most Members on this floor, which is that these sanctions really matter. In other words, regardless of what we end up doing with regard to the Iranian nuclear agreement—and I am very concerned about what I see in the framework agreement—we have to be very careful about relieving sanctions because Iran is the No. 1 state sponsor of terrorism in the world. That is based on our own State Department.

With us providing them sanctions relief, it frees up resources that they can then use for some of their terrorist activity in the Mideast and really around the globe.

I returned from Israel a couple days ago and got some great briefings that were very troubling about what is happening with regard to Iran's support of Hezbollah—additional and more sophisticated missiles with guidance systems—and what is happening even with the other groups in the region, including a Sunni group, Hamas, in providing rockets there, and certainly what they are doing in Syria and what they are doing today in Yemen and even in Libya.

So this is not just about the nuclear arms agreement, if that, in fact, does come to some conclusion. It is about a broader issue, about ensuring that we do not provide this funding for Iran to continue its aggression in the Middle East and around the globe.

I want to speak about something closer to home, and I appreciate my colleague from Oklahoma giving me a chance to talk briefly. This is about a piece of legislation that actually passed a committee today that helps create jobs and helps to encourage more construction projects and would make a huge difference in getting people back to work.

I will say I am glad Senator CARPER is on the floor because I want to talk about him too. He was part of this project. We have worked on this the last few years. Senator CLAIRE MCCASKILL of Missouri is my cosponsor, but today in the committee, with the help of chairman RON JOHNSON and Ranking Member CARPER on the floor today, we were able to get people working together to move this permitting reform bill forward.

This is about regulatory reform. It is about ensuring we streamline to make our system work better. But ultimately it is about jobs. That is why both the business community and the labor unions representing the building trades—the AFL–CIO Building Trades Council supported this legislation today. They want to see people get back to work, and so do I.

If we look at what has happened over the past year, our economic growth has been anemic. Even in the first quarter of this year, we find just 0.2 percent growth is now the number out there. Employment numbers from last month were disappointing. We need to give this economy a shot in the arm, and this will help do it.

Unfortunately, what we have now is a permitting process that is full of uncertainty, unpredictability, it is out of date, it hinders investment, it stifles growth, and keeps jobs from being created at a time when too many Americans, particularly in the construction trades, are looking for work.

This is a real problem in getting investment in America too. There is a World Bank study done every year about how countries line up in terms of their ability to get things done, the ease of doing business. With regard to green-lighting a project, permitting, the United States of America now stands No. 41 in the world—41. That is unacceptable. That means that capital is going elsewhere, and one reason is because of the delays; one reason is because of the liability risk; one reason is because people are worried if they put capital here, it is not going to be able to come to fruition quickly enough because of our permitting system. So this is about not just global rankings but helping Americans go back to work.

I learned about this first when constituents came to me; that with regard to Federal permitting, particularly on energy projects, sometimes there are as many as 35 different Federal permits, we are told. American Municipal Power came to me. They were trying to put together a hydro plant on the Ohio River—something we should all be for—and it was taking too much time. They were losing investors.

Folks came to me from Wellsville, OH. They wanted to put together a $6 billion synthetic fuels plant there. It was a coal-to-liquid plant that would convert coal into clean diesel and jet fuel that would create jobs, employing up to 2,500 workers just to build it. Unfortunately, permitting delays and lawsuits interfered with the project and the plant was never constructed. We need that in Ohio. It would have been a win-win for us.

So this is an urgent issue we should address, and this is just a couple of examples of it. The bottom line is it is not unheard of for some projects to have dozens of different Federal permits. So this will help.

This bill does a few things. One, it does strengthen coordination and deadline setting. It creates an interagency council that identifies best practices, deadlines for reviews and approvals of important infrastructure projects, strengthens cooperation between State and local permitting authorities to avoid the duplication we see too often now in trying to get a permit to build something.

The bill also facilitates greater transparency, more public participation, with the creation of an online dashboard so you know where a project is to see who is holding this thing up and how to get it moving. The bill requires agencies to accept comments from stakeholders early in the approval process, with the goal of identifying public policy concerns early on so it doesn't end up stopping the project.

Finally, the bill institutes some very sensible litigation reforms. Again, I thank my colleague from Delaware because he helped us to work through this. This reduces the statute of limitations on lawsuits, challenging permitting decisions from 6 years, where it is now, down to 2 years.

This is legislation that can unite both our parties. It is something that will help to get the economy going. It is something the President's own jobs council has called for. It is something that also the business groups have called for, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Roundtable. Again, it is commonsense reform where we were able to bring together groups that normally don't see eye to eye, including the labor unions.

Here is a quote today from Sean McGarvey, president of North America's Building Trades Unions. He said:

> If there was ever an issue that could be considered a no-brainer for Congress, the Federal Permitting Improvement Act is it. . . . Any way you slice it, this is a jobs bill, and it is critically important to the economic interests of the skilled craft construction professionals I represent.

I agree with Sean. This is a bill that makes sense. It is one all Americans

can agree on. We need to be committed to these serious reforms and get them done. This is going to help turn our economy around, help bring back some of these good-paying jobs, and it is an area where we can find common ground.

Again, I thank Senator MCCASKILL for her partnership over the last 3 years on this. I thank the members of our committee for voting for it today. Again, to the chairman and ranking member, including Senator CARPER, who is on the floor today, thank you for moving this through the committee. Now let's get it to the floor.

We had a strong vote today. I think the final vote was 12 to 1. Let's get this to the floor and actually get it done, have a vote on this legislation, get it through the House, get it to the President for his signature, and start to bring back these jobs and start to build these projects right here in the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Ohio for his kind words, and to him and our colleague, Senator MCCASKILL from Missouri, for their persistence and leadership on an important issue.

I oftentimes describe myself on this floor as a recovering Governor and one who focuses on how to create a more nurturing environment for job creation and job preservation. There are a lot of attributes—access to capital, infrastructure—which Senator INHOFE leads us on every day. Another one is a reasonable tax burden. Another is commonsense regulation.

My dad always used to say: Use some common sense. And I think, with the legislation we moved out of committee, and hopefully through this Senate Chamber, that will show a lot of common sense and provide a more nurturing environment.

So I thank Senator INHOFE.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

TRIBUTE TO ELIZABETH ''BETH'' LESKI AND CAROL RICHEL

Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the efforts of the men and women who serve their neighbors every day as Federal, State, county, and municipal workers.

In 1985, the Public Service Roundtable, with support from Congress, started the very first Public Service Recognition Week to honor the hard work of public employees on our behalf and the sacrifices they often make in doing so. Since then, the first week of May has been officially designated by Congress as Public Service Recognition Week. This week is the 30th anniversary, and I think a perfect opportunity for each of us to show our appreciation to the millions of public servants in our communities and across the country.

Over the past several months, I have been coming to the Senate floor, as my colleagues know, to highlight the important work being done by public employees at the Department of Homeland Security, in particular.

Over 200,000 men and women work at the Department of Homeland Security. While their jobs are diverse, they share one common mission; that is, to keep our country a safe, secure, and resilient place where the American way of life can thrive. Whether they are patrolling our borders, responding to natural disasters or bolstering our defenses in cyber space, these public servants touch the lives of Americans every day.

Today, I rise to recognize two more outstanding public servants at DHS, this time from the Transportation Security Administration, which we call TSA.

As we may recall, TSA was established after the devastating September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks with the mission to better protect our Nation's transportation systems. Today, TSA employs some 47,000 transportation security officers at over 440 airports nationwide. Each year, those officers screen about 660 million travelers and nearly 1.5 billion bags.

TSA is also the lead agency in securing our surface transportation networks, including our roads, bridges, tunnels, railroads, and maritime ports. For anyone who has ever taken a flight, chances are they have seen the men and women of TSA in action. If they haven't seen them, they certainly enjoyed the benefit of the important work they often do behind the scenes to keep us safe.

I would like to take a moment today to recognize one of those TSA employees who is keeping our skies safer. Her name is Elizabeth ''Beth'' Leski.

Beth is one of those TSA employees who are usually out of sight but whose work, nonetheless, is vital. She is a Secure Flight Program analyst in the TSA Office of Intelligence and Analysis. Originally from Michigan, she has lived in Severn, MD, for the last two decades with her husband David. After graduating with a B.S. in aviation management, Beth worked in the airline industry for 21 years before joining the Secure Flight Program.

Over the past 4 years, Beth has worked at TSA as a customer service agent, customer service supervisor, and now as a program analyst at the Secure Flight Operations Center.

Here she is in a picture, between Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson and Deputy Secretary Mayorkas.

As I said, over the past 4 years, Beth has worked in different roles at the Secure Flight Operations Center. Secure Flight is a program that enhances aviation security by running the names of passengers against the government's watch list of known or suspected terrorists. In other words, Beth helps to keep bad people off of planes by ensuring that those who receive boarding passes are not on our government's list of individuals prohibited from flying.

According to her colleagues, Beth works tirelessly to synchronize all the moving parts at her operations center. They say that Beth always goes above and beyond the call of duty. She strives to make life easier for fellow analysts, developing checklists, spreadsheets, and calendar invitations to keep individuals accountable and organized. Her colleague James Billups says that Beth ''inspires everyone around her, and truly brings the best out of people.'' I can see why.

In addition to her positive energy in the workplace, she has been widely recognized at TSA and the Department for always lending a helping hand at employee morale events. She is also known for welcoming new recruits to the national capital region with a unique ''Welcome Aboard'' package. It is actions such as these that show that Beth has truly embodied TSA's core value of team spirit.

In 2014, Beth received the Secretary's Award for her steadfast and outstanding assistance to the entire team in the Secure Flight Operations Center.

When she is not securing our skies, Beth likes to run and travel the world—pursuits she and I actually share in common. We have another very important thing in common—the U.S. Navy. Beth is a retired yeoman chief petty officer with 21 years of service with the U.S. Navy Reserve. I retired as a captain and spent a couple of years in an airplane with the Navy around the world, and my dad was a chief in the Navy, as well. But on behalf of the Senate—and, really, on behalf of all Americans—Beth, I just want to thank you. We thank you for your exemplary service to our country.

I wish to take a couple more minutes to recognize the service and sacrifice of another TSA employee. Her name is Carol Richel.

As we can see, even though TSA is often the target of criticism and frustration, their mission at the end of the day is to save lives—our lives. Carol reminded us of this mission just a couple of months ago when a man wielding a machete attacked her and her colleagues at the Louis Armstrong Airport in New Orleans.

A native of St. Ignace, MI, Carol has worked as a TSA officer at the New Orleans airport since October 2003 and has been a TSA supervisory officer since October 2005. She is known by her colleagues to step up on a moment's notice. This latest incident was no exception. As many of us may remember from the news stories, in March, a deranged man began to attack a number of TSA agents at a security checkpoint at the New Orleans airport. The man sprayed insect repellent in the face of an officer, pulled a machete from the waistband of his pants, and began swinging the weapon in the direction of other TSA officers. Watching from her post, Carol yelled at the passengers in the area to run.

But her warning also attracted the attention of the attacker, and at the

moment, he started to run toward Carol. As the man got closer to her, Lieutenant Heather Sylve of the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office began firing at him. Lieutenant Sylve shot the assailant three times, wounding and incapacitating him on site. He later died as a result of those wounds.

Unfortunately, one of those shots also hit Carol in the arm. Injured but undeterred, she reported to her post the very next day, ready to work—not the next week, not the next month, the next day.

When asked about her work, by the St. Ignace News, she said:

I enjoy my job, and I feel that what we do is a necessary thing. . . . This is an example of why it's necessary.

According to her colleagues, Carol is known for her hard work, her dedication to TSA's mission, and her sincere interest in the well-being of the entire team.

Our colleague from Oklahoma will enjoy this. When she is not at work, Carol enjoys caring for her animals and dedicating herself to Bible studies.

Carol's bravery and commitment to her colleagues and the public she serves truly exemplify TSA's core values of integrity, innovation, and team spirit.

To Beth and Carol, let me say this. Every day you go to work, we want you to know that you help to ensure the safety of your fellow Americans and the security of our transportation system, which serves us all. We are grateful for that. Thank you both for your tireless dedication and your invaluable service to our Nation and its people.

And to all of the public servants across this country and beyond our borders who give us 110 percent every day, let me close by saying that I want you to know that what you do every day is important to me and to all of my colleagues with whom I am privileged to serve here in this body. We hope your work and your service fills your life with meaning and with happiness. On behalf of the people that we serve together, thank you for what you do. May God continue to bless each of you and this country we love.

I yield the floor, and thank my colleague from Oklahoma for his kindness.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I say to my friend from Delaware, I appreciate his remarks. It is seldom people will thank people for the time and effort they spend and the successes they have.

Even though he is located so close to Washington that he is not exposed as much as I am—twice a week—I actually learn personally to know these people. I feel the commitment they make. Certainly in Tulsa, Dallas, and here are the ones whom I know well. So I appreciate the fact that the Senator is paying attention to them. That means a lot.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. President, since 2002, I have come to the floor to talk, after we discovered the truth about the whole global warming thing and who is behind it and all this stuff. I don't want to say anything that would be interpreted as not respectful, but I can remember back in 2002, it was a difficult thing to tell the truth about this to the American people because at that time most of the American people felt that—yes, they bought into this idea that the world is coming to an end, and it is all manmade gases that are causing this. So it was difficult.

The Gallup poll of 2002 said at that time that, of all the environmental concerns, No. 1 was global warming. Now, that is not true today. Today, it is almost dead last. Last March, there was a poll that came out from Gallup, and it was next to the last. It was down from some 20 different environmental concerns.

So the people have realized that this largest tax increase in the history of America, if it were to take place, is not going to solve a problem—a problem that really doesn't exist to the extent it has been represented. Today, they are still debating this.

I want to bring people up to date on where we are now—the fact that climate change is not based on hard evidence and observation, but rather on a set of wishful beliefs, a well-scripted dialogue with which President Obama and the environmental alarmists are intending to scare the American people into accepting this thing that would be so devastating economically to America.

The other day a good friend of mine, LAMAR SMITH from the House—I like LAMAR. He and I were elected actually the same day many years ago. LAMAR is the chairman of the committee that has a lot of this jurisdiction, and he published an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal that was entitled, ''The Climate-Change Religion.'' Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this article be printed in the RECORD at the conclusion of my remarks.

I thank LAMAR SMITH for his continued leadership and support on this issue. As LAMAR highlights in the op-ed, the debate about global warming is predicated more on ''scare tactics than on fact based determinations.''

Global warming alarmism has evolved into a religion where one is either an alarmist or a skeptic. Some people are not aware of those two terms. Someone who has bought into this ''the world is coming to an end''—they are the alarmists. People who do not believe that, as myself, are skeptics. And being a skeptic is akin to heresy of the highest order. Good policy has to be based on good science, not on religion, and that requires science free from bias, whatever its conclusions may be.

The modern-day religion of climate change has been very artful in establishing and controlling carefully scripted talking points intended to scare the American people under the guise of environmental protectionism.

There are three main tenets of climate change alarmism that can be found in any related speech, which we heard the President recite during his recent Earth Day speech. Those three tenets are: No. 1, climate change is human caused. No. 2, climate change is already wreaking havoc across the globe. And No. 3, we must act today—now—before terrible things happen—the world coming to an end.

These three main tenets of climate change can be found on just about every administrative agency page, and they are creeping into every Federal policy determination.

As wise as the Presiding Officer is, something that he is not aware of that is happening in America today is that the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, adjusted its policy for receipt of disaster preparedness resources to require States that are to be accepting these FEMA funds to first accept the undeniable ''challenges posed by climate change'' and then spend State resources figuring how to plan for them before becoming eligible for disaster preparedness funds.

Look, I come from Oklahoma, a State that has tornadoes, called Tornado Alley. When this happens, as it did very recently in the south-central part of Oklahoma, for us to get the funds that we are entitled to from FEMA, the State of Oklahoma has to accept the policy that we as a State accept the undeniable challenges posed by climate change and then spend our State resources figuring out how to plan for them before becoming eligible for disaster relief. That is impossible.

People can't believe that is true when I tell them this is being done through the administration and this is adopted by these agencies. FEMA is supposed to be there to assist States in areas of the country for disaster relief. But they cannot get it. They are held hostage until they say something that they know is a lie and are held to that and spend State money. Again, that is not really believable, what I just stated, because it is so inconceivable that that could happen.

Now, the reality of this debate, however, is that the climate has been changing since the Earth was formed. I said the other day—a good friend of mine had an amendment on the floor. The amendment made comment to the fact that the climate is changing. Yes, it is changing. I think what the proponents of this idea are trying to do is to try to change it over to say that those people who are not blaming human emissions as the cause of all these problems are denying that climate changes.

I said on floor at that time, all evidence, archeological evidence, scriptural evidence, historical evidence is that climate has always, always changed. We all accept that. The big issue is, is it because of human emissions. That is where the science now

shows clearly that it is not. You are going keep hearing it, though, but it is not.

Further, the scientific debate around the role of climate change, its causes and projected impacts, is ongoing. There is no consensus, and the Wall Street Journal recently produced a great opinion piece that highlights a multitude of discrepancies in the assertion that 90 percent of the scientists believe this to be true. This is kind of interesting because any time you do not have science behind you, what you say is science is settled, science is settled. And sooner or later, people believe it, and they have not offered any evidence that would support that. That is what has happened.

This item really suggests that the Wall Street Journal opinion piece that highlights the discrepancies in the 97 percent, when they say 97 percent of the scientists believe manmade gas is causing global warming—the article points out that the myth of a scientific consensus is predicated on—and I am quoting now—''a handful of surveys and abstract-counting exercises that have been contradicted by more reliable research.''

Over the years, I have quoted a number of scientists. In fact, my Web site way back in the—probably 10 years ago, I started accumulating the number of scientists and their credibility and their qualifications and statements they have made. One I remember, from my head now, is Richard Lindzen. Richard Lindzen is a professor from MIT. He is recognized as one of the top climatologists in the country. When asked the question, he says, of course it is not true. But the reason people, the bureaucracy, are so concerned about it is that regulating carbon is a bureaucracy's dream. If you regulate carbon, you regulate life. That is what the motivation is around this.

I think that is a good article to read so people will realize that there is no consensus, scientific consensus. Some of them believe it, some of them do not.

As climate research continues to develop, limitations in the overall understanding of our climate and the limitations of scientific research have become increasingly evident. This could not be more evident than by the growing discrepancy between climate model predictions and actual observations. For example, alarmists failed to foresee the ongoing warming hiatus.

What is a warming hiatus? There has not been a change in that temperature in the last 15 years. This is something that is incontrovertible. Everybody understands that. They admit they didn't foresee this happening, but that hiatus is actually going on today. It is still continuing. It further explained that the source of such a discrepancy could be caused by the ''combinations of internal climate variability, missing or incorrect radiative forcing, and model response error.''

In other words, climate modeling cannot accurately project, much less predict, the climate of the future as climatologists and the broader scientific community have yet to fully understand how our climate system actually works today.

There is also a growing body of scientific studies suggesting that variations in solar radiation and natural climate variability have a leading role in climate change. Surprise, everybody, the Sun warms us. That is a shocker to a lot of people. It is not manmade gas. It is not CO_2 emissions. It is the Sun.

A number of independent studies assessing the impact of clouds have even suggested that water vapor feedback is entirely canceled out by cloud processes. Yet when the facts of reality do not appropriately align with the religion of climate change, the alarmists will simply try to explain these things away or conveniently exclude any science that shows they are wrong.

A favorite talking point of the climate change religion that is often used by senior officials within the Obama administration is that hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, floods—you name it—are proof of harm being caused by global warming. They all say that. I have yet to hear a speech by any of the alarmists where they do not talk about the fact that all the hurricanes and tornadoes—the nature of them, the severity of them, the occurrences—are proof of harm being caused by global warming. But the global data shows no increase in the number or intensity of such events, and even the IPCC itself acknowledges the lack of any evident relationship between extreme weather and climate.

This is interesting because the IPCC—I know most people are aware of this who are into this issue. But the IPCC is the Intergovernmental Panel On Climate Change. This is the United Nations. I even wrote a book about it. The longest chapter is talking about the United Nations, how they put this together. But they are the ones who have supposedly the science behind this whole thing, and they are the ones who are now admitting that there is no increase in intensity or occurrences of hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts or floods.

In fact, Roger Pielke was before our committee in July of 2013. He said the oft-asserted linkage between global warming and recent hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and drought is ''unsupportable based on evidence and research.''

I am still quoting now.

It is misleading, and just plain incorrect, to claim that disasters associated with hurricanes, tornadoes, floods or droughts have increased on climate timescales either in the United States or globally.

Hurricane landfalls have not increased in the United States ''in frequency, intensity or normalized damage since at least the year 1900.''

That is now an accepted fact. But in spite of that, every speech you hear, they talk about all the hurricanes and all the disasters taking place and the intensity that has come to us because of global warming.

The IPCC—again, this is the U.N. 2013 ''Fifth Assessment Report.'' Now, the assessment report that they come out with is—they will come out with a long, complicated report every so often, but then they will have kind of abbreviated ones for people like us to use to spread their propaganda. Their ''Fifth Assessment Report'' concluded that ''current data sets indicate no significant observed trends in global tropical cyclone frequency over the past century. . . . No robust trends in annual numbers of tropical storms, hurricanes and major hurricane counts have been identified over the last 100 years in the North Atlantic Basin.''

But let's just keep in mind everyone is now in agreement on that. Yet you still hear in the speeches that the world is coming to an end, and all the tornadoes—all this intensity is going to be disastrous to America.

Counter to the doomsday predictions of climate alarmists, increasing observations suggest a much reduced and practically harmless climate response to increased amounts of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Also missing from the climate alarmists' doomsday scenarios and well-scripted talking points are the benefits from increased carbon that has led to a greening of the planet and contributed to increased agricultural productivity.

People do not realize that you cannot grow things without CO_2. CO_2 is a fertilizer. It is something you cannot do without. No one ever talks about the benefits. The people are inducing that as a fertilizer on a daily basis.

Despite admitted gaps to the scientific understanding of climate change and a track record of climate modeling failures, President Obama and his environmental allies are holding fast to their bedrock beliefs. They are intent on selling the President's so-called Climate Action Plan to the American people that is less about protecting the environment and more about expanding the role of the government while enriching, I should say, some campaigns of some of our friendly Democrats. There is a guy named Tom Styer. Tom Styer lives in California. He is very, very wealthy. He is all wrapped up in this issue. He claims that he spent in the last election to elect people who go along with global warming $75 million of his money. Originally, he was going to spend $100 million, $50 million of his money and $50 million that he was going to raise. He found out he couldn't raise it, so that did not work.

I would say that his effort was not all that successful, judging from the results of the last election. But he is still out there. He still has a lot of money. He will not even miss the $75 million.

For the President's core domestic plan policy, the Clean Power Plan, let's look at what this is. Starting back in 2002, when it was perceived to be a very

popular issue, Members of this Senate started introducing bills that would be cap-and-trade bills that would address this issue. It is very similar to the plan the President is putting out now. At that time, I was the chairman of the committee—I think it was the Subcommittee on Clean Air in the Senate. I was a believer because everybody said that was true, until they came out—and there is a study made by the Charles River Associates and MIT that said if we comply with the cap and trade, the cost to the American people would be in the range of $300 billion to $400 billion every year. That, again, would be the largest tax increase in history. I thought, if the world is coming to an end, maybe we need to do that.

I started questioning the science behind it. I started getting responses from scientists all over America. First of all, 10 of them came in. Then it went up to 400 and then 1,000. I started publishing these on my Web site so people would know that there is another side to what they were calling this determined science by IPCC. They tried from that time—this is 2002—until last year to pass legislation that would legislatively give us a cap-and-trade system, but it got defeated more and more each year because the people have actually caught on. They have caught on that it is not a real thing, the science is not settled. That has led the President to say, all right, if you guys are not going to pass legislation, I am going to do it through regulation.

Where have we heard that before? That is everything the President has been doing that he can't get through in his policy that is through the legislature. Right now, you probably cannot get 20 votes in the whole Senate on this issue. He is trying to do it through regulation. We have a Clean Power Plan.

We had a hearing on this just last week. The President is no longer satisfied with the fact that he can now tell you what doctor you can use under ObamaCare, what type of investments you can use under that regulation or how fast your Internet will be. I understand that is coming up next. He would like to dictate what type and how much energy you can use.

With such high costs on the line, one would think there must be an equal amount if not greater number of benefits. What are the benefits? In reality, according to various impact assessments, the environmental benefits of the Clean Power Plan—again, admittedly, it is going to be $479 billion initially, the cost of this, and the core domestic policy of the President's Climate Action Plan that is supposed to protect this country from the impending impacts we are facing, the climate change—all of these costs will reduce CO_2 concentrations by less than 0.5 percent. The global average temperature rise will be reduced by only 0.01 degree Fahrenheit, and sea level rise will be reduced by 0.3 millimeters. That is the thickness of three sheets of paper.

Further, these minuscule benefits would be rendered pointless by the continued emissions growth in India and China. The chart is up now. It is very significant.

Because we look at this and look at what China and India are contributing to the atmosphere by their emissions. Now, there is the United States. In fact, the figure is that China alone produces more CO_2 in 1 month—that is 800 million tons—than the Clean Power Plan will reduce in 1 year, and that is 500 million tons.

Perhaps what is most telling is that President Obama's EPA didn't even bother to measure what impacts the proposed Clean Power Plan would have on the environment. This is something which has been very well documented.

I guess what we are saying here is that it doesn't really matter what we are doing here in the United States. This is not where the problem is. But that is to be expected under the religion of climate change. When the science doesn't add up and the projections don't pan out and the weather won't cooperate, alarmists will refer to their commitment to a higher moral authority or obligation. As evidenced by the Clean Power Plan, it doesn't matter if these policies provide any benefit in climate change; crusaders certainly will not be dissuaded by the exorbitant costs.

It is ironic, however, that while touting a commitment to a moral obligation, which we have heard time and again from this administration, the resulting policies will cause real economic hardship to this country and to the most vulnerable populations. This is something people need to pay attention to. The increase in the cost of fuel for Americans would be—and it has already been documented—the electricity cost will go up by double digits in 43 States. And whom does it hurt the most? It hurts the poor people. Those individuals who spend the highest amount of their expendable income on heating their homes will be hit the worst. This hypocrisy is kind of akin to jetting around the country in a 232-foot private plane on Earth Day to warn global citizens of the harm caused by increased CO_2 emissions in the atmosphere.

The President's international discussions around climate change stand to be equally harmful to the American people. The President likes to point to his recent agreement with China as evidence of international cooperation on climate change, but this agreement is nothing more than an exercise in theatrics.

China is sitting back right now licking its chops and hoping America will start reducing its emissions and drive its manufacturing base overseas to places where they don't have these emission restrictions. The farce of an agreement lets China continue business as usual, and that is 800 million tons of CO_2 a month until 2030. Boy, that is until 2030, while hard-working American taxpayers are going to foot the cost of the President's economically disastrous climate agenda.

Despite what the President might say to the international community, without the backing of the U.S. Congress, which the President does not have, he has no authority to reach binding or legally enforceable agreements with other countries. I will remind the President of this again in December.

Some people don't know that the United Nations has a big party every year in December, and it has been going on now for 15 years. Every year, they invite all the countries—this is all through the United Nations—from all around the world, some 192 countries, to this big party. I am talking about caviar and all you can drink and all that. All they have to do is say they will agree to try to lower their emissions of CO_2.

I remember the party in Copenhagen 2 years ago. As I recall, Obama was there, Kerry was there, PELOSI was there, and BOXER was there. All the far-left liberals were there to try to convince the people from these other countries that we were going to pass a cap-and-trade bill, so they better do it too.

Well, I waited until they were all through with their things, and I went over to Copenhagen. I tell the Chair, I was the one-man truth squad. I went over to explain the truth to the other 191 countries. I told them that these people are lying to them by saying we will pass legislation. I said we are not going to pass legislation, and of course we did not pass legislation.

I have to say this. The 191 countries over there all had one thing in common: They all hated me, but they all understood that I was right and that there weren't the votes in this country to pass it.

The American people are starting to catch on, and that is why I am not surprised, as I mentioned, that the Gallup Poll that was released just last March concluded that the current level of worry on environmental issues remains at or near record lows, and among those concerns on the environmental issue, global warming is second to last. What Americans do care about is the economy and Federal spending and the size and power of the Federal Government.

The disintegrating case for climate alarm coupled with an American public that is quickly losing interest does not pan well for the President's climate agenda or his self-acclaimed environmental legacy. Climate alarmists have spent just as much energy, if not more, convincing the world that it is bad to be a skeptic of what was once referred to as global cooling and then became global warming and is now global climate change. The tenet of the modern climate change religion cannot withstand the scrutiny of the merits, primarily because it is a result of political design and not scientific revelation. And that is why anyone who is

willing to point out discrepancies within the climate change debate or raise legitimate concerns will be subjected to a barrage of arrogant sarcasm and personal attacks.

Whether the alarmists call it global warming or climate change, the American people understand that the President's climate agenda is not about protecting the public; it is about a power grab.

I will make three final points.

First of all, I think we all know that the climate is always changing. I remember—and I will go from memory on this. We have cycles, and the cycles have been taking place all throughout history. In 1895, we went into a period of cooling, and that was when they first started saying that another ice age was coming, and that lasted 30 years, until about 1918. In 1918, a change came about. It started getting warmer, and we went into a 30-year warming period. It was the first time the phrase ''global warming'' was used. In 1945, that changed, and we went into a cooling spell, and the same thing has happened since then. Right now, of course, we are in kind of a remission era.

This is what is interesting: No one can deny that 1945 was the year when we had the largest surge in the emissions of CO_2 in the history of this country, and that precipitated not a warming period but a cooling period. That is first.

The second thing is, in Australia—I wasn't going to mention this until I talked yesterday to one of the members of Parliament in Australia. Several years ago, Australia bought into this argument and said: We are going to lead the way, and we will start restricting our emissions.

They imposed a carbon tax on their economy a few years ago, and it cost $9 billion in lost economic activity each year and destroyed tens of thousands of jobs. It was so bad that the government recently voted to repeal the carbon tax, and their economy is better for it. In fact, it was announced just following the repeal that Australia experienced a record job growth of 121,000 jobs—far more than the 10,000 to 15,000 jobs economists had expected.

There is a country that tried it, and they found out what it cost, and you would think we could learn from their mistakes.

The third thing is to ask the question. What if I am wrong and they are right? There is an answer to that. I remember when President Obama was first elected. He appointed Lisa Jackson, and she became the Director of the Environmental Protection Agency. During the time she was there, they were building this thing up, and we were holding hearings in the committee I chaired at that time.

I asked her: In the event that one of these bills passes on cap and trade or the President comes up with some kind of proposal or a regulation that does the same thing, will that have the effect of lowering CO_2 emissions worldwide?

Her answer: No, it wouldn't.

And the reason it wouldn't is because this is where the problem is. The problem is in China, Mexico, and India. So the mere fact that we do something just in our country has a reverse effect because as we chase away our manufacturing base and it goes to one of those countries—and China is hoping to be one of those countries—where they have no emission requirements, it would have the effect of not decreasing but increasing emissions.

If you bought into this and you agree that I am wrong and they are right, just keep in mind that by their own emission this would not reduce CO_2, and that is what we are supposed to be concerned with.

The people of America have awakened. The economy and the Obama foreign policy of appeasement have captured their interest, and these are concerns that are real concerns and things we ought to do today.

With that, I yield the floor.

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

[From the Wall Street Journal, Apr. 23, 2015]

THE CLIMATE-CHANGE RELIGION

(By Lamar Smith)

Earth Day provided a fresh opening for Obama to raise alarms about global warming based on beliefs, not science.

''Today, our planet faces new challenges, but none pose a greater threat to future generations than climate change,'' President Obama wrote in his proclamation for Earth Day on Wednesday. ''As a Nation, we must act before it is too late.''

Secretary of State John Kerry, in an Earth Day op-ed for USA Today, declared that climate change has put America ''on a dangerous path—along with the rest of the world.''

Both the president and Mr. Kerry cited rapidly warming global temperatures and ever-more-severe storms caused by climate change as reasons for urgent action.

Given that for the past decade and a half global-temperature increases have been negligible, and that the worsening-storms scenario has been widely debunked, the pronouncements from the Obama administration sound more like scare tactics than fact-based declarations.

At least the United Nations' then-top climate scientist, Rajendra Pachauri, acknowledged—however inadvertently—the faith-based nature of climate-change rhetoric when he resigned amid scandal in February. In a farewell letter, he said that ''the protection of Planet Earth, the survival of all species and sustainability of our ecosystems is more than a mission. It is my religion and my dharma.''

Instead of letting political ideology or climate ''religion'' guide government policy, we should focus on good science. The facts alone should determine what climate policy options the U.S. considers. That is what the scientific method calls for: inquiry based on measurable evidence. Unfortunately this administration's climate plans ignore good science and seek only to advance a political agenda.

Climate reports from the U.N.—which the Obama administration consistently embraces—are designed to provide scientific cover for a preordained policy. This is not good science. Christiana Figueres, the official leading the U.N.'s effort to forge a new international climate treaty later this year in Paris, told reporters in February that the real goal is ''to change the economic development model that has been reigning for at least 150 years.'' In other words, a central objective of these negotiations is the redistribution of wealth among nations. It is apparent that President Obama shares this vision.

The Obama administration recently submitted its pledge to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The commitment would lock the U.S. into reducing greenhouse-gas emissions more than 25% by 2025 and ''economy-wide emission reductions of 80% or more by 2050.'' The president's pledge lacks details about how to achieve such goals without burdening the economy, and it doesn't quantify the specific climate benefits tied to his pledge.

America will never meet the president's arbitrary targets without the country being subjected to costly regulations, energy rationing and reduced economic growth. These policies won't make America stronger. And these measures will have no significant impact on global temperatures. In a hearing last week before the House Science, Space and Technology Committee, of which I am chairman, climate scientist Judith Curry testified that the president's U.N pledge is estimated to prevent only a 0.03 Celsius temperature rise. That is three-hundredths of one degree.

In June 2014 testimony before my committee, former Assistant Secretary for Energy Charles McConnell noted that the president's Clean Power Plan—requiring every state to meet federal carbon-emission-reduction targets—would reduce a sea-level increase by less than half the thickness of a dime. Policies like these will only make the government bigger and Americans poorer, with no environmental benefit.

The White House's Climate Assessment implies that extreme weather is getting worse due to human-caused climate change. The president regularly makes this unsubstantiated claim—most recently in his Earth Day proclamation, citing ''more severe weather disasters.''

Even the U.N. doesn't agree with him on that one: In its 2012 Special Report on Extreme Events, the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says there is ''high agreement'' among leading experts that long-term trends in weather disasters are not attributable to human-caused climate change. Why do the president and others in his administration keep repeating this untrue claim?

Climate alarmists have failed to explain the lack of global warming over the past 15 years. They simply keep adjusting their malfunctioning climate models to push the supposedly looming disaster further into the future. Following the U.N.'s 2008 report, its claims about the melting of Himalayan glaciers, the decline of crop yields and the effects of sea-level rise were found to be invalid. The InterAcademy Council, a multinational scientific organization, reviewed the report in 2010 and identified ''significant shortcomings in each major step of [the U.N.] assessment process.''

The U.N. process is designed to generate alarmist results. Many people don't realize that the most-publicized documents of the U.N. reports are not written by scientists. In fact, the scientists who work on the underlying science are forced to step aside to allow partisan political representatives to develop the ''Summary for Policy Makers.'' It is scrubbed to minimize any suggestion of scientific uncertainty and is publicized before the actual science is released. The Summary for Policy Makers is designed to give

newspapers and headline writers around the world only one side of the debate.

Yet those who raise valid questions about the very real uncertainties surrounding the understanding of climate change have their motives attacked, reputations savaged and livelihoods threatened. This happens even though challenging prevailing beliefs through open debate and critical thinking is fundamental to the scientific process.

The intellectual dishonesty of senior administration officials who are unwilling to admit when they are wrong is astounding. When assessing climate change, we should focus on good science, not politically correct science.

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

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

CELEBRATING ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today in celebration of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. In 1979, President Jimmy Carter established Asian Pacific Heritage Week. This week of recognition was expanded to a month-long celebration in 1992. Every May, Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month provides Americans the opportunity to reflect upon the many contributions made by the Asian American and Pacific Islander community in Nevada and across the Nation.

May is a significant month in Asian American and Pacific Islander history. The first 10 days of May coincide with the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in the United States on May 7, 1843, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869, which relied heavily on the work of Chinese immigrants. But Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month does not only recognize the past achievements of this vibrant community; this month is also a chance to honor the civil rights activists, farmers, scientists, entrepreneurs, health professionals, educators, and other members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, who continue to help shape our Nation into an even better place culturally, economically, and politically.

In Nevada, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are among the fastest growing populations and have enriched Nevada's history and culture. Hundreds of thousands of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders live in Nevada, and contribute to small business development and boost our economy. I am proud to represent such strong and innovative people, and I continue to work hard to enact legislation that positively impacts the Asian American and Pacific Islander community. For instance, I joined my colleague, Hawaii Senator MAZIE HIRONO, earlier this year in fighting for legislation that would reunite children and families of Filipino World War II veterans, and I will continue my steadfast support of family reunification efforts.

America is a nation of immigrants with diverse backgrounds and united common principles, which is part of what makes us strong, resilient, and unique. This month, we celebrate the wonderful and important contributions of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community in Nevada and throughout the Nation, and I extend my best wishes for a joyous Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

RECOGNIZING THE DIGITAL INVESTIGATION CENTER AT CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, last month, I had the opportunity to visit the award-winning Leahy Center for Digital Investigation at Champlain College in Burlington, VT. One of the Nation's top law enforcement officers, Federal Bureau of Investigation Director James Comey, joined me for a tour of this impressive facility. It was a fitting time to visit the center; earlier in the week, the LCDI was recognized as the Best Cybersecurity Higher Education Program in the country by SC Magazine.

We all know that computers and technology have changed not only the way people commit crimes, but also the way law enforcement investigates and prosecutes criminals. Students here are learning firsthand how to help law enforcement agencies across the country in areas related to computer forensics and other forms of digital investigation. By giving them this hands-on experience, Champlain College and the Leahy Center are training the next generation of analysts who will work to combat cyberthreats and other digital threats.

I was especially pleased that the FBI Director joined me in visiting the LCDI. Both of us left with a deep appreciation for the excellent education the next generation of cybersecurity professionals are receiving at the Leahy center. These students receive intense hands-on experience, dealing with the same issues that practitioners in the field work on every day. With a 90 percent placement rate in relevant fields, the center is a critical part of ensuring that law enforcement has the expertise and resources it needs to face the cyberthreats of the future.

The cyberthreats we face are real, and the training students receive from the Leahy Center for Digital Investigation will help us face those threats head on. I congratulate Champlain College and the center for this achievement, and look forward to years of success to come.

RECOGNIZING RED HEN BAKING COMPANY

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Red Hen Baking Company was founded in 1999 by Randy George and Eliza Cain in the Mad River Valley of Vermont. They started as a small operation, baking and delivering fresh bread to nearby stores and restaurants. They used pure ingredients, baked around the clock, and soon, with the support of the surrounding community, and as the word-of-mouth testimonials spread, their small operation grew into the Hen we know today. They moved their operation to the popular Camp Meade location, in my hometown of Middlesex.

Red Hen Baking Company exemplifies the spirit and the vision of Vermont business. Randy often says that Vermont is the only State in which he could imagine starting and running a successful bakery of this kind. They tend to do things the right way, rather than the easy way—from the selection of the essential elements of their bread, to their employee treatment policies and practices. Randy, Eliza and the Hen's ''barnyard animals'' take pride in their product, and it shows.

Randy always reminds his customers that his employees are the most important part of his bakery business, so it was no surprise when he was invited by President Obama and Labor Secretary Tom Perez to join them at the White House as a ''Champion of Change'' for working families. Employers from across the country shared their success stories, and the devastating and impossible choices working families face when paid sick leave is not among their benefits. The panel was a tremendous success, and I was proud to have Vermont represented by such a steadfast supporter of fair treatment for employees.

Randy and Liza's message is clear. Put the people in your business at the core of everything you do, and they will work hard for you for years to come—in the Hen's case, even decades. Randy and Liza offer health coverage, fair, livable wages, and paid sick days. They want their employees to thrive both personally and professionally, and they have encouraged other businesses to adopt similar standards.

Marcelle and I are so happy to live in Middlesex and to have our neighbors setting such high standards for the treatment of a dedicated workforce. I want to congratulate Randy and Liza on their successful business, and to thank them. Happy, healthy employees are productive employees, and it is right to invest in each other's success.

It is the right way, and it is the Vermont way. We look forward to our visits every time Marcelle and I come home.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF DIVISION M OF THE CONSOLIDATED AND FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015, THE EXPATRIATE HEALTH COVERAGE CLARIFICATION ACT

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a statement in support of Division M of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act be printed in the RECORD.

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

STATEMENT OF SENATORS CARPER, TOOMEY, COONS, AND RUBIO IN SUPPORT OF DIVISION M OF THE CONSOLIDATED AND FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015, THE EXPATRIATE HEALTH COVERAGE CLARIFICATION ACT.

At the end of the last Congress, a bipartisan group of Senators and Members of Congress led by Senators Carper, Toomey, Coons and Rubio, worked together to secure passage of the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act of 2014. That legislation, which was included as Division M of the Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, provides important technical clarifications of how the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) applies to health coverage provided by U.S. insurers to globally mobile employees. It puts those U.S. insurers on equal footing with their foreign counterparts and protects jobs in this country.

As the Administration prepares to begin the rulemaking process to implement the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act, we want to ensure Congressional intent is clear so the Act is implemented properly. We are aware the Congressional Record already contains two statements that reflect Congressional intent on certain elements of the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act, but further explanation will aid the Administration in its implementation efforts.

The issues that we seek to clarify today are: relief from the ACA's health insurer fee, the effective date of the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act, treatment of groups of similarly situated individuals (including student and religious missionary groups), who to take into account when determining enrollment in expatriate health insurance plans, locations where expatriate plans must provide coverage for qualified expatriates assigned or transferred to the United States, actuarial value, and reporting requirements.

One important clarification relates to the application of the health insurer fee established in section 9010 of the ACA to expatriate health insurance plans. Under the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act, premiums with respect to persons covered by qualified expatriate health insurance plans are not included in the calculation of the amount of that issuer's share of the health insurance fee. To make certain that the intent of that provision is abundantly clear, we want to iterate that no health insurer fee will be owed with respect to expatriate health insurance plans for 2016 and beyond.

Additionally, in implementing the special rule related to the health insurer fee for 2014 and 2015, it is the intent of Congress that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) assess less than the full ''applicable amount'' otherwise specified in ACA section 9010 for 2014 and 2015, and that it refund or credit any excess funds already paid by expatriate health insurance issuers for 2014.

In addition to those important clarifications, we believe additional clarifications will further ensure appropriate implementation of the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act.

The Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act became law on December 16, 2014. The legislative language provides that the Act takes effect upon enactment and applies to expatriate health plans issued or renewed on or after July 1, 2015, unless otherwise specified. It is important to clarify that Congressional intent is to provide immediate relief to U.S. issuers of expatriate health insurance plans effective on the date of enactment, and for the additional requirements imposed by the Act to apply only to plans issued or renewed on or after July 1, 2015, to give the Administration time to issue guidance on these new requirements.

Another clarification relates to the treatment of ''groups of similarly situated individuals,'' which includes student and religious missionary groups, under the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act. Congress does not intend every student or religious missionary or other similarly situated group to have to endure a lengthy approval process through which the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor determine that international health care coverage is appropriate for the group. Rather, if a health plan meets the requirements of being an expatriate health plan and a group of similarly situated individuals meets the requirements of eligibility to purchase such a plan, we expect that these groups can purchase plans as expeditiously as possible. We expect the Secretaries will issue guidance on this matter that is consistent with the language of the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act for these groups to access health insurance and other related services and support in multiple countries.

The Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act limits its relief to expatriate health plans that meet the standards established in the law. One of those standards is that ''[s]ubstantially all of the primary enrollees in such plan or coverage are qualified expatriates . . . .'' It is important to clarify that Congress does not intend for individuals who are enrolled in COBRA or other continuation coverage under the plan to be taken into account when determining whether substantially all of the primary enrollees are qualified expatriates.

Another standard is that where an expatriate health plan provides coverage for qualified expatriates who are transferred or assigned to the United States, the plan must provide certain coverages in ''. . . such other country or countries as the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of Labor, may designate (after taking into account the barriers and prohibitions to providing health care services in the countries as designated).'' It is important to clarify that Congress does not intend that expatriates in foreign countries receive duplicate or unnecessary health insurance coverage. Instead, the Secretaries should promulgate guidance establishing that, by virtue of having U.S.-issued expatriate health coverage, qualified expatriates need the full benefits and protections of the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act in such locations as are necessary for the individual to perform his/her job responsibilities.

The Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act says that plan sponsors must reasonably believe that ''the benefits provided by the expatriate health plan satisfy a standard at least actuarially equivalent to the level provided for in section 36B(c)(2)(C)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code.'' The intent of Congress is to require expatriate health coverage to meet the minimum-value as it is delineated in the Internal Revenue Code 36B(c)(2)(C)(ii). We believe the law allows for employers and issuers to retain the flexibility to design and offer plans with a higher value as they may determine necessary and appropriate to meet the needs and circumstances of their covered population.

Finally, there is the issue of reporting requirements. The ACA added section 6055 to the Internal Revenue Code, which provides that every provider of minimum essential coverage will report coverage information by filing an informational return with the IRS and furnishing a statement to individuals. The information is used by the IRS to administer, and individuals to show compliance with, the ACA's individual shared responsibility provision. It is Congress's intent that any additional reporting that may be required as a result of the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act or related guidance should be kept as minimal as possible, recognize the unique nature of expatriate health plans, and be incorporated into the existing requirements under section 6055. Should future laws or regulations streamline the reporting requirements for domestic health plans, we expect that this relief be provided equally to expatriate health plans.

We believe these are important clarifications that will ensure the Expatriate Health Coverage Clarification Act is implemented consistent with Congressional intent and will permit U.S.-based expatriate health insurance issuers to compete with their foreign counterparts.

RECOGNIZING FLIGHT OFFICER WILLIAM A. COLBERT, JR., OF THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize Flight Officer William August Colbert, Jr., for his honorable service to the United States as a member of the famed Tuskegee Airmen. Mr. Colbert is a lifelong Marylander who was born in Annapolis and attended Anne Arundel County public schools, graduating from Wiley H. Bates High School. Upon his graduation, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps and was stationed in Allegany County, MD where he met and married his wife, the late Vivian Lee Colbert. He ultimately made Cumberland his home.

After spending time working in the Baltimore shipyards, Mr. Colbert enlisted in the Army Air Force in 1943 and achieved the rank of flight officer at the Tuskegee Army Air Field. He was alerted for overseas duty on two occasions, but the war ended prior to his deployment. While Mr. Colbert never saw combat, he learned to fly with the best, and became a Red Tail. Mr. Colbert has always considered his contribution to the Tuskegee Airmen as what he was called to do as a U.S. citizen. He did so without expectation of fame or fanfare.

When Mr. Colbert returned to Cumberland after his military service, he worked as a tire builder for the Kelly-

Springfield Tire Company for 33 years until his retirement. He became a member of Fulton Myers American Legion Post. He and his wife had two children but lost one due to complications of childbirth. They raised their son William Augustus Colbert, III, who went to Bowie State University, where he met and married his wife Anna Hudson Colbert. Mr. Colbert has been blessed with four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Last July, Mr. Colbert became a great-great-grandfather. He is an admired family man who has opened his home, heart, and talents—including hunting, fishing, photography, and jazz—to family and friends alike. Mr. Colbert has enjoyed gardening and carpentry, and he personally ensured that the U.S. flag was raised and lowered each day on the former Pine Avenue playground, which was located directly across the street from his house.

The contributions of Mr. Colbert and his fellow Tuskegee Airmen—the first African American combat unit in the Army Air Corps—played a crucial role in integrating the U.S. armed services. They helped to shatter stereotypes through their distinguished service at home and abroad.

In the 109th Congress, I was honored to cosponsor legislation awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition long overdue of their unique military record, which inspired revolutionary reform in the Armed Forces, and to join the President of the United States and my colleagues in Congress in presenting the medal to 300 members of the Tuskegee Airmen in a ceremony in the U.S. Capitol. The medal features three Tuskegee Airmen in profile—an officer, a mechanic and a pilot. The eagle symbolizes flight, nobility, and the highest ideals of our Nation. The years 1941–1949 indicate the years during which these airmen were assigned to segregated units. The reverse side depicts three types of airplanes flown by the Tuskegee Airmen in World War II: the P–40, P–51 and B–25. The original gold medal remains on display at the Smithsonian Institution.

Mr. Colbert was in failing health at the time, so he was unable to attend that ceremony and be presented with a copy of the medal. I am pleased to announce that on Friday, May 15, 2015, Mr. Colbert will finally receive the recognition he has earned during a presentation of the Congressional Gold Medal along with presentations by State and local elected officials, veterans service organizations, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, NAACP, in his hometown of Cumberland, MD.

I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing sincere appreciation and congratulations to Mr. Colbert for his outstanding service to our country in uniform and in his community.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO MARY ELIZABETH CUNNINGHAM

● Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I would like to pay tribute to a Connecticut resident who recently demonstrated extraordinary capability and heroism. Mary Elizabeth Cunningham, a resident of Niantic, who works as an emergency room nurse at Yale-New Haven Hospital, was flying from Chicago to Hartford on April 22. When she heard an announcement over the loudspeaker seeking the assistance of any medical professionals on board, she quickly volunteered to help a passenger experiencing respiratory difficulties. After successfully providing aid, Ms. Cunningham was about to return to her seat when she was asked to help another passenger, who had lost consciousness. While assessing the situation, she began to feel dizzy herself, along with other passengers and members of the flight crew.

Despite the challenging circumstances, she did not panic but instead urged the flight crew to make an emergency landing, fearing something was wrong. The pilot swiftly landed the plane in Buffalo, and although 17 passengers were later evaluated by medical personnel, it appears that everyone has made a full recovery. Had Ms. Cunningham not been on the plane to assist with handling the situation, that might not have been the case.

Ms. Cunningham deserves the highest praise, not just for her choice to become a health provider, but for her speedy and decisive actions to help those in need and recognizing a potentially disastrous situation. I am particularly pleased to recognize her on National Nurses Day, when we recognize the essential services nurses provide in hospitals and communities all across the country. I know all of Connecticut joins me in honoring and thanking Ms. Cunningham for her exemplary performance in the line of duty.●

TOP MONTANA TEAM IN CAPITOL HILL CHALLENGE

● Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I wish to recognize a group of Montana students and their teacher, who truly embody the innovative and hardworking spirit that has, for so long, been the engine of our great Nation.

Ms. Jennifer Zirbel and her class at Lone Peak High School in Gallatin Gateway, MT, recently represented Montana well in the Capitol Hill Challenge with their exemplary performance in the 12th annual Stock Market Game.

There were 5,000 high school and middle schools teams from all 50 States that participated in the Challenge. As the top performing Montana team in the competition, they have demonstrated exemplary knowledge of math, economics, business and the global economy. They have made Montana proud. They are outstanding young Montanans who have proven that hard work and dedication can lead to tremendous success in whatever you set your mind to. The real world financial and business skills that they have gained through their participation in this program will no doubt serve them well in their future as active citizens.●

TRIBUTE TO CHEYENNE BRADY

● Ms. HEITKAMP. Mr. President, I congratulate Ms. Cheyenne Brady, a resident of the great State of North Dakota, on being crowned the 2015–2016 Miss Indian World.

The Miss Indian World competition is the largest and most prestigious cultural pageant for young Native women and was recently held during the Gathering of Nations Powwow at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Twenty contestants from across the United States and Canada were judged on public speaking, a personal interview, talent presentation, traditional dance, and an essay. Throughout the competition, contestants demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of their culture and tribal history. Cheyenne won awards for the Best Essay as well as Best Dancer categories.

Cheyenne is a member of the Sac and Fox Nation, and also represents the Hidatsa Arikara, Cheyenne, Pawnee, Otoe, Kiowa Apache, and Tonkawa tribes. At 22 years old, she is a student at North Dakota State University majoring in behavioral health and was recently accepted into North Dakota State University's graduate school program for American Indian Public Health. As Congress works to support Native youth and address their holistic needs that include behavioral and mental health issues, it is heartening to see Cheyenne specialize in areas so critical to helping her tribe and community members succeed.

I wish Cheyenne well as she travels across the United States and Canada in her role as Miss Indian World. During her reign, Cheyenne hopes to instill a sense of pride in Native youth and will encourage them to embrace their culture. It is truly a great honor to have such a talented young woman represent North Dakota and Indian Country on the world stage.●

TRIBUTE TO STEVEN LEACH

● Mr. SANDERS. Mr. President, I would like to recognize the inspiring accomplishments of Steven Leach, a 20-year U.S. Army veteran and past department commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars from Pawlet, VT, who is known by his fellow veterans, friends, and acquaintances as ''The Monument Man.'' Steve has long been a strong leader within the veterans' community, especially as a member of Harned-Fowler VFW Post 6471 in Manchester Center, VT, and a passionate advocate for veterans and their family members.

Most recently, Steve has dedicated himself to preserving the memory of the service and sacrifice of wartime veterans for future generations of Vermonters, as well as visitors to the Green Mountain State. In 2010, he spearheaded a major initiative to erect a monument commemorating the thousands of Vermont veterans who served in the Korean war, including the 94 Vermonters who were killed in action during ''the forgotten war'' and the 20 who remain missing to this day. For more than 3 years, Steve planned, designed, coordinated, and fundraised to make the monument a reality, and on August 5, 2013, he helped inaugurate the Vermont Korean War Monument in Manchester, VT.

Inspired by the overwhelming support for that effort and not one to rest on his laurels, Steve set out to erect a similar monument in honor of World War II veterans, to be installed at the new Bennington Welcome Center on Route 279, also known as the Vermont World War II Veterans Memorial Highway. That project is almost complete and will be dedicated on August 15 as part of the events commemorating the 70th anniversary of the conclusion of World War II. On that date, thanks in large part to Steve's efforts, Vermonters will gather to unveil a monument recognizing the sacrifices of those who contributed to the defeat of tyranny 70 years ago, including the more than 1,200 Vermonters who died as a result of combat.

Between the two monument campaigns, Steve has logged hundreds of volunteer hours, travelled thousands of miles, raised tens of thousands of dollars, and, most importantly, touched the hearts of countless Vermonters in his quest to honor the service of our State's veterans.

Steve Leach is another one of those extraordinary veterans we all have in our home States, who, although he took off his uniform, never really quit serving his country. This humble man will be rather embarrassed that I have chosen to place him in the spotlight for his selfless devotion to public service. His tireless efforts deserve special recognition in this body, and I am so proud to share his accomplishments with my colleagues.●

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–22. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the State of Michigan memorializing the United States Congress to require the U.S. Department of Defense to ensure that replacement aircraft are assigned to Selfridge Air National Guard Base to compensate for the proposed elimination of the A–10 fleet; to the Committee on Armed Services.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 29

Whereas, The proposed U.S. Department of Defense budget would eliminate the nation's A-10 fleet, including aircraft at Michigan's Selfridge Air National Guard Base. Selfridge currently is home to 18 A–10 Thunderbolt II aircraft, directly supporing 535 jobs related to that mission; and

Whereas, The proposed cuts would have a dramatic effect on the lives and morale of the dedicated men and women who choose to serve our country at Selfridge Air National Guard Base and other U.S. military bases. The elimination of the A–10 fleet would place in jeopardy more than 400 jobs at Selfridge alone; and

Whereas, In Michigan, these proposed cuts would have immeasurable impacts on Macomb County and the local communities surrounding the Selfridge Air National Guard Base. For nearly a century, the base has been a source of community pride and local jobs, with the local economic benefit worth more than $700 million to residents and businesses in several surrounding cities and townships. In addition, the base is a key component of disaster response for the entire state and a vital base for our nation's homeland security; and

Whereas, The A–10 fleet should not be eliminated until an enduring fighter aircraft mission, or suitable enduring non-fighter mission supplementary to the KC–135 Air Refueling Tanker, can be assigned to Selfridge Air National Guard Base. The elimination of the A–10 fleet will make Selfridge vulnerable to closure in future Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommendations. Assigning replacement aircraft would not only maintain the viability of this important base for homeland security, but would also be cost-effective: the Air National Guard can operate aircraft at about half the cost of an active duty unit; and

Whereas, The brave pilots and crew who serve in the A–10 unit based at Selfridge Air National Guard Base have performed brilliantly against the enemies of freedom on battlefields across the globe providing desperately needed close air support for our nation's warriors. It is vital to our national security that those skilled airmen continue to be utilized to defend our nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we memorialize the Congress of the United States to require the U.S. Department of Defense to ensure that replacement aircraft are assigned to Selfridge Air National Guard Base to compensate for the proposed elimination of the A–10 fleet; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of the Michigan congressional delegation.

POM–23. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming requesting the United States Congress to eliminate the freeze on longer combination vehicles and consent to the creation of a voluntary compact between Western States that will establish uniform size and capacity, routes, configuration, and operating conditions for longer combination vehicles; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

HOUSE ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION 2

Whereas, one of the most significant ways to improve freight system performance on the highways of the western United States is through the use of more efficient trucks and track combinations; and

Whereas, over the past two (2) decades, longer combination vehicles (LCVs), which are tractor-trailer combinations with two (2) or more trailers that have a gross weight exceeding eighty thousand (80,000) pounds, have demonstrated considerable benefits to the general public through increased productivity, higher safety ratings, increased fuel savings, emissions reductions and congestion mitigation; and

Wereas, a Federal Highway Administration freeze on state authority to expand the of LCVs has been in place since 1991, and since that time there has been substantial population, traffic congestion and vehicle registration growth and a significant increase in vehicle miles traveled and vehicle emissions; and

Whereas, eliminating the freeze on LCVs for the affected states, including Wyoming, will give these states the flexibility to establish uniformity in LCV, oversight and find ways to benefit from LCV operations in each of the affected states and throughout the western United States; and

Whereas, consenting to a voluntary compact or agreement between the states of Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming will allow these states to establish uniform size and weight limits for LCVs, which are not to exceed one hundred twenty-nine thousand (129,000) pounds gross vehicle combination weight or one hundred (100) foot cargo carrying length, and adopt LCV routes, configurations and operating conditions: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Members of the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:

Section 1. That Congress is urged to lift the freeze on longer commercial vehicles for the affected Western states, including Wyoming, in order to take advantage of new transportation strategies to improve highway efficiency and reduce vehicle miles traveled, traffic congestion, fuel consumption and air pollution emissions.

Section 2. That Congress consent to the creation of voluntary compact or agreement between the states. of Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming that will establish uniform LCV size capacity, routes, configurations and operating conditions.

Section 3. That the Secretary of State of Wyoming transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress and to the Wyoming Congressional Delegation.

POM–24. A joint resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming calling on the United States Congress, state, and local authorities to take action to prevent further damage and remediate damages caused by free-roaming feral horses on rangelands in the West and to develop effective fertility control methods to reduce the populations of free-roaming feral horses in the West; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION 3

Whereas, Wyoming has recognized the Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971 and free-roaming horses are defined as feral under W.S. 11–48–101(a) (iii); and

Whereas, the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) estimates that almost fifty thousand (50,000) feral horses roam BLM managed rangelands in the West, with nearly three thousand (3,000) of those feral horses, the majority of which descend from animals turned out by ranchers, roaming public rangelands in Wyoming; and

Whereas, free-roaming feral horses have virtually no natural predators in Wyoming

nor the West and BLM evidence suggests the population of feral horses can double in size about every four (4) years if left uncontrolled; and

Whereas, BLM estimates that the current free-roaming population of feral horses significantly exceeds the number that can exist in healthy balance with other public rangeland resources and uses, including wildlife and domestic livestock grazing; and

Whereas, free-roaming feral horses, among other things, trample and destroy vegetation, hard-pack soil, over-graze and decimate riparian areas causing degradation in areas that provide important habitat for native species such as pronghorn, mule deer, bighorn sheep and sage grouse; and

Whereas, the state of Wyoming has a federally approved sage grouse conservation plan, the efficacy of which is being compromised by continuing habitat damage resulting from free-roaming horses; and

Whereas, the number of free-roaming feral horses removed from public rangelands in the West by BLM in compliance with the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, now far exceeds the number of feral horses adopted or sold; and

Whereas, those feral horses not adopted by the public are held in long-term pastures or short-term corrals, costing BLM nationally an estimated fifty-eight million dollars ($58,000,000.00) per year; and

Whereas, evidence suggests the development and use of effective fertility control methods can limit the populations of free-roaming feral horses, lessen the need to remove free-roaming feral horses from the state's rangelands, improve the health of the rangelands in the West, conserve wildlife habitat and save taxpayers money; and

Whereas, the following reports provide, among other things, data, statistics and recommended strategies to manage free-roaming feral horses in the West and protect the state's rangeland resources and uses: Rangewide Interagency Sage-grouse Conservation Team, Near-Term Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Action Plan (September 2012); Ted Williams, Horse Sense, Audubon (September/October 2006); David Ganskopp and Martin Vavra, Habitat Use by Feral Horses in the Northern Sagebrush Steppe, Journal of Range Management Volume 39(3) (May 1986); K.W. Davies and C.S. Boyd, Effects on Feral Free-Roaming Horses on Semi-Arid Rangeland Ecosystems: An Example from the Sagebrush Steppe, Ecosphere Volume 5(10) (October 2014); Linda Zeigenfuss et al., Influence of Nonnative and Native Ungulate Biomass and Seasonal Precipitation on Vegetation Production in a Great Basin Ecosystem, Western North American Naturalist Volume 74(3) (2014); Erik Beever and Peter Brussard, Examining Ecological Consequences of Feral Horse Grazing Using Exclosures, Western North American Naturalist Volume 60(3) (2000); Kelly Crane et al., Habitat Selection Patterns of Feral Horses in Southcentral Wyoming, Journal of Range Management Volume 50(4) (July 1997); Erik Beever, Management Implications of the Ecology of Free-Roaming Horses in Semi-Arid Ecosystems of the Western United States, Wildlife Society Bulletin Volume 31(3) (2003); and Erik Beever and Cameron Aldridge, Influences of Free-Roaming Equids on Sagebrush Ecosystems, with a Focus on Greater Sage-Grouse, Studies in Avian Biology Volume 38 (2011): Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Members of the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:

Section 1. That the Wyoming Legislature calls on Congress and federal agencies to adequately fund and support all efforts to manage free-roaming feral horses on rangelands in the West at the appropriate management level, utilizing all management and control methods authorized by Section 3(d) of the Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act.

Section 2. That the Wyoming Legislature calls on Congress in conjunction with all appropriate state and local governments to engage in cooperative efforts to remediate and minimize the environmental impact of free-roaming feral horses on rangelands in the West. These efforts should include the development and use of effective fertility control methods to reduce the free-roaming populations of feral horses on rangelands in the West.

Section 3. That the Wyoming Legislature calls on Congress to prohibit the reintroduction of feral horses back onto the western rangelands outside the current herd management areas, nor onto existing herdo management areas at or above the authorized management levels.

Section 4. That the Wyoming Legislature calls on Congress and federal agencies to prioritize these requested management activities to the sage grouse core areas and priority habitat strongholds in order to reduce the possibility of an endangered listing for the sage grouse and to stop the resource-damage now occurring.

Section 5. That the Secretary of State of Wyoming transmit copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, to the Wyoming Congressional Delegation, the Secretary of the Interior, the Director of the Federal Bureau of Land Management and the Director of the Wyoming Office of the Bureau of Land Management.

POM–25. A resolution adopted by the Senate of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts memorializing the President of the United States and the United States Congress to establish a Presidential Youth Council; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

RESOLUTIONS

Whereas, Young people have always played an important role in the nation's history and development but continue to play a disproportionately small role in American government; and

Whereas, Just over ⅓ of the United States population is comprised of Americans age 24 and under; and

Whereas, Youth participation, involvement and engagement should be universally recognized as safeguards of democracy but the existing mechanisms of the Federal Government are designed in ways that inhibit youth participation, leading to the underrepresentation of young people in the policymaking process; and

Whereas, Policy decisions made today will have a profound impact on future generations and all Americans should have a voice in government, especially with regard to policies that directly affect them; and

Whereas, A Presidential Youth Council would offer young persons in America with a means of sharing their perspectives and voicing their opinions at the highest level of government while also providing the President and Congress with a bipartisan source of information on the concerns facing youths across the country; and

Whereas, Members of Congress, governors, state legislatures and mayors have created youth councils that have proven to be effective means of receiving input from young people and have lead to more efficient policies and practices affecting young people: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Massachusetts General Court hereby encourages the creation of a Presidential Youth Council to advise the President and Congress on the perspectives of young people, to assist in the design and implementation of youth policies and to allow young people to provide solutions on the most pressing issues facing the future of America; and be it further

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be transmitted forthwith by the Clerk of the Senate to the President of the United States, to the Presiding Officer of each branch of Congress and to the Members thereof from the commonwealth.

POM–26. A resolution adopted by the Legislature of the State of California urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to work together to create a comprehensive and workable approach to reform the nation's immigration system according to specified principles; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 2

Whereas, This country was built by immigrants seeking a better life; and

Whereas, Estimates suggest that there are 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the shadows in the United States, including millions of children brought to this country undocumented who have grown up here, call the United States home, and are suffering from our dysfunctional immigration policy; and

Whereas, A logical and streamlined path to citizenship for individuals after they gain legal status would stimulate the economy by allowing these individuals to get college degrees and driver's licenses, buy homes, start new companies, and create legal, tax-paying jobs, affording them a chance at the American Dream; and

Whereas, The United States Congress last enacted major immigration legislation more than 25 years ago; and

Whereas, Since that time, fragmented attempts at immigration reform have failed to create the rational and effective systems needed to maintain international competitiveness. Whether in industries like agriculture, which requires large numbers of workers able to perform physically demanding tasks, or in industries like technology or health care, where the demand for employees with advanced degrees is projected to exceed supply within the next five years, immigration policy must be designed to respond to emerging labor needs in all sectors of the United States economy; and

Whereas, Our national interests and security are not served by our outdated, inefficient, and slow-moving immigration system. Patchwork attempts to mend its deficiencies undermine our potential for prosperity and leave us vulnerable and unable to meet the needs of the modern world; and

Whereas, Labor mobility is crucial to our economic prosperity and our country's recovery from the economic crisis. Yet our rigid, outdated immigration policies are making it difficult for our companies and our nation to compete. Information released in a study by the University of California, Los Angeles, states that legalizing the status of undocumented immigrants working and living in the United States would create approximately $1.5 trillion in additional gross domestic product growth over the next 10 years and increase wages for all workers. Another study by the University of California, Davis, indicates that the last large wave of immigrants, from 1990 to 2007, inclusive, raised the income of a native-born American worker by an average of $5,000; and

Whereas, California has the largest share of immigrants in the country. These immigrants are a vital and productive part of our state's economy and are active in a variety

of industries, including technology, biotech, hospitality, agriculture, construction, services, transportation, and textiles. They also represent a large share of our new small business owners and create economic property and needed jobs for everyone; and

Whereas, Keeping these families, business owners, and hard workers in the shadows of society serves no one; and

Whereas, Our state, for economic, social, health, security, and prosperity reasons, must support policies that allow individuals to become legal and enfranchised participants in our society and economy; and

Whereas, Comprehensive immigration reform should include a reasonable and timely path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants who are already living and working in the United States. Immigration reform should also include comprehensive background checks, require demonstrated proficiency in English and payment of all current and back taxes, and have the flexibility to respond to emerging business trends; and

Whereas, The Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan research group in Washington, D.C., estimates that in 2012, the federal government spent $18 billion on immigration enforcement, and since 2004, the number of United States Border Patrol agents has doubled; and

Whereas, Increased enforcement has given the federal government the ability to prioritize the deportation of lawbreakers and dangerous individuals and to ensure our border's security. Nevertheless, this enforcement should not be done in an inhumane way; and

Whereas, Immigration enforcement should continue to focus on criminals, not on hard-working immigrant families, and not at the expense of effective trade with two of our top three economic partners; and

Whereas, The United States loses large numbers of necessary, highly skilled workers due to the lengthy and complicated processes currently in place to get or keep a legal residency option; and

Whereas, Reform should include an expedited process for those residing abroad and applying for legal visas. Additionally, reform should offer permanent residency opportunities to international students in American universities who are highly trained and in high demand, and in so doing avoid an intellectual vacuum after their graduation; and

Whereas, Reform should recognize the societal and cultural benefits of keeping the family unit intact. The system should take into account special circumstances surrounding candidates for probationary legal status, such as those of minors who were brought to the country as children or workers whose labor is essential to maintain our country's competitiveness: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature urges the President and the Congress of the United States to work together and create a comprehensive and workable approach to solving our nation's historically broken immigration system, using the principles described in this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and the Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States.

POM–27. A resolution adopted by the Legislature of Rockland County, New York, urging the United States Senate to introduce and pass legislation similar to H.R. 343, that would allow volunteer firefighters and emergency medical and rescue personnel to claim services as a charitable contribution to their department; to the Committee on Finance.

POM–28. A resolution adopted by the Tompkins County Legislature of the State of New York asking the United States Congress and the President of the United States to halt the ''Fast-Track'' process of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and instead, to allow the Trans-Pacific Partnership a fully transparent, public debate in Congress until its impact are fully assessed by all stakeholders, in order to protect the rights of the people of Tompkins County, the best interests of local businesses and workforce, the health of the environment, and the sovereignty of all levels of government; to the Committee on Finance.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, without amendment:

H.R. 651. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 820 Elmwood Avenue in Providence, Rhode Island, as the ''Sister Ann Keefe Post Office''.

S. 179. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14 3rd Avenue, NW, in Chisholm, Minnesota, as the ''James L. Oberstar Memorial Post Office Building''.

S. 994. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1 Walter Hammond Place in Waldwick, New Jersey, as the ''Staff Sergeant Joseph D'Augustine Post Office Building''.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. JOHNSON for the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

*David Michael Bennett, of North Carolina, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2018.

*Mickey D. Barnett, of New Mexico, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2020.

*Stephen Crawford, of Maryland, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for the remainder of the term expiring December 8, 2015.

*Stephen Crawford, of Maryland, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2022.

*James C. Miller, III, of Virginia, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2017.

*Nomination was reported with recommendation that it be confirmed subject to the nominee's commitment to respond to requests to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Senate.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself, Mr. LEE, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 1200. A bill to promote competition and help consumers save money by giving them the freedom to choose where they buy prescription pet medications, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 1201. A bill to advance the integration of clean distributed energy into electric grids, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mrs. SHAHEEN:

S. 1202. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to assist States in adopting updated interconnection procedures and tariff schedules and standards for supplemental, backup, and standby power fees for projects for combined heat and power technology and waste heat to power technology, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HELLER (for himself, Mr. CASEY, Mr. MORAN, Mr. MANCHIN, Mr. TOOMEY, Mr. HEINRICH, Mr. VITTER, Mr. TESTER, and Ms. COLLINS):

S. 1203. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve the processing by the Department of Veterans Affairs of claims for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

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

S. 1204. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement to provide for management of the free-roaming wild horses in and around the Currituck National Wildlife Refuge; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mrs. CAPITO):

S. 1205. A bill to designate the same individual serving as the Chief Nurse Officer of the Public Health Service as the National Nurse for Public Health; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. SANDERS:

S. 1206. A bill to address the concept of ''Too Big To Fail'' with respect to certain financial entities; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. HIRONO:

S. 1207. A bill to direct the Secretary of Energy to establish a grant program under which the Secretary shall make grants to eligible partnerships to provide for the transformation of the electric grid by the year 2030, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1208. A bill to amend title 49, United States Code, to require gas pipeline facilities to accelerate the repair, rehabilitation, and replacement of high-risk pipelines used in commerce, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, and Mr. SCHATZ):

S. 1209. A bill to establish State revolving loan funds to repair or replace natural gas distribution pipelines; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mrs. CAPITO (for herself, Mr. CASSIDY, and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 1210. A bill to provide for the timely consideration of all licenses, permits, and approvals required under Federal law with respect to oil and gas production and distribution; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. COCHRAN (for himself, Mr. WICKER, Mr. MURPHY, and Ms. STABENOW):

S. 1211. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide that payment

under the Medicare program to a long-term care hospital for inpatient services shall not be made at the applicable site neutral payment rate for certain discharges involving severe wounds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. THUNE, Mr. FRANKEN, Ms. STABENOW, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. RISCH, Ms. AYOTTE, Ms. COLLINS, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 1212. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and the Small Business Act to expand the availability of employee stock ownership plans in S corporations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. KING:

S. 1213. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 and the Federal Power Act to facilitate the free market for distributed energy resources; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. GRAHAM, Ms. COLLINS, and Ms. MIKULSKI):

S. 1214. A bill to prevent human health threats posed by the consumption of equines raised in the United States; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1215. A bill to amend the Methane Hydrate Research and Development Act of 2000 to provide for the development of methane hydrate as a commercially viable source of energy; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1216. A bill to amend the Natural Gas Act to modify a provision relating to civil penalties; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1217. A bill to establish an Interagency Rapid Response Team for Transmission, to establish an Office of Transmission Ombudsperson, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1218. A bill to establish an interagency coordination committee or subcommittee with the leadership of the Department of Energy and the Department of the Interior, focused on the nexus between energy and water production, use, and efficiency, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1219. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to provide for the safe and reliable interconnection of distributed resources and to provide for the examination of the effects of net metering; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1220. A bill to improve the distribution of energy in the United States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1221. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to require periodic reports on electricity reliability and reliability impact statements for rules affecting the reliable operation of the bulk-power system; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1222. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to provide for reports relating to electric capacity resources of transmission organizations and the amendment of certain tariffs to address the procurement of electric capacity resources, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1223. A bill to amend the Energy Policy Act of 2005 to improve the loan guarantee program for innovative technologies, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1224. A bill to reconcile differing Federal approaches to condensate; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1225. A bill to improve Federal land management, resource conservation, environmental protection, and use of Federal real property, by requiring the Secretary of the Interior to develop a multipurpose cadastre of Federal real property and identifying inaccurate, duplicate, and out-of-date Federal land inventories, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1226. A bill to amend the Mineral Leasing Act and the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands to promote a greater domestic helium supply, to establish a Federal helium leasing program for public land, and to secure a helium supply for national defense and Federal researchers, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1227. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to develop an implementation strategy to promote the development of hybrid micro-grid systems for isolated communities; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HOEVEN (for himself and Mr. DONNELLY):

S. 1228. A bill to require approval for the construction, connection, operation, or maintenance of oil or natural gas pipelines or electric transmission facilities at the national boundary of the United States for the import or export of oil, natural gas, or electricity to or from Canada or Mexico, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1229. A bill to require the Secretary of Energy to submit a plan to implement recommendations to improve interactions between the Department of Energy and National Laboratories; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1230. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a program under which the Director of the Bureau of Land Management shall enter into memoranda of understanding with States providing for State oversight of oil and gas productions activities; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1231. A bill to require congressional notification for certain Strategic Petroleum Reserve operations and to determine options available for the continued operation of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 1232. A bill to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to modify provisions relating to smart grid modernization, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 1233. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to expand the electric rate-setting authority of States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself and Mr. DAINES):

S. 1234. A bill to enhance consumer rights relating to consumer report disputes by requiring provision of documentation provided by consumers; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1235. A bill to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to authorize Regional Corporations and Village Corporations to establish energy assistance programs; to the Committee on Finance.

By Ms. MURKOWSKI:

S. 1236. A bill to amend the Federal Power Act to modify certain requirements relating to trial-type hearings with respect to certain license applications before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. KING:

S. 1237. A bill to amend the Natural Gas Act to limit the authority of the Secretary of Energy to approve certain proposals relating to export activities of liquefied natural gas terminals; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REID, Mr. WARNER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HELLER, Mr. KING, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. THUNE):

S. Res. 170. A resolution supporting the goals and ideals of National Travel and Tourism Week and honoring the valuable contributions of travel and tourism to the United States; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BURR, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KIRK, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. VITTER):

S. Res. 171. A resolution congratulating the students, parents, teachers, and administrators of charter schools across the United States for making ongoing contributions to education, and supporting the ideals and goals of the 16th annual National Charter Schools Week, to be held May 3 through May 9, 2015; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. VITTER (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. COONS, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SCOTT, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. HOEVEN):

S. Res. 172. A resolution honoring the vital role of small businesses and the passion of entrepreneurs in the United States during ''National Small Business Week'', from May 4, through May 8, 2015; considered and agreed to.

By Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. CASEY):

S. Res. 173. A resolution condemning atrocities committed by Bashar al-Assad of Syria and his regime, and for other purposes; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 85

At the request of Mr. KING, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr.

WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 85, a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to establish a simplified income-driven repayment plan, and for other purposes.

S. 125

At the request of Mr. LEAHY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 125, a bill to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes.

S. 338

At the request of Mr. BURR, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 338, a bill to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

S. 352

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 352, a bill to amend section 5000A of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to provide an additional religious exemption from the individual health coverage mandate, and for other purposes.

S. 366

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 366, a bill to require Senate candidates to file designations, statements, and reports in electronic form.

S. 386

At the request of Mr. THUNE, the name of the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 386, a bill to limit the authority of States to tax certain income of employees for employment duties performed in other States.

S. 507

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 507, a bill to amend the National Labor Relations Act to permit employers to pay higher wages to their employees.

S. 607

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 607, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for a five-year extension of the rural community hospital demonstration program, and for other purposes.

S. 676

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 676, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to prevent tax-related identity theft and tax fraud, and for other purposes.

S. 681

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) were added as cosponsors of S. 681, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to clarify presumptions relating to the exposure of certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, and for other purposes.

S. 682

At the request of Mr. DONNELLY, the names of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) and the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. LANKFORD) were added as cosponsors of S. 682, a bill to amend the Truth in Lending Act to modify the definitions of a mortgage originator and a high-cost mortgage.

S. 746

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the names of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS), the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN), the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) and the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) were added as cosponsors of S. 746, a bill to provide for the establishment of a Commission to Accelerate the End of Breast Cancer.

S. 783

At the request of Mr. GRASSLEY, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 783, a bill to provide for media coverage of Federal court proceedings.

S. 804

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 804, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to specify coverage of continuous glucose monitoring devices, and for other purposes.

S. 849

At the request of Mr. ISAKSON, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. BOXER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 849, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to provide for systematic data collection and analysis and epidemiological research regarding Multiple Sclerosis (MS), Parkinson's disease, and other neurological diseases.

S. 853

At the request of Ms. BALDWIN, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 853, a bill to improve the efficiency and reliability of rail transportation by reforming the Surface Transportation Board, and for other purposes.

S. 1043

At the request of Mr. MERKLEY, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1043, a bill to ensure that transportation and infrastructure projects carried out using Federal financial assistance are constructed with steel, iron, and manufactured goods that are produced in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1088

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1088, a bill to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to provide for voter registration through the Internet, and for other purposes.

S. 1117

At the request of Mr. JOHNSON, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1117, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the authority of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to remove senior executives of the Department of Veterans Affairs for performance or misconduct to include removal of certain other employees of the Department, and for other purposes.

S. 1127

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1127, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to expand the denial of deduction for certain excessive employee remuneration, and for other purposes.

S. 1136

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Delaware (Mr. COONS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1136, a bill relating to the modernization of C–130 aircraft to meet applicable regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 1142

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1142, a bill to clarify that noncommercial species found entirely within the borders of a single State are not in interstate commerce or subject to regulation under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 or any other provision of law enacted as an exercise of the power of Congress to regulate interstate commerce.

S. 1148

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) and the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) were added as cosponsors of S. 1148, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to provide for the distribution of additional residency positions, and for other purposes.

S. 1170

At the request of Mrs. FEINSTEIN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1170, a bill to amend title 39, United States Code, to extend the authority of the United States Postal Service to issue a semipostal to raise funds for breast cancer research, and for other purposes.

S. 1193

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from Hawaii (Mr. SCHATZ) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1193, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent

and expand the temporary minimum credit rate for the low-income housing tax credit program.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 1232. A bill to amend the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to modify provisions relating to smart grid modernization, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I am proud to introduce the Smart Grid Act of 2015.

America's trillion-dollar electricity grid is ill-equipped to meet the needs of the future. Grid outages and interruptions are estimated to cost taxpayers $150 billion annually, according to the U.S. Department of Energy DOE. At the same time, electricity demand is expected to grow 24 percent by 2040 and electricity costs for American consumers are expected to increase 18 percent over that same period.

Yet the news is not all grim, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates that $46 billion to $117 billion could be saved in the avoided construction costs of power plants and transmission lines over 20 years, if the United States transitions to ''smart grid'' technologies.

This bill promotes a more efficient and flexible electricity grid—an electricity grid that supports low-cost renewable energy, electric vehicles and energy storage, and helps consumers save money while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The bill extends cost-share grant programs created in the Energy Independence and Savings Act of 2007, EISA2007, and sets DOE on a path to help create technology communication standards that will pave the way for innovation in new household appliances and save consumer dollars.

Specifically, the bill will establish two DOE competitive grant programs to promote the modernization of the electricity grid. Among critical areas identified by the electricity industry, the new authorizations will promote grid efficiency and real time rate adjustments, in addition to driving innovations and deployment of new energy technologies. The grant programs would require an equal matching investment from the grant recipient to ensure that beneficiaries are also held accountable. The grant recipients will be required to exchange information and ideas to further the development of a modernized electric grid. The bill will also direct DOE to begin developing standards for data sharing and communication between electricity users and providers on the grid, to improve grid efficiency and reliability.

I encourage my colleagues to review and ultimately support this legislation.

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. 1232

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 ''Smart Grid Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. SMART GRID INTEROPERABILITY WORKING GROUP.

Section 1303 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17383) is amended—

(1) by striking the section designation and heading and inserting the following:

''SEC. 1303. SMART GRID ADVISORY COMMITTEE; SMART GRID TASK FORCE; SMART GRID INTEROPERABILITY WORKING GROUP.'';

(2) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d);

(3) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

''(c) SMART GRID INTEROPERABILITY WORKING GROUP.—

''(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Secretary, in collaboration with the National Institute of Standards and Technology of the Department of Commerce, the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and the Smart Grid Interoperability Panel, shall establish a working group, to be known as the 'Smart Grid Interoperability Working Group'—

''(A) to identify additional efforts the Federal Government can take to better promote the establishment and adoption of open standards that enhance connectivity and interoperability on the electric grid;

''(B) to study the market and policy barriers to deploying responsive appliances at scale; and

''(C) to develop a plan for establishing and promoting the widespread adoption of interoperability standards.

''(2) MEMBERSHIP.—The Smart Grid Interoperability Working Group shall include such representatives as the Secretary determines to be appropriate from—

''(A) appliance manufacturers;

''(B) utilities;

''(C) software providers;

''(D) energy efficiency and environmental stakeholders; and

''(E) relevant Federal departments and agencies.

''(3) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this paragraph, the Smart Grid Interoperability Working Group shall submit to the Secretary a report that describes the initial findings and recommendations of the Smart Grid Interoperability Working Group, as described in paragraph (1).''; and

(4) in subsection (d) (as redesignated by paragraph (2)), by striking ''and Smart Grid Task Force'' and inserting '', the Smart Grid Task Force, and the Smart Grid Interoperability Working Group''.

SEC. 3. SMART GRID TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, AND DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM POLICY.

Section 1304 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17384) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1), in the second sentence, by inserting ''and lessons learned from demonstration projects implemented under this section'' before the period at the end;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (D), by striking ''and'' at the end;

(ii) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

''(F) to identify best practices for the implementation of the Fair Information Practice Principles (FIPPS) of the Federal Trade Commission for the collection, use, disclosure, and retention of individual customer information.''; and

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in subparagraph (A)—

(I) by striking the subparagraph designation and heading and all that follows through ''the initiative'' and inserting the following:

''(A) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the Initiative, subject to clause (ii)''; and

(II) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) REQUIREMENT.—In selecting smart grid demonstration projects to receive assistance under this subparagraph, the Secretary shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable—

''(I) geographical diversity; and

''(II) diversity among types of electricity markets and regulatory environments.'';

(ii) by redesignating subparagraphs (B) through (F) as subparagraphs (C) through (G), respectively;

(iii) by inserting after subparagraph (A) the following:

''(B) ADDITIONAL DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FUNDING.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the Initiative, in addition to financial assistance provided under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall provide grants, on a competitive basis, for demonstration projects in any of the following 7 program areas:

''(I) TRANSACTIVE ENERGY.—Projects that implement a system of economic or control mechanisms that optimizes the dynamic balance of supply and demand across the electrical infrastructure, using economic value as a key operational parameter.

''(II) INNOVATION IN VALUATION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY GRID SERVICES AND EFFICIENCY.—Projects that implement innovative ways of valuing the grid services provided by demand response, energy efficiency, distributed generation, electric vehicles, and storage.

''(III) RATE DESIGN–DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM.—Projects that implement rates, such as 3-part rates, to equitably ensure cost-recovery and the reliability of the distribution grid, while also supporting the increased penetration of distributed generation, storage, and electric vehicles.

''(IV) RATE DESIGN–CONSUMER ACCEPTANCE OF TIME-BASED PRICING.—Projects that—

''(aa) study consumer adoption of time-based retail electricity rates through the implementation of time-based rates, in conjunction with randomized control trials; and

''(bb) may—

''(AA) provide to customers a range of time-based pricing options, as well as options to adopt enabling technology; and

''(BB) implement a heterogeneity of marketing and outreach approaches.

''(V) ENERGY STORAGE.—Projects that demonstrate innovative approaches for using energy storage for grid services, including—

''(aa) flexibility; and

''(bb) the integration of intermittent renewable energy.

''(VI) SMART ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING.—Projects that—

''(aa) demonstrate innovative approaches for integrating electric vehicles into grid operations; or

''(bb) produce, test, and certify to IEEE/UL standards bidirectional power electronics for electric vehicles.

''(VII) OTHER PROGRAM AREA.—Projects in 1 additional program area that the Secretary may identify, by regulation.

''(ii) PRIORITY REQUIREMENTS.—In selecting demonstration projects to receive grants under clause (i), the Secretary shall give priority to—

''(I) for demonstration projects described in subclause (I) of clause (i), projects that—

''(aa) incorporate real-time prices and technologies that allow prices to be directly delivered to end-user devices (an approach commonly known as 'prices to devices'); or

''(bb) advance device visibility in grid system operations;

''(II) for demonstration projects described in subclause (II) of clause (i), projects that address valuation of ancillary services, capacity, and services offered in price-responsive markets;

''(III) for demonstration projects described in subclause (III) of clause (i), projects that assess—

''(aa) the impact of the rates described in that subclause on customer electricity consumption patterns;

''(bb) customer interest and enrollment in the new rates;

''(cc) the impact of rates on the economics of distributed generation and storage;

''(dd) the impact of rates on consumer adoption patterns of distributed generation and storage; or

''(ee) the effectiveness of various educational outreach measures in presenting the rates to customers;

''(IV) for demonstration projects described in subclause (IV) of clause (i), projects that—

''(aa) investigate the effects on customer participation and satisfaction rates of—

''(AA) choice architecture, such as defaulting to an opt-in, versus an opt-out, program; and

''(BB) enabling technology; or

''(bb) demonstrate how the lessons learned from the study described in that subclause can be used to develop a rate transition plan that facilitates significant and lasting enrollment in the new rates with a high degree of customer satisfaction;

''(V) for demonstration projects described in subclause (V) of clause (i), projects that maximize—

''(aa) benefits to intermittent renewable energy generation; and

''(bb) the range of grid services provided by storage; and

''(VI) for demonstration projects described in subclause (VI) of clause (i), projects that demonstrate methods of—

''(aa) maximizing the grid services provided by electric vehicles; and

''(bb) minimizing load spikes and grid costs associated with electric vehicles.'';

(iv) in subparagraph (C) (as redesignated by clause (ii))—

(I) by striking ''subparagraph (A) shall be carried out'' and inserting the following:

''subparagraph (A) or (B) shall be—

''(i) carried out'';

(II) by striking the period at the end and inserting ''; and''; and

(III) by adding at the end the following:

''(ii) given priority in selection for assistance based on the extent to which the project demonstrates strong collaboration among—

''(I) State energy agencies;

''(II) State public utility and public service commissions;

''(III) electric utilities;

''(IV) power aggregators; and

''(V) if applicable, independent system operators, regional transmission organizations, or wholesale market operators.'';

(v) in subparagraph (D) (as redesignated by clause (ii)), by striking ''subparagraph (B)'' and inserting ''subparagraph (C)'';

(vi) in subparagraph (E) (as redesignated by clause (ii)), by striking the subparagraph designation and heading and all that follows through ''No person'' and inserting the following:

''(E) ELIGIBILITY FOR OTHER FUNDING.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—A person or entity that receives financial assistance for a demonstration project in any program area described in subparagraph (A) or any of subclauses (I) through (VII) of subparagraph (B)(i) may be eligible to receive assistance under any other such program area, if the person or entity establishes to the satisfaction of the Secretary a synergy between the program areas.

''(ii) INELIGIBILITY.—No person''; and

(vii) in subparagraph (F) (as redesignated by clause (ii))—

(I) in the first sentence, by striking ''The Secretary'' and inserting the following:

''(i) ESTABLISHMENT OF CLEARINGHOUSE.—The Secretary'';

(II) by striking the second sentence and inserting the following:

''(ii) PROVISION OF INFORMATION.—As a condition of receiving financial assistance under this subsection, a utility or other participant in a smart grid demonstration project shall provide such information as the Secretary may require, to become available through the smart grid information clearinghouse and for purposes of producing the reports described in subclauses (IV) and (V) of clause (iv), in such form and at such time as the Secretary may require.'';

(III) in the third sentence, by striking ''The Secretary shall assure'' and inserting the following:

''(iii) PROTECTED INFORMATION.—The Secretary shall ensure''; and

(IV) by adding at the end the following:

''(iv) WORKING GROUPS.—

''(I) ESTABLISHMENT.—For each program area described in subparagraph (A) or any of subclauses (I) through (VII) of subparagraph (B)(i), the Secretary shall establish a working group, to be composed of representatives of each project selected to receive assistance within that program area.

''(II) MEETINGS.—Each working group established under subclause (I) shall meet not less frequently than once every 90 days.

''(III) PARTICIPATION REQUIRED.—As a condition of receiving financial assistance under this subsection, the owner or operator of a demonstration project shall designate a representative of the project to serve as a member of the applicable working group established under subclause (I), including by attending each meeting of the working group under subclause (II).

''(IV) REPORTS.—Each working group established under subclause (I) shall submit to the Secretary reports regarding the demonstrations projects carried out by members of the working group, at such times and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

''(V) PUBLICATION.—The Secretary shall periodically publish reports and other appropriate informational materials for use, within each program area described in subclause (I), by—

''(aa) State regulators;

''(bb) wholesale market operators;

''(cc) electric utilities; and

''(dd) such other individuals and entities as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.''; and

(2) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

''(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section for each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021.''.

SEC. 4. FEDERAL MATCHING FUND FOR SMART GRID INVESTMENT COSTS.

Section 1306(f) of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17386(f)) is amended by striking ''fiscal years 2008 through 2012'' and inserting ''each of fiscal years 2017 through 2021''.

By Mr. WYDEN:

S. 1233. A bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to expand the electric rate-setting authority of States; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, today I rise to introduce the PURPA PLUS Act.

In my home State we have numerous emerging small renewable energy technologies, such as wave energy buoys, hydropower turbines in irrigation canals, biomass burning cogeneration facilities and rooftop solar installations. Like Oregon, many States have sought to advance such new electricity technologies by allowing utilities to pay higher than normal power purchase rates, called ''incentive rates'', for power from these desirable technologies. Incentive rates allow individuals and small businesses deploying these desirable technologies to recover the money they invest in the infrastructure, such as solar panels or other electricity generation equipment, over a reasonable period of time. The ability of States to award such incentive rates for small projects is currently hampered by the need to go through a case-by-case review process before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC.

The PURPA PLUS Act simply provides States the legal authority to set incentive rates for small renewable energy projects. Currently, under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978, PURPA, the FERC regulates the price that utility companies pay for electricity from small, independent power providers. Such prices can be no higher than what it would normally cost a utility company either to generate or to buy additional power from the lowest cost provider. This structure sets a limit on prices that is often too low for small renewable energy projects to be financially viable, despite other clear benefits they provide, such as local job creation, lower investment in high-voltage transmission lines, diversity in an area's power generation portfolio, and the environmental benefits of green energy.

PURPA PLUS would transfer the authority for setting power purchase rates for small power projects of less than 2 megawatts from FERC to the States on a voluntary basis. If a State chose to exercise this authority to promote small wind energy development, or solar, or cogeneration projects, it could. If a State chose not to use this authority, FERC would continue to regulate these projects as before. By capping the project size at 2 megawatts, PURPA PLUS only extends this new authority for small projects that are providing very small amounts of power to the local utility company, leaving regulation of large wind farms, hydropower and other large renewable energy projects unchanged.

While I acknowledge that the power from these small projects may be more expensive than a large central generation station powered by coal or gas, I

believe that States, if they choose, should be able to consider the associated benefits of small renewable power and set higher prices, when the market demands such action and when the benefits outweigh the costs.

I urge my colleagues to review and ultimately to support this legislation.

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. 1233

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 ''PURPA's Legislative Upgrade to State Authority Act'' or ''PURPA PLUS Act''.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds that—

(1) section 210 of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 824a–3)—

(A) established a new class of nonutility generators known as ''qualifying cogeneration facilities'' and ''qualifying small power production facilities''; and

(B) encouraged the development of alternate sources of energy with the requirement that utilities purchase energy offered by qualifying facilities;

(2) since the date of enactment of that section, materials and designs for qualifying facility technologies have advanced and placed renewable resources and cogeneration facilities within the reach of more consumers, including technologies such as—

(A) solar photovoltaic panels;

(B) small wind turbines;

(C) storage technologies to support renewable energy;

(D) small hydroelectric generators on existing dams, diversions, and conduits;

(E) hydrokinetic generators;

(F) gas microturbines;

(G) steam-cycle turbines;

(H) Stirling engines;

(I) fuel cells; and

(J) biomass boilers;

(3) States need additional regulatory flexibility and authority to be able to incentivize the qualifying facilities; and

(4) the avoided cost caps on qualifying facilities should be removed so that States can set the rates for qualifying facilities of not more than 2 megawatts capacity.

SEC. 3. STATE AUTHORITY TO INCENTIVIZE QUALIFYING FACILITIES.

Section 210(b) of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 824a–3(b)) is amended in the last sentence by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', except that the rule shall provide that a State regulatory authority or nonregulated electric utility, acting under State authority, may set rates that exceed the incremental cost of alternative electric energy for purchases from any qualifying cogeneration facility or qualifying small power production facility of not more than 2 megawatts capacity''.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 170—SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEEK AND HONORING THE VALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM TO THE UNITED STATES

Ms. KLOBUCHAR (for herself, Mr. BLUNT, Mr. SCHATZ, Mr. KIRK, Mr. REID, Mr. WARNER, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. HELLER, Mr. KING, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. FRANKEN, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. THUNE) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 170

Whereas National Travel and Tourism Week was established in 1983 through the enactment of the Joint Resolution entitled ''Joint Resolution to designate the week beginning May 27, 1984, as 'National Tourism Week' '', approved November 29, 1983 (Public Law 98–178; 97 Stat. 1126), which recognized the value of travel and tourism;

Whereas National Travel and Tourism Week is celebrated across the United States from May 2 through May 10, 2015;

Whereas more than 120 travel destinations throughout the United States are holding events in honor of National Travel and Tourism Week;

Whereas 1 out of every 9 jobs in the United States depends on travel and tourism, and the industry supports 15,000,000 jobs in the United States;

Whereas the travel and tourism industry employs individuals in all 50 States, the District of Columbia, and all the territories of the United States;

Whereas international travel to the United States is the single largest export industry in the country, generating a trade surplus balance of approximately $74,000,000,000;

Whereas the travel and tourism industry, Congress, and the President have worked to streamline the visa process and make the United States welcoming to visitors from other countries;

Whereas travel and tourism provide significant economic benefits to the United States by generating nearly $2,100,000,000,000 in annual economic output;

Whereas leisure travel allows individuals to experience the rich cultural heritage and educational opportunities of the United States and its communities; and

Whereas the immense value of travel and tourism cannot be overstated: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of National Travel and Tourism Week;

(2) commends the travel and tourism industry for its important contributions to the United States; and

(3) commends the employees of the travel and tourism industry for their important contributions to the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 171—CONGRATULATING THE STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND ADMINISTRATORS OF CHARTER SCHOOLS ACROSS THE UNITED STATES FOR MAKING ONGOING CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATION, AND SUPPORTING THE IDEALS AND GOALS OF THE 16TH ANNUAL NATIONAL CHARTER SCHOOLS WEEK, TO BE HELD MAY 3 THROUGH MAY 9, 2015

Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. BENNET, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. BURR, Mr. CARPER, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. COONS, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HATCH, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. KIRK, Mr. LANKFORD, Mr. MCCAIN, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCOTT, Mr. TILLIS, and Mr. VITTER) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 171

Whereas charter schools are public schools that do not charge tuition and enroll any student who wants to attend, often through a random lottery when the demand for enrollment is outmatched by the supply of available charter school seats;

Whereas high-performing public charter schools deliver a high-quality public education and challenge all students to reach the students' potential for academic success;

Whereas public charter schools promote innovation and excellence in public education;

Whereas public charter schools throughout the United States provide millions of families with diverse and innovative educational options for children of the families;

Whereas high-performing public charter schools and charter management organizations are increasing student achievement and attendance rates at institutions of higher education;

Whereas public charter schools are authorized by a designated entity and—

(1) respond to the needs of communities, families, and students in the United States; and

(2) promote the principles of quality, accountability, choice, high-performance, and innovation;

Whereas, in exchange for flexibility and autonomy, public charter schools are held accountable by the authorizers of the charter schools for improving student achievement and for sound financial and operational management;

Whereas public charter schools are required to meet the student achievement accountability requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.) in the same manner as traditional public schools;

Whereas public charter schools often set higher expectations for students, beyond the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.), to ensure that the charter schools are of high quality and truly accountable to the public;

Whereas 43 States and the District of Columbia have enacted laws authorizing public charter schools;

Whereas, as of the 2014–2015 school year, more than 6,700 public charter schools served more than 2,900,000 children;

Whereas in the United States—

(1) in 150 school districts, more than 10 percent of public school students are enrolled in public charter schools; and

(2) in 12 school districts, at least 30 percent of public school students are enrolled in public charter schools;

Whereas public charter schools improve the achievement of students enrolled in the charter schools and collaborate with traditional public schools to improve public education for all students;

Whereas public charter schools—

(1) give parents the freedom to choose public schools;

(2) routinely measure parental satisfaction levels; and

(3) must prove the ongoing success of the charter schools to parents, policymakers, and the communities served by the charter schools or risk closure;

Whereas, between 2010 and 2015, research studies have found that students attending public charter schools perform better academically than their peers;

Whereas at least 500,000 students are on waiting lists to attend public charter schools across the country before the start of the 2014–2015 school year; and

Whereas the 16th annual National Charter Schools Week is scheduled to be celebrated the week of May 3 through May 9, 2015: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) congratulates the students, families, teachers, administrators, and staff of public charter schools across the United States for—

(A) making ongoing contributions to public education;

(B) making impressive strides in closing the academic achievement gap in schools in the United States, particularly in schools with some of the most disadvantaged students in both rural and urban communities; and

(C) improving and strengthening the public school system throughout the United States;

(2) supports the ideals and goals of the 16th annual National Charter Schools Week, a week-long celebration to be held May 3 through May 9, 2015, in communities throughout the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to hold appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities during National Charter Schools Week to demonstrate support for public charter schools.

SENATE RESOLUTION 172—HONORING THE VITAL ROLE OF SMALL BUSINESSES AND THE PASSION OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE UNITED STATES DURING ''NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK'', FROM MAY 4, THROUGH MAY 8, 2015

Mr. VITTER (for himself, Mrs. SHAHEEN, Mr. ENZI, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RUBIO, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. GARDNER, Ms. AYOTTE, Mr. COONS, Ms. HEITKAMP, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. RISCH, Mr. SCOTT, Mrs. FISCHER, and Mr. HOEVEN) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 172

Whereas 2015 marks the 52nd anniversary of ''National Small Business Week'', a designation that every President since 1963 has endorsed;

Whereas, as of 2008, the approximately 28,400,000 small businesses in the United States, the leading force of the economy of United States, created 63 percent of net new private sector jobs and generated close to 50 percent of the private, non-farm gross domestic product of the United States;

Whereas 22,735,915 of the small businesses of the United States have no employees, and 86 percent are sole proprietorships;

Whereas, as of 2007, 2,450,000 veterans were small business owners, which accounted for 9.3 percent of all businesses in the United States;

Whereas, in 2013, veteran small business owners accounted for 9 percent of all business owners and 9 percent of the adult population in the United States;

Whereas small businesses owned by women increased as a share of total businesses in the United States from 26.4 percent in 1997 to 29.6 percent in 2007, and, as of 2007, totaled nearly 7,800,000 businesses;

Whereas small businesses employ about 56,100,000 million people of the United States, which is approximately half of the private workforce of the United States;

Whereas small businesses account for 37 percent of employment in the high-tech sector;

Whereas high-patenting small businesses produce 16 times more patents per employee than large patenting firms;

Whereas small businesses in the United States represent nearly 98 percent of all exporters and produce 33 percent of the export value of the United States;

Whereas, on July 30, 1953, Congress created the Small Business Administration to aid, counsel, assist, and protect the interests of small businesses in order to preserve free and competitive enterprise, to ensure that a fair proportion of the total sales of Federal Government property are made to small businesses, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of the United States;

Whereas, for more than 50 years, the Small Business Administration has helped more than 10,000,000 entrepreneurs reach the dream of creating and maintaining a small business, and has played a key role in fostering local and national economic growth; and

Whereas the President has designated the week beginning May 4, 2015, as ''National Small Business Week'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) honors the vital role of small businesses and entrepreneurs in the United States during ''National Small Business Week'';

(2) supports the designation of ''National Small Business Week'';

(3) recognizes the important role of the Small Business Administration as a valuable resource for entrepreneurs in the United States;

(4) supports and encourages young entrepreneurs to pursue their passions and create more start-up businesses;

(5) recognizes the importance of creating policies that promote a business-friendly environment for small business owners that is free of unnecessary and burdensome regulations and red tape;

(6) recognizes the National Small Business Person of the Year and the National Lender of the Year; and

(7) supports efforts to—

(A) encourage consumers to shop locally; and

(B) increase awareness of the value of locally-owned small businesses and the impact of locally-owned small businesses on the economy of the United States.

SENATE RESOLUTION 173—CONDEMNING ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY BASHAR AL-ASSAD OF SYRIA AND HIS REGIME, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

Mr. REID (for himself, Mr. MCCONNELL, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. MENENDEZ, and Mr. CASEY) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 173

Whereas Bashar al-Assad, through his actions and decisions, has lost his legitimacy as a leader of the Syrian people;

Whereas forces loyal to the Assad regime have committed war crimes and crimes against humanity, including starvation, systematic murder, torture, rape and sexual violence, enforced disappearance, and used weapons of mass destruction including chemical weapons;

Whereas the actions of the Assad regime have egregiously violated international laws of war and shocked the global conscience;

Whereas the United Nations has documented the Assad regime's campaign to defeat opposition forces by starving rebels and civilians through calculated efforts to cut off food supplies in opposition-controlled areas such as eastern Aleppo and Homs;

Whereas there is evidence that the Assad regime conducted systematic torture and killing of people who were detained by regime forces;

Whereas rape and sexual violence against civilians by regime forces has been cited as a primary reason families flee Syria;

Whereas it has been reported that more than 11,000 people have disappeared after being taken into custody by forces loyal to the Assad regime;

Whereas the Assad regime continues to use helicopters to indiscriminately drop barrel bombs, even after the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 2139 on February 22, 2014, that ''[d]emands that all parties immediately cease all attacks against civilians, as well as the indiscriminate employment of weapons in populated areas, including shelling and aerial bombardment, such as the use of barrel bombs. . .'';

Whereas Syria once possessed one of the most advanced chemical weapons programs in the Middle East;

Whereas there were multiple documented cases of chemical attacks committed by the Assad regime, including the deployment of sarin gas in Aleppo in March and April 2013, as well as the devastating sarin and conventional attack committed near Damascus in August 2013 that killed more than 1,400 innocent civilians, including 426 children;

Whereas sarin is banned under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, done at Paris January 13, 1993, and entered into force April 29, 1997 (commonly known as the ''Chemical Weapons Convention'');

Whereas, in September 2013, the Assad regime agreed to eliminate its chemical weapons stockpile by handing over all of its chemical weapons to international control, providing inspectors immediate and unfettered access to all suspected sites, and allowing international forces to destroy the entire stockpile and production facilities;

Whereas the September 2013 agreement mandated that Syria accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention;

Whereas, after Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, there continue to be numerous documented reports that the Assad regime has repeatedly attacked civilians, including women and children, and armed opposition groups with chlorine gas, a substance that is banned for use as a weapon under the Chemical Weapons Convention;

Whereas, on March 6, 2015, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 2209 by a vote of 14 in favor, zero against, and 1 abstention condemning in the strongest terms the use of chlorine as a weapon in Syria and vowing that any future use would result in the imposition of Chapter VII measures;

Whereas, on March 6, 2015, the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations Samantha Power stated, ''Despite having acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Assad regime has again demonstrated its brutality by turning to chlorine as another barbaric weapon in its arsenal against the Syrian people. . .. Let's ask ourselves who has helicopters in Syria? Certainly not the opposition. Only the Assad regime does and we have seen them use their helicopters in countless other attacks on innocent Syrians using barrel bombs'';

Whereas it is clear that Bashar al-Assad has repeatedly lied to the international community about using chemical weapons, deploying barrel bombs, and targeting civilians, demonstrating again and again that he cannot be trusted;

Whereas internationally recognized tribunals have been used in the past to hold leaders accountable for war crimes;

Whereas the conflict in Syria has resulted in the loss of countless innocent lives, has displaced millions of people, and has destabilized the Middle East; and

Whereas the organization known as the Islamic State, the al Qaeda-affiliated Jabhat Al Nusra, and other armed opposition groups have also carried out atrocities in Syria: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved,

SECTION 1. SENSE OF THE SENATE.

The Senate—

(1) condemns the actions of Bashar al-Assad and his regime for committing brutal acts of violence against the Syrian people, for committing systematic murder, torture, rape and enforced disappearance against the Syrian people, and for using weapons of mass destruction including chemical weapons against the Syrian people;

(2) condemns the loss of innocent civilian life during the course of the civil war in Syria;

(3) supports the diplomatic efforts of the international coalition to drive Bashar al-Assad from office and preserve the institutions of government required to restore stability to Syria; and

(4) objects to any role for Bashar al-Assad in any final settlement to the civil war.

SEC. 2. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this resolution shall be construed as an authorization for the use of military force.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 1202. Mr. REID 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 1203. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1202 submitted by Mr. REID and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1204. Mr. REID 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 1205. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1204 submitted by Mr. REID and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1206. Mr. REID 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 1207. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1206 submitted by Mr. REID and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1208. Mr. REID 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 1209. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1208 submitted by Mr. REID and intended to be proposed to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1210. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1140 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1211. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1210 submitted by Mr. CARDIN and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 1140 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1212. Mr. ROBERTS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1140 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1213. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1140 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) to the bill H.R. 1191, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 1214. Mr. LEAHY (for Mr. LEE) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 125, to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes.

SA 1215. Mr. INHOFE (for Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1124, to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to improve the Act.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 1202. Mr. REID 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:

This Act shall become effective 1 day after enactment.

SA 1203. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1202 submitted by Mr. REID and intended to be proposed 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:

In the amendment, strike ''1 day'' and insert ''2 days''.

SA 1204. Mr. REID 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:

This Act shall become effective 3 days after enactment.

SA 1205. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1204 submitted by Mr. REID and intended to be proposed 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:

In the amendment, strike ''3 days'' and insert ''4 days''.

SA 1206. Mr. REID 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:

This Act shall become effective 5 days after enactment.

SA 1207. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1206 submitted by Mr. REID and intended to be proposed 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:

In the amendment, strike ''5 days'' and insert ''6 days''.

SA 1208. Mr. REID 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:

This Act shall become effective 7 days after enactment.

SA 1209. Mr. REID submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1208 submitted by Mr. REID and intended to be proposed 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:

In the amendment, strike ''7 days'' and insert ''8 days''.

SA 1210. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1140 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) 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 13, strike lines 17 through 19 and insert the following:

''(ii) may substantially reduce the breakout time of acquisition of a nuclear weapon by Iran, if deployed.

SA 1211. Mr. CARDIN submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1210 submitted by Mr. CARDIN and intended to be proposed to the amendment SA 1140 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) 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 1, line 4, of the amendment, strike ''breakout time of'' and insert ''breakout time for''.

SA 1212. Mr. ROBERTS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1140 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) 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 15, between lines 18 and 19, insert the following:

''(L) An assessment of whether any country is providing to Iran, through sales, leases, or other lending, weapons systems in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1929 (2010) or sophisticated air defense systems.

SA 1213. Ms. AYOTTE submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1140 proposed by Mr. CORKER (for himself and Mr. CARDIN) 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, strike line 1 and insert the following:

''(h) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON INTERCONTINENTAL BALLISTIC MISSILE PROGRAM.—

''(1) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

''(A) The Islamic Republic of Iran continues to advance its intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) program.

''(B) On February 2, 2015, the Islamic Republic of Iran successfully launched its Safir long-range missile system to send a satellite into orbit.

''(2) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—Congress—

''(A) remains concerned about the threat posed by Iran's ballistic missile development program to the security of the United States and its allies; and

''(B) calls on the President to urge the Government of Iran to comply with United Nations Security Council resolution 1929 regarding their intercontinental ballistic missile program.

''(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

SA 1214. Mr. LEAHY (for Mr. LEE) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 125, to amend title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 to extend the authorization of the Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant Program through fiscal year 2020, and for other purposes; as follows:

On page 2, line 11, strike ''$30,000,000'' and insert ''$25,000,000''.

SA 1215. Mr. INHOFE (for Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself and Mrs. MURRAY)) proposed an amendment to the bill S. 1124, to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to improve the Act; as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''WIOA Technical Amendments Act''.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.

(a) DESIGNATION OF AREAS SERVED BY RURAL CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AS LOCAL AREAS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 106(b) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3121(b)) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (5) and (6) as paragraphs (6) and (7), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) AREAS SERVED BY RURAL CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.—The Governor may approve, under paragraph (2) or (3), a request for designation as a local area from an area described in section 107(c)(1)(C).''.

(b) LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS.—Section 107(i)(1)(B) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3122(i)(1)(B)) is amended by striking ''the day before the date of enactment of this Act'' and inserting ''the day before the date of enactment of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998''.

(c) PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM.—Section 116 of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3141) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2)(A)(iv), by striking ''clause (i)(IV)'' and inserting ''clause (i)(VI)''; and

(2) in subsection (g), by striking ''for a program described in subsection (d)(2)(A)''.

(d) STATE ALLOTMENTS.—Section 132(b) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3172(b)) is amended, in paragraphs (1)(B)(iv)(I) and (2)(B)(iii)(I), by inserting ''less than'' after ''fiscal year that is''.

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(III) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3112(b)(2)(D)(i)(III)) is amended by striking ''section 106(b)(5)'' and inserting ''section 106(b)(6)''.

(2) Section 129(b)(1)(C) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3164(b)(1)(C)) is amended by striking ''subsections (b)(6) and (c)(2) of section 106'' and inserting ''subsections (b)(7) and (c)(2) of section 106''.

(3) Section 134(a)(2)(B)(ii) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3174(a)(2)(B)(ii)) is amended by striking ''section 106(b)(6)'' and inserting ''section 106(b)(7)''.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 400(b) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 780(b)) is amended to read as follows:

''(b)(1) Each member of the National Council shall serve for a term of 3 years.

''(2)(A) No member of the National Council may serve more than two consecutive full terms beginning on the date of commencement of the first full term on the Council. Members may serve after the expiration of their terms until their successors have taken office.

''(B) As used in this paragraph, the term 'full term' means a term of 3 years.

''(3) Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which such member's predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of such term.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect as if enacted 1 day after the date of enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.).

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. CORNYN. 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 May 6, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building.

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 6, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Fish and Wildlife Service: The President's FY2016 Budget Request for the Fish and Wildlife Service and Legislative Hearing on Endangered Species bills.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions be authorized to meet, during the session of the Senate, on May 6, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SD–430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Reauthorizing the Higher Education Act:

The Role of Consumer Information in College Choice.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 6, 2015, at 10 a.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 6, 2015, at 9:30 a.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Ensuring an Informed Citizenry: Examining the Administration's Efforts to Improve Open Government.''

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

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 6, 2015, at 2:15 p.m., in room SD–226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

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

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Mr. CORNYN. 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 May 6, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., in room 428A of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a hearing entitled ''Impact of Federal Labor and Safety Laws on the U.S. Seafood Industry.''

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

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Special Committee on Aging be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 6, 2015, at 2 p.m., in room SH–216 of the Hart Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Aging in Place: Can Advances in Technology Help Seniors Live Independently.''

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on May 6, 2015, at 2:30 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Subcommittee Oversight of Multilateral and Bilateral International Development Programs and Policies.''

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

WIOA TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 61, S. 1124.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1124) to amend the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to improve the Act.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Alexander-Murray substitute amendment at the desk be agreed to. I further ask that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

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

The amendment (No. 1215) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''WIOA Technical Amendments Act''.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENTS TO WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT.

(a) DESIGNATION OF AREAS SERVED BY RURAL CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AS LOCAL AREAS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Section 106(b) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3121(b)) is amended—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (5) and (6) as paragraphs (6) and (7), respectively; and

(B) by inserting after paragraph (4) the following:

''(5) AREAS SERVED BY RURAL CONCENTRATED EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.—The Governor may approve, under paragraph (2) or (3), a request for designation as a local area from an area described in section 107(c)(1)(C).''.

(b) LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS.—Section 107(i)(1)(B) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3122(i)(1)(B)) is amended by striking ''the day before the date of enactment of this Act'' and inserting ''the day before the date of enactment of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998''.

(c) PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM.—Section 116 of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3141) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2)(A)(iv), by striking ''clause (i)(IV)'' and inserting ''clause (i)(VI)''; and

(2) in subsection (g), by striking ''for a program described in subsection (d)(2)(A)''.

(d) STATE ALLOTMENTS.—Section 132(b) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3172(b)) is amended, in paragraphs (1)(B)(iv)(I) and (2)(B)(iii)(I), by inserting ''less than'' after ''fiscal year that is''.

(e) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Section 102(b)(2)(D)(i)(III) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3112(b)(2)(D)(i)(III)) is amended by striking ''section 106(b)(5)'' and inserting ''section 106(b)(6)''.

(2) Section 129(b)(1)(C) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3164(b)(1)(C)) is amended by striking ''subsections (b)(6) and (c)(2) of section 106'' and inserting ''subsections (b)(7) and (c)(2) of section 106''.

(3) Section 134(a)(2)(B)(ii) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 3174(a)(2)(B)(ii)) is amended by striking ''section 106(b)(6)'' and inserting ''section 106(b)(7)''.

(f) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 400(b) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 780(b)) is amended to read as follows:

''(b)(1) Each member of the National Council shall serve for a term of 3 years.

''(2)(A) No member of the National Council may serve more than two consecutive full terms beginning on the date of commencement of the first full term on the Council. Members may serve after the expiration of their terms until their successors have taken office.

''(B) As used in this paragraph, the term 'full term' means a term of 3 years.

''(3) Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration of the term for which such member's predecessor was appointed shall be appointed only for the remainder of such term.''.

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by this section shall take effect as if enacted 1 day after the date of enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3101 et seq.).

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

The bill (S. 1124), as amended, was passed.

CONDEMNING ATROCITIES COMMITTED BY BASHAR AL-ASSAD OF SYRIA AND HIS REGIME

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 173.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 173) condemning atrocities committed by Bashar al-Assad of Syria and his regime, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 173) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TODAY

Mr. INHOFE. 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. 170, National Travel and Tourism Week; S. Res. 171, National Charter Schools Week; and S. Res. 172, National Small Business Week.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolutions en bloc.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, 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 THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2015

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m., Thursday, May 7; 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, with the time until the cloture vote equally divided in the usual form; finally, that the filing deadline for all second-degree amendments to substitute amendment No. 1140 and H.R. 1191 be at 10 a.m.

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

PROGRAM

Mr. INHOFE. Senators should expect a cloture vote on the pending substitute amendment at 10:30 a.m. tomorrow.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. INHOFE. If there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 6:28 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, May 7, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.