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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. FARENTHOLD).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 17, 2015.

I hereby appoint the Honorable BLAKE FARENTHOLD to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 6, 2015, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

END IMMIGRANT FAMILY DETENTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIÉRREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIÉRREZ. Mr. Speaker, you are in the presence of greatness. No, not me, but I am flattered if that was your first thought. Rather, I speak of my excellent grandson, who has come to Washington and to the floor of the House of Representatives to see his grandpa at work.

Tonight, Luisito, who is 12, will be my escort, along with his grandma, at the annual White House picnic for Members of Congress and their families. It would take way more than the allotted 5 minutes to enumerate all of the reasons for this grandfather's pride, so let me just say I am looking forward to showing him off at tonight's gathering.

But more than tonight's picnic, what I am really looking forward to is Father's Day. This Sunday, in Chicago, along with Luisito, my grandson, I will be with his dad and my daughters, who always make the old man feel loved.

And this Father's Day, I will be especially thankful for being allowed to have my family around me, because on Monday, I will be visiting with hundreds of children who cannot be with their dads.

On Monday, I will be joining seven of my colleagues in San Antonio to visit the two largest family detention facilities in the country. Karnes and Dilley are where moms and their children are being kept behind bars awaiting resolution of their immigration cases seeking asylum.

Remember a year ago when tens of thousands of children and young people were fleeing violence in three countries in Central America? The Republicans thought that these children would bring this country to its knees, and anti-immigration groups organized mobs to protest and keep children out of detention facilities in their communities. Do you remember that?

Well, many mothers with small children were also fleeing to the U.S. last year, and they are still being held in detention facilities, which are operated by private prison companies in Texas and Pennsylvania. They are detained for the completely lawful act of seeking asylum. My colleagues and I are going to see firsthand what is going on.

The minority whip, Mr. HOYER, and two of my closest allies on the family detention issue, Ms. LOFGREN and Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD, both of California, are going, and we will be hosted by our colleague from Texas, Mr. CASTRO, as we visit the two facilities.

I am sure that Immigration and Customs Enforcement personnel, and even private companies who are contracted to run the facilities and profit from the incarceration of other people, are trying their best to make the conditions of detention for these moms and kids as humane as they can.

But, you see, that misses the point. We shouldn't be holding vulnerable women and children in detention. We have mothers and small children living in jail-like facilities with uncertain futures, limited access to legal counsel, and this has been going on for some time, for almost a year for some of them. Even with schools and laundry and TVs, they are still being held behind fences.

Moms still have to explain to the youngest children that, no, in fact, they do not know when they can leave or whether they will be deported back to the violent countries they fled after months in detention.

Children who face trauma, gangs, murder, and sexual assault in their neighborhoods were forced to leave alone or in groups or with a parent. They faced all sorts of dangers—smugglers and predators—on the journey to northern Mexico, where we know assault, robbery, and rape are commonplace. Then they crossed the U.S. border, often with the guidance of additional smugglers and criminals, and, following the process in the U.S. law, presented themselves to authorities to request asylum.

Now, because we have not put money into our immigration court system and, by the way, because we have not created ways for people to come here with visas instead of smugglers, we are all paying a higher price to house and feed moms and kids when much cheaper monitoring and supervision options are available. Why? The government feels that imprisoning these children

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and moms, even in relatively humane conditions, will be a deterrent to others.

But 136 House Democrats, including all 8 Members traveling to Texas on Monday, have asked the Secretary of Homeland Security to end the practice of holding moms and children in detention when there are other ways to get the job done.

The children are paying the highest cost. It doesn't take a developmental expert to know that weeks and months in detention in prison-like conditions, having already lived through weeks and months and years of desperation, are not conducive to good child development.

But with my Republican friends, it is usually not the human cost that matters. So let me break it down another way.

At $343 per person per day, we are spending $125,000 per detainee per year—$125,000. But the alternatives to detention we could be using cost about $5.50 a day, or about $2,000 a year. That is cost savings logic that even in Washington we can understand.

Mr. Speaker, regardless of how you feel about the funding and regardless of how you feel about immigration or policy issues, Central America, or any other issues, you cannot lose sight of the fact that we are talking about children.

As a father, I will not be able to look at those children without seeing my grandson, and they are probably a lot like your children and grandchildren, too. I am going to Texas for myself to see these women and children we are holding, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

PAHRUMP VA CLINIC

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. HARDY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HARDY. Mr. Speaker, we live in America, a nation conceived in liberty and consecrated by the service and sacrifice of our military men and women.

Veterans throughout the country depend on our integrity to keep our promises. We promise to care for their health after they come home from battle; and yet, too often, we delay making good on the promise.

Specifically, why have veterans of Pahrump, Nevada, had the promise of a new clinic dangled over their heads for years? Construction was finally approved nearly 1 year ago, and the ground remains unbroken.

Later today, the VA is holding a town hall in Pahrump. My staff will be there to hear the latest updates. I hope they will finally have something to tell the veterans there other than what they have shared with me.

Something is very wrong with the VA right now. My advocacy for the veterans of my district, especially those who need better and more accessible health care now, will not cease.

Let's not leave our veterans with more unmet promises. We can do better for the more than 8,000 veterans of Nye County, Nevada.

STOP MESSING AROUND WITH FAILED TRADE AGREEMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, 44 days—44 days—that is when the highway trust fund runs dry.

Now, this isn't a surprise. We have been kicking the can down the road for awhile. The Republicans have been in charge for 4½ years. And today, the Ways and Means Committee is, rather begrudgingly, holding its first hearing on the issue of the highway trust fund. However, they have already foreclosed the options.

The chairman and the Republican leadership have said: We can't do user fees the way Dwight David Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan did. That is off the table. We are going to come up with some other creative or phony way to pay for these investments.

And they pretty much have said they are going to try to kick the can down the road until the end of December.

Well, those sorts of patches won't deal with the massive pothole that we have with our infrastructure in this country: 140,000 bridges need repair or replacement; 40 percent of the service of the National Highway System is degraded to the point where you have to dig it up and put in a new roadbed, not just pave it over a little bit; $86 billion backlog to bring our transit system just up to a state of good repair—not to build out more options to get people out of congestion and traffic, just to bring the existing system up to a state of repair. It is so bad that in the Nation's Capital they are unnecessarily killing people because of a system that is outmoded, obsolete, and defective.

But we are the United States of America. We can't afford to invest, according to Republicans. They don't distinguish between investment and spending, unless it is the Pentagon, where spending is good. But rebuilding American infrastructure, they can't find the money for that.

Luckily, there is furious, furious activity going on now. The President went to the baseball game last week for the first time in 7 years. He showed up at the House baseball game. He came to the Democratic Caucus last week. He sent three secretaries here. He is inviting groups down to the White House, bringing them down by motorcade. He is on the phone with JOHN BOEHNER, his former archenemy. They are furiously, furiously at work.

Unfortunately, what they are scheming over is how to undo what we did last week, blocking the last worst trade agreement that America will ever have, saying: We want a new paradigm on trade. No more failed trade policies for this country. It is not working, to just rebuild or build upon the massive profits of multinational corporations, hoping some of it might trickle down.

Actually, it has just led to job exports because they can get 30-cent-an-hour labor in Vietnam. They desperately want this agreement. And Malaysia, hey, the House stripped out the minor restrictions on human trafficking so that U.S. companies could feel free to go to Malaysia.

So they are furiously plotting what way they can trick us or somehow overcome 85 percent of the Democrats in the House caucus here and a number of Republicans who have concerns about these failed trade deals.

Now, just think—just think—if Speaker BOEHNER, President Obama, and corporate America assembled, were just working to help us find a solution to our crumbling infrastructure, because it is certainly important to everybody in this country. If we found that solution, if we moved forward with a long-term bill, we could, instead of having to argue over assistance for workers who are going to lose their jobs because of this trade agreement, we could be hiring hundreds of thousands of Americans, and not just construction workers. This would involve manufacturing. For transit, it involves high tech. It involves small business. It involves minority business enterprises. It involves family-wage jobs where people can make a living, not getting retrained to go to McDonald's because their job was sent to Asia or Mexico or someplace else.

We have a tremendous opportunity. Stop messing around with these failed trade agreements, and let's put our heads together and figure out how to pay for a long-term transportation bill and get this country moving again.

LGBT PRIDE MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. ESTY) for 5 minutes.

Ms. ESTY. Mr. Speaker, June is national LGBT Pride Month, and so I rise today to honor and recognize the determination, advocacy, contributions, and talents of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans.

I was 15 years old, a high school student in a small town, when I gave my first gay rights speech. I did not know in 1975 that I would one day have the opportunity to be here on the floor of the House of Representatives to support equal rights, but I did know that it is wrong to discriminate against fellow Americans because of who they love.

And I think I knew on some level that my brother Jamie was gay. I was, and still remain, committed to stand with those who fight bigotry, discrimination, and violence against those who love another.

And looking back, I am so deeply thankful to stand here today and to celebrate the remarkable progress we have made in recent years. That progress is due to the tireless determination and enduring struggle of

LGBT Americans and allies, like my brother Jamie and my mother, Mitzi Henderson.

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Don't Ask, Don't Tell is a thing of the past, and it no longer forces our men and women in uniform to choose between serving this Nation and being open about who they are and who they love. Marriage equality is now a reality in 37 States and in Washington, D.C. That covers 70 percent of all Americans. During LGBT Pride Month, we celebrate the progress we have made, but we also recommit to the continued fight for full equality.

Congress needs to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, ENDA, to ensure that no one is fired because of one's gender identity or sexual orientation. Congress needs to pass the SAME Act, which I had the honor of helping to introduce, to ensure that all couples can receive the Social Security benefits that they have earned. Congress needs to pass the Respect for Marriage Act so that all couples are treated with equality and fairness no matter where they live or who they love.

At this very moment, the pursuit of national marriage equality continues. The Supreme Court is currently considering a case that affords the Court a rare opportunity, the opportunity to make history while advancing justice. The Court may and—I hope—will rule that the Constitution's guarantee of the right to marry extends to same-sex couples throughout the United States.

No matter how the Court rules in the days ahead, I know we still have a long road ahead to advance equal rights for all Americans, but I also know we will prevail. We will prevail because we will continue to have those courageous conversations one at a time. We will prevail because we advocate for something far more powerful than politics; we advocate for love.

I am honored to join with Americans across this great country to celebrate national LGBT Pride Month and to stand with those who stand up every day to defend the right of all Americans to be proud of who they are, to be proud of who they love, and to proudly work together for the ongoing cause of true equality under the law.

KIPP GENERATIONS COLLEGIATE GRADUATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GENE GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker and Members, I rise today in honor of the graduates from the KIPP Generations Collegiate High School, KGC, in Houston, Texas. KIPP is a charter school that partners with our Houston area public school system.

Last Sunday, I was honored to speak at their commencement ceremony. I have followed the success of KIPP students for 20 years. From their beginnings in elementary school, Mike Feinberg and his excellent staff have taught thousands of children in Texas. KGC's main focus is to build a rigorous learning environment to better equip its students for college.

This school has upheld its mission by empowering its graduates to take ownership of their education by approaching learning with curiosity, with a sense of responsibility, and by putting their knowledge into action in the service of others. Hailing under the motto of ''We Lift as We Climb,'' KGC is truly a model of success for the entire country.

KGC's values of hope, empowerment, grit, and citizenship are tools that every student needs to succeed in the 21st century. Because of this learning environment, every graduate from this program has been accepted into a college or a university. KGC continues to perform well above the State in district averages.

I would like to congratulate the students, the parents, the teachers, and the administrators for their success now and in the future.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 19 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

The following proceedings were held before the House convened for morning-hour debate:

UNITED STATES ASSOCIATION OF FORMER MEMBERS OF CONGRESS 2015 ANNUAL REPORT TO CONGRESS

The meeting was called to order by the Honorable Jim Walsh, vice president of Former Members of Congress Association, at 8:06 a.m.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Lord God of history, we thank You for this day when former Members return to Congress to continue, in a less official manner, their service to our Nation and to this noble institution.

May their presence here bring a moment of pause where current Members consider the profiles they now form for future generations of Americans.

May all former Members be rewarded for their contributions to this constitutional Republic and continue to work and pray that the goodness and justice of this beloved country be proclaimed to the nations.

Bless all former Members who have died since last year's meeting, 30 in all. May their families and their constituents be comforted during a time of mourning and forever know our gratitude for the sacrifices made in service to the House.

Finally, bless those here gathered that they might bring joy and hope to the present age in supportive companionship to one another. Together, we call upon Your holy name now and forever.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable Jim Walsh led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

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

Mr. WALSH. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the distinguished Democratic whip.

Mr. HOYER. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker. I was glad to be here with Jim Walsh.

I looked at the list. As I look around—I am not sure this is accurate—but I saw in the list there are about, I would say, 30 names on this list, and I think there are only two on the list, although that may be not accurate, with whom I have not served. Ron, you are one of them, and I think Lou Frey. Where is Lou?

Mr. FREY. Over here.

Mr. HOYER. The two of you, I think, are the only two former Members with whom I have not served.

And, unfortunately, I never served with Speaker Michel. I served with Minority Leader Michel, but I wish I had served with Speaker Michel, one of the great Americans with whom I have served.

I think Bob Michel is the quintessential example of what a Member of Congress ought to be: civil, committed to his party and to his principles, but committed above all to his country and to his family.

Bob, it was an honor to serve with you, and it is an honor to be your friend. Thank you very much for your service.

To all of you who made this institution what it is today and those of us who are continuing to make it what it ought to be, we are not doing that job very well, for the most part. Although, I will say this, that Speaker BOEHNER is trying to make that happen and, to the extent that we work together, we do. But it is harder and harder, as you know, because the ideological differences between the parties have become more substantial than they were, certainly when I came here in 1981.

Jim Blanchard and I served on the Financial Services Committee together. It was then the Banking Committee. But we are trying to work together to do what is best for our country. I think the country believes its board of directors is not working nearly as well as it ought to.

I want to thank all of you for staying engaged and for continuing to send the message to your colleagues, your friends, your neighbors who have great respect for you. And you have something that very few people have. You know, there are only about a little short of 11,000 of us who have served in this House of Representatives since the founding of the Republic, which is an

amazingly small number in a country that is now 320 million, give or take, people.

So it was a wonderful, wonderful honor for us to be elected here. As you know, we can't be appointed to the House of Representatives.

And as I look around this room on both sides of the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, so many people with whom I worked very, very closely, positively and productively in the Congress of the United States, it is always a privilege to welcome you back. And, of course, so many of you—Ron Sarasin is a permanent fixture, of course. We see Ron through his activity on the historic society working here on a very regular basis to make sure that Americans understand the history and the importance of their Capitol. Ron, thank you very much for that service and that leadership.

Mr. Chris Shays is coming into the Chamber. Hi, Chris. Good to see you.

Mr. SHAYS. We haven't voted yet, have we?

Mr. HOYER. Now, there are some of you I need—and I am not sure that I would get all of you—but we haven't voted yet.

I want to thank all of you for staying involved, staying true to the responsibility the people gave you; and when you no longer had that responsibility, in terms of being an elected Member of this body, you continued your fidelity to what this body means, particularly this body. I think all of us are very proud that we served, as we all say, in the people's House.

This was the House that was designed to be most responsive to the passions and the fears and the aspirations and the hopes, the good and the bad, of the American people, where every 2 years we had to re-up. And I think that will never change. It will never change, first of all, because it was a good theory. And, secondly, it will never change because the Senators don't want to give us a free shot at them. So, you know, you have got the principle and then the practical combined in that way.

But I always enjoy being with you, saying hello to you. Certainly my office, which is, as you know, just one floor down here in the Capitol, if we can do anything for any of you at any point of time, if you need a place to hang your jacket or make a telephone call or we have got a conference room that is vacant from time to time, you can use that. It was a privilege and an honor to serve with all of you and to continue to be your friends. God bless you. Thank you very much.

Let me pay special honor to my Maryland colleague, Bev Byron. Jim Moran, I think, and John may be the most recent new Members of the former Members. Maybe some of the rest of you, I think. But Bev Byron and Mike McIntyre.

Bev Byron and I started out—well, she may have been there 1 or 2 years before I was there. But in 1962, we started in the Young Democrats together. Now, she wants me to sit down. She is saying ''now you are going to meddling.'' We love you, Bev. I love you. Thank you.

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Whip, on behalf of all of my colleagues here in the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress, let me say thank you for your loyalty to this group. You always come year after year. You share your wisdom. You give us a sense of what is happening, and you connect we, the former Members, with the current. And it is a great value to all of us. Thank you.

I now call upon the distinguished president of the association, Barbara Kennelly, the gentlewoman from Massachusetts.

Ms. KENNELLY. Thank you, Jim.

I was pleased to represent Connecticut for 17 years.

Mr. WALSH. Pardon me.

Ms. KENNELLY. All those little States up there.

And thank you, Leader HOYER, for being with us this morning. I can always know where your seniority is because I was one behind you, and you were fortunate and you stayed.

Anyway, we begin this meeting, and I thank everybody who is here with us this morning as we begin this wonderful day of former Members.

We are back in this revered Chamber, which we all loved and worked in and had really such an honor to be here, and it is an honor to be here again today to present the 45th annual report of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress.

I will be joined by some of our colleagues in reporting on the activities and projects of our organization since our last report, which was last July. Wait until you see how far we have come even since last year.

I first would like the Clerk to call the roll.

Mr. Blanchard of Michigan
Ms. Buerkle of New York
Mr. Bustamante of Texas
Ms. Byron of Maryland
Mr. Carnahan of Missouri
Mr. Carr of Michigan
Mr. Clement of Tennessee
Ms. Dahlkemper of Pennsylvania
Mr. Edwards of Texas
Mr. Frey of Florida
Mr. Frost of Texas
Mr. Gingrey of Georgia
Mr. Hertel of Michigan
Mr. Hughes of New Jersey
Ms. Kennelly of Connecticut
Mr. Kolbe of Arizona
Mr. Konnyu of California
Mr. Lancaster of North Carolina
Mr. Lungren of California
Mr. McIntyre of North Carolina
Mr. Mezvinsky of Iowa
Mr. Moore of Kansas
Mr. Moran of Virginia
Ms. Morella of Maryland
Mr. Sarasin of Connecticut
Mr. Sarpalius of Texas
Mr. Shays of Connecticut
Mr. Skaggs of Colorado
Mr. Stearns of Florida
Mr. Sundquist of Tennessee
Mr. Tanner of Tennessee
Mr. Tierney of Massachusetts
Mr. Turner of Texas
Mr. Walsh of New York.

Mr. WALSH. The Chair announces that 34 former Members of Congress have responded to their names.

Ms. KENNELLY. Thank you all for joining us today.

Our association was chartered by Congress, and one requirement of that charter is for us to report once a year to Congress about our activities. Wait until you see how many activities that we have.

Many of you have joined us for several years on this occasion, and there will be numerous programs and projects with which by now many of you have become very familiar. This is a sign of our association's stability and purpose.

We are extremely proud of our 45-year history, of creating lasting and purposeful programs to teach about Congress and representative government, and of our ability to take long-standing projects and to expand them and to improve them. We will report on our program in just a minute.

During our annual meeting today, we will honor two of our colleagues with well-deserved recognition. In a few minutes, we will celebrate Lou Frey's accomplishments with our Lifetime Achievement Award. And later today, during a luncheon in his honor, we will bestow the 2015 Distinguished Service Award to our dear friend, Amo Houghton. I certainly hope all of you in attendance and those coming later can join us for the luncheon since Amo has been an inspiration and a mentor to so many of us.

While the ceremony is not going to take place right now, I do want to read into the RECORD the inscription of the plaque Amo Houghton will receive today:

> The 2015 Distinguished Service Award is presented by the U.S. Association of Former Members of Congress to Congressman Amo Houghton.
>
> Congressman Houghton of New York is known for his civility, intellect, and compassion. Amo valiantly served our country as a United States Marine and for 18 years as a Member of Congress. While serving in Congress, Amo was relied upon by both Republican and Democratic Members for his keen mind, unassuming nature, and unquestioned integrity to help find solutions when others only saw impasse.
>
> He set the standard for good citizenship and a commitment to the common good and continues to do so in his support of educational and philanthropic endeavors. He is a voice of reason that continues to resonate with all of those who care deeply about Congress and the ideals of representative democracy. His colleagues from both sides of the aisle salute him as a distinguished and dedicated public servant.
>
> Washington, D.C.

Please do join us this afternoon because I think the luncheon is going to be absolutely wonderful, and I hope you all can attend. I know there are

others that couldn't be with us this morning that will be with us this noontime.

Now, back to our report. Our association is bipartisan. It was founded in 1970 and chartered by Congress in 1983. The purpose of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress is to promote public service and strengthen democracy, abroad and in the United States.

About 600 former Members, Senators and Representatives, belong to this association. Republicans, Democrats, and Independents are united in this organization in their desire to teach about Congress and the importance of representative democracy.

We are proud to have been chartered by Congress, and we are just as proud to take no funding from Congress. All the activities which we are about to describe are financed via membership dues, program-specific grants, sponsors, or via our fundraising dinner that you are going to hear about very shortly.

Our finances are sound, our projects fully funded, and our most recent audit by an outside accountant confirmed that we are running our association in a fiscally sound, responsible, and transparent manner.

It has been another successful, active, and rewarding year. We have continued our work of serving as a liaison between the current Congress and legislatures overseas. We have created partnerships with highly respected institutions in the area of democracy building and election monitoring. We have developed new projects and are expanding others. We, again, have sent dozens of bipartisan teams of former Members of Congress to teach about public service and representative democracy at universities and high schools both in the United States and abroad.

Our most important domestic undertaking is teaching America's next generation about their government and responsibility of citizenship. After our report here in the Chamber this morning, we will inaugurate a new association project aimed at bringing civic education back to public school classrooms. The focus on civics has been ingrained in our association's DNA for over 30 years, most prominently as a part of our Congress to Campus program.

I will yield to my good friend, David Skaggs of Colorado, who for a number of years, when our association was not able to administer this program on its own, stepped up to the plate and not only kept Congress to Campus going, but expanded it significantly.

David.

Mr. SKAGGS. Thank you very much, Barbara.

I appreciate the opportunity to report on the Congress to Campus program. Although I have been affiliated with it for a long time, I want to recognize the co-chairs of the program who couldn't be with us this morning, Larry LaRocco of Idaho and Jack Buechner of Missouri. They have done a terrific job over the years in moving this program along.

This program, as many of us have participated in it well know, sends bipartisan teams of former Members to colleges and universities across the country and around the world. It engages our Members from all over the country in educating the next generation of leaders about the institution of Congress, the duties and responsibilities that we have as Members, and most importantly, the value of public service.

Since our visits always involve a bipartisan team, they demonstrate, I think, pretty well that political debate can and should be respectful, dynamic, and courteous.

Former Members volunteer their time leading classes, meeting with student leaders, meeting with community organizations, joining with student government meetings—all manner of activities on campus. The schools are encouraged to offer the program to the entire campus community to demonstrate how we do our work in the Congress.

I have gone on many of these trips, most recently this spring with our former colleague Pete Smith of Vermont, on a visit to Evergreen State College in Washington State. I was again reminded of how valuable these programs are, and I learned a great deal from exchanges with Pete during the course of that visit.

Speaking to the students renews our hope, I think, in the future of our country, and I hope and believe that Members will get as much out of this as the students do.

We are delighted to report this year that we added some new schools to the program, as well as returning to many of our old favorites. During the last academic year, we visited over 25 schools, including Abilene Christian, Boston University, Palm Beach State, Tufts University, the U.S. Naval Academy, and Washington State University, to name just a few. Over 40 former Members participated, including several former Members who just left office last January, so it is great to get them involved very quickly.

I want to thank everyone who made a visit and, most of all, those that have donated their time pro bono to this very important program of the association. I think Members will tell you that it gives them an opportunity in a very meaningful way to continue their public service.

I hope all our colleagues, particularly those who may not yet have participated in the program, will consider making a visit. It is an opportunity to renew old friendships or make new ones. Maybe, if you can't make a visit yourself, you can put us in touch with your former alma mater or a school in your old district so that we can take the program there. Sharon Witiw, who is seated to my left, runs the program for the association and can provide all the information you may need.

We especially want to recognize our continued relationship with the Stennis Center for Public Service and its associate director, Brother Roger. The folks at the Stennis Center have been a fantastic partner in keeping the program on track, both logistically and financially.

We have expanded the program internationally. There were two delegations to the U.K. in the past year for weeklong visits with hundreds of British students. Members participated even in townhall meetings in Britain. I hate to think of how much more fun that is than townhall meetings here.

It is reported that these visits have been one of the highlights of the students' semesters, and we want to thank Philip Davies with the British Library in London for all he does to make the program work over there.

We have also incorporated Congress-to-Campus-like activities in a number of other international programs, including the Congressional Study Group on Germany. With the support of the German Embassy here in Washington, we were able to have a weeklong Congress and Bundestag to Campus program where former Members joined with members of the Bundestag and met with students from dozens of universities in the northeast.

Last fall, a new program was piloted using technology to reach a new constituency. Thanks to an in-kind grant from iCohere, we had three 90-minute Congress to Campus webinar sessions to an audience of community colleges across the Nation.

The webinar platform allowed students from all over the country to participate and ask questions of the bipartisan panels of former Members. We are currently adapting the webinar platform to also serve high school government classes around the country and hope to have that program up and running this fall. Please consider participating in one of these programs that do not necessarily involve the 3-day commitment of a campus visit.

The association has also continued to support the People to People program, which brings hundreds of high school students to the Capitol to learn about leadership and American Government. Several times over the past year, former Members have keynoted those sessions, and we have heard that many staffers on the Hill were first inspired into public service through their People to People experience.

Thanks to everyone who has helped make this program the hallmark program of the association. An informed and engaged citizenry is absolutely essential if our democracy is going to work, and this program really contributes to that end.

Thank you very much.

Ms. KENNELLY. Thank you, David. Thank you for all you have done for one of our most successful programs.

I can remember I got excited when I heard about these programs, and I really wanted to be part of it. At one time,

Nancy Johnson and I went to Annapolis, and I wondered if Annapolis students would be so interested in two women of age spending 2½ days with them.

We had the best times, absolutely; and I really urge you to go. Nancy and I were always friendly, but it really gives you a chance to spend 2½ days with someone from the other party who you might have known or you might not have known, and you will enjoy it.

We have another new project, and the purpose of the Common Ground Project is to involve citizens in a dialogue about the issues of the day and have a vigorous debate that doesn't shy away from being partisan but, at the same time, manages to be productive.

To give you more background on this Common Ground Project, I invite my colleague from New York, former Member Ann Marie Buerkle, to share her report.

Ann Marie.

Ms. BUERKLE. Thank you very much, Barbara, Mr. Speaker.

One of the many joys of being active with this remarkable, effective association is that it brings together Republicans and Democrats in our many programs, whether it is a part of our board of directors, during our annual meeting and charitable government tournament, for panel discussions, as well as other presentations. All that this association does is bipartisan. Our board is divided evenly between Republicans and Democrats, and our leadership rotates between the two parties.

Currently, our Congress, indeed, our country, is going through a period of polarization and partisanship. While we don't leave our political beliefs at the door when participating in association activities, we pride ourselves in creating an environment where an across-the-aisle dialogue is not only possible, but also the norm. We have institutionalized this approach in a program that we call the Common Ground Project.

The purpose of the Common Ground Project is to create venues and events where a bipartisan approach can involve the public in a dialogue on the issues of the day. Some of our longstanding programs, most importantly the Congress to Campus program we just heard about, already fit neatly into the goals of the Common Ground Project. There are other additional undertakings that were specifically created to further this project.

We are extremely proud of our partnership with the National Archives, which, since 2010, has brought dozens of former Members—again, from both sides of the aisle—together with the public for panel discussions for a productive as well as a respectful dialogue. I have been privileged to participate in a number of our Common Ground Project activities, including Congress to Campus, as well as the National Archives panel series. I believe these dialogues are incredibly important.

Since our last report to Congress, we continue to offer the public a number of opportunities to participate in conversations about the issues that concern our Nation. At the National Archives, former Members held discussions about the midterm elections, our current electoral system, and some of the issues that have caused this current partisan divide. Other public forums included presentations on money in politics, foreign affairs and international trade issues, the U.S. Constitution, and the accomplishments of women in leadership.

As David Skaggs reported earlier, the Congress to Campus program included, for the first time, a number of webinars that reached a very specific audience, in this case, community college students, and gave them an opportunity to interact online with our bipartisan panels of former Members of Congress. After some introductory remarks, most of the webinar time was committed to giving the students an opportunity to ask questions online. We were thrilled with the positive response to this new initiative and believe that this concept will translate into furthering the goals of the Common Ground Project.

Using modern technology, we can effectively reach audiences all across the United States of America to engage with them in a meaningful dialogue. This is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate the great benefit that comes from differing opinions being aired, discussed, and dissected in order to find that common ground.

We will explore, over the next year, additional ways to make use of webinars as a means of bringing the public together with our former Member teams. Our initial plan includes reaching out to high school audiences, in addition to college students. The program could then be expanded to include other constituencies who would be gathered in front of the computer, again, to participate in a webinar. This would allow us to include, among others, the VFW, chambers of commerce, and many groups who may not have access to an in-person discussion.

There are quite a number of other activities that contribute to our Common Ground Project. Unfortunately, the list is too long this morning to include them all here. It is our association's most important undertaking to reengage the public in a political discourse that is productive, respectful, and yields solutions rather than sound bites.

We, as former Members, can contribute greatly towards a better understanding of how the important issues of our day play out on Capitol Hill, and I view it as one of the responsibilities that comes with the privilege of having served in Congress. We have an opportunity to bridge the political gap and show the American people that we can have deeply held convictions and still have discussions and debates that find not only the common ground, but also seek solutions.

Thank you so much.

Ms. KENNELLY. Thank you, Ann Marie. And thank you very much for being willing to be active in our association and do a number of things for us.

Ann Marie was on the panel. As you know, we have a very close relationship with the Archives. And we, our organization and the Archives, had a panel 2 days after election. And this shows that we really can be bipartisan. There were various views that came forth in that discussion, but it was absolutely wonderful. We had a full audience. And it just shows that bipartisanship can work, even 2 days after election. Some of us were happy, and some of us weren't.

Another example of how powerful and productive bipartisanship can be is our annual Congressional Golf Tournament. It is chaired by our past president, Dennis Hertel of Michigan, and by fellow board member Ken Kramer of Colorado.

I will now yield the floor to Dennis Hertel to give us a brief report about our charitable golf tournament.

Dennis.

Mr. HERTEL. Thank you, Barbara. I am still more comfortable over here.

Congratulations, Barbara, on this great turnout today. And the annual dinner, what a great success it was, better than ever. You and Jim Walsh have done just fantastic and what you have accomplished for the association.

Eight years ago, we took a 35-year-old tradition, our annual golf tournament, which pits Republicans against Democrats, and gave it a new and much bigger mission. We converted it into a charitable golf tournament to aid severely wounded vets returning from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan. Our beneficiaries—Warfighter Sports, a program of Disabled Sports USA, and Tee It Up for the Troops—use golf and other sports to help our wounded veterans readjust to life after sustaining severe injuries. They involve the entire family in the sport, and they provide equipment and training.

Our seventh annual event was held last year on July 28 at the Army Navy Country Club. And we have had more Congressmen, active Members, attend our tournament than all of these other golf tournaments that you hear about in Washington, D.C. There might be more in Washington, D.C., than any other place in the country as far as fundraisers, but we have more Members turn out for our cause.

All together, these tournaments have raised over a half million dollars for these outstanding programs. During each of our past tournaments, we have had several dozen current and former Members from both sides of the aisle come together to support our wounded troops that day and throughout the year; and they have met with dozens of wounded warriors, many of whom play in our foursomes. Some double amputees included in their numbers have hit

further and straighter than a lot of our members—certainly me. It is an incredibly humbling, rewarding, and memorable experience to spend a day in the presence of these inspiring men and women.

I want to thank everyone in the association, particularly Sharon Witiw, as well as Ken Kramer, our tournament's co-chair. Sharon just does a tremendous job week in and week out working on this all year long, and Ken has just been the mainstay of the program.

Equally important, I am happy to report we have again secured the leadership of two of our most outstanding current Members who are co-chairs to help us lead this effort: Congressman JIMMY DUNCAN of Tennessee and Congressman GENE GREEN of Texas. So some co-chairmen that many of us have served with have just been tremendous in opening up their offices and staff and working with us all the time.

GENE replaces our past Democratic co-chair, Mike McIntyre of North Carolina.

Mike, please stand up. We want to thank you so much for your hard work as co-chair.

Mike really put us up on the map and got us higher as far as Members' participation, and it has really made a great difference. And JIMMY DUNCAN and GENE GREEN, we just can't thank them enough for what they have been doing and their constant encouragement of Members to come and play with us.

That brings me to the point of our former Members. We are having, for the first time in the last few tournaments, more current Members play in the golf tournament than former Members when we are sponsoring it. So I hope that the great turnout today is an indication of having more people come to our golf tournament. Even if you don't want to play golf, just come and enjoy the day with our veterans. It is so convenient. It is right here at Army Navy. Don't worry about your skill level, you know. It is an honor for us to help such an incredibly deserving group in this small way.

The next tournament will be July 27. We call it ''The Members'' tournament. But unlike the Masters, you don't need to play at the pro level to have a successful and enjoyable day. All you have to do is show up and help raise some money. I want to stress that, while this event is called a tournament, no one should be worried about their score or their skill level to participate. I am certainly an example of that.

This event is 100 percent about helping wounded warriors. Nobody cares what your handicap is. Your individual score is not kept because we have a scramble format, which I am very much in favor of; so, you know, they don't really know how you did. But if you hit one good, they can use it, including a putt.

So both current and former Members give it their time and attention. If you only play golf once a year, this should be the day you do it.

So I want to thank all of you so much for all the help. And if you can play or if you can bring us a new sponsor, please let us know.

Thanks very much.

Ms. KENNELLY. Thank you, Dennis, for this report.

We are so honored that we can play a small role in the rehabilitation of these amazing men and women. And as a golfer, I can tell you it doesn't matter if your handicap is 10 or if your handicap is 27; and I have been both places. And I promise you, in a scramble, no matter what Marty Russo does, he doesn't always win.

In addition to the domestic programs we have just described, our association also has a very active and far-reaching international focus. We conduct programs focused on Europe and Asia; we bring current Members of Congress together with their peers in legislatures overseas; and we work with the Department of State to talk about representative democracy in our office with audiences abroad. To me, this is becoming one of the most important programs.

As I remember, when I first became active in Association of Former Members, you really did not see many sitting Members of Congress. It was our association. We have expanded this, and as a result, a number of Members take part in our organizations that do go abroad and do study things abroad.

The other day, the German Marshall Fund had put out a new report, and Pete put together a get-together. I was so impressed. We had scholars about Germany. We had a very interesting audience as well as the German Marshall Fund there.

But what really impressed me was the number of Members—and this was one of the busiest days when they were doing the trade legislation—the Members that were attending; and even when they had to go out, they came back. My feeling is, if we get this new business of having present Members be active in our association, that means they will know our association before they are former Members.

Psychologically, this is very good because they bring very new information, but not only that, we are not trying to get them to be Members. After they have left or lost, they know about us. I think this will be very healthy for the organization.

One of our most valued partners in these undertakings is the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians. Our friendship with our colleagues in Ottawa goes back to 1987 when a group of former parliamentarians came and visited with us to learn about our association and our projects and used the lessons learned to create their own association in Canada.

For almost 30 years, we have been friends and partners and we are honored to have as our guest today David Daubney, a former member of the Canadian Parliament and an officer of our sister organization.

Welcome, David, if you are here this morning. Thank you, David. We are so pleased you can be with us.

I have not had the opportunity, and former Members have asked me to go up to Ottawa to join in their big event, like our dinner, and I got into the airport in Ottawa, and that is the day that they had a very sad bomb scare.

Very fortunately, I didn't get out of the airport because if I had, I wouldn't have gotten home for a couple of days because the airport was locked down. I was sorry I couldn't be there. I thank you for the good times we have had in the past year with the Canadian delegation. You are going to hear more about that.

Via the former Members association, I have met with numerous groups of legislators from emerging democracies who have come to Washington for a better understanding of our representative government and our form of democracy. These conversations and meetings are always two-way streets. I have to say that I learn as much, if not more, from our visitors than they do from me.

Just last month, our association hosted at our offices a large group of young professionals from ASEAN, countries including Vietnam and Indonesia, and we had a great dialogue about running for office and serving our constituency.

Our association also has a longstanding partnership with a great NGO Legacy International, bringing young professionals from the Middle East and north Africa to the United States. Our most recent group just completed their 6 weeks in Washington. They stay 6 weeks.

The group is composed of young professionals from Morocco and Tunisia. Most of these visitors work in the NGO sector in their countries, and they come to the United States to learn about the interaction between government and nongovernmental sectors.

I would like to take this moment to thank former Congresswoman Bev Byron because she has been very, very generous in opening up her house to students for dinner, and it is much appreciated by the association.

The goal of this program is to seek a better understanding between cultures and establish an avenue of dialogue between nations. It is a unique opportunity to create a constructive political and cultural discourse between the United States and north Africa. I am very proud that our association is part of this vital dialogue.

In addition to hosting visiting delegations, our association organizes former Member delegations to travel overseas and engage students, government officials, NGOs, and corporate representatives. You have already heard about the Congress to Campus programs and the very international component that it has.

We brought the program to numerous universities in countries such as Turkey, the United Kingdom, other overseas delegations; we call them ExDELs.

We have traveled to countries where a dialogue is often difficult, but nonetheless incredibly important—for example, China, a country to which we have now sent seven ExDELs over the past 4 years.

In addition to these former Member international programs, our association supports Congress' international outreach in a meaningful, productive, and bipartisan way via our congressional study groups. These are all programs that involve current Members of Congress, and I now invite my good friend and my predecessor, and I thank Connie for helping me begin my presidency, and I enjoyed her presidency, Connie Morella.

Ms. MORELLA. Thank you, Madam President. Thank you very much, Barbara. I just want to say it has been great working side by side with you for the 2 years when you were vice president, and you are doing a great job. It is nice to continue to be involved with all the wonderful programs that the former Members offer.

I appreciate the opportunity to briefly speak to you about the work of Congressional Study Groups on Germany, Japan, Turkey, and Europe. They are flagship international programs of the former Members of Congress for over three decades. The study groups are independent, bipartisan legislative exchanges for current Members of Congress and their senior staff, and they serve as educational forums and invaluable tools for international dialogue with the goal of creating better understanding and cooperation between the United States and its most important strategic and economic partners.

Each study group has a membership roster of between 75 and 125 Members of Congress, current Members of Congress, and is led by a bipartisan, bicameral pair of co-chairs. I want to acknowledge the service of all of our co-chairs for their hard work and dedication to these critical programs, and I hope they are watching.

The Congressional Study Group on Germany is led by Senator JEFF SESSIONS, Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN, Representative CHARLIE DENT, and Representative TED DEUTCH.

The Congressional Study Group on Japan is led by Senator MAZIE HIRONO, Senator LISA MURKOWSKI, Representative DIANA DEGETTE, and Representative BILLY LONG.

The Congressional Study Group on Turkey is led by Representative GERRY CONNOLLY and Representative ED WHITFIELD.

The Congressional Study Group on Europe is led by Senator JOHN BOOZMAN, Senator CHRIS MURPHY, Representative JEFF FORTENBERRY, and Representative PETER WELCH.

Our co-chairs are true leaders, who not only serve in their role at official study group events, but are also called on by various embassies and countless outside organizations to speak on panels, attend roundtables, and meet with visiting delegations.

The study group model focuses on high-level dialogue on pressing issues surrounding security, energy, trade questions, and financial questions that affect our key bilateral and multilateral relationships with our partners abroad.

Programming celebrates active discussion among all participants, avoiding lengthy speeches or formal presentations, in order to create the kind of atmosphere that promotes personal connections. We believe that the network of peers created via our programs have acted to renew and expand areas of mutual cooperation.

The congressional study groups are not the only program dedicated to this mission, but they are unique in their year-round outreach to Capitol Hill. Unlike other formats, we provide long-lasting staff support and maintain a well-respected reputation as independent and nonadvocacy.

As a result, our network attracts a large, diverse groups of legislators and policymakers who are committed to international dialogue more broadly and don't have to shy away from our programming lest they be asked to support a particular policy position. What is most important for us is that they join the discussion.

A few highlights from the discussion in the last 12 months include the 31st Annual Congress-Bundestag Seminar hosted by Representative CHARLIE DENT in Pennsylvania's 15th Congressional District in September 2014; the 32nd Annual Congress-Bundestag Seminar hosted by our German counterparts in Berlin, Dresden, and Leipzig in May 2015; the 2nd Annual Congressional Member Study Group tour to Japan in February 2015; three senior congressional staff study tours to Germany in partnership with the Embassy of Germany; one senior congressional staff study tour to Japan, which visited Tokyo, Fukushima, and Hiroshima; and 21 high-level roundtables here in Washington, D.C.

That is quite a list of very important meetings and study groups and trips. The work of the congressional study groups is complemented by our diplomatic advisory council. Initially focused on European nations, the diplomatic advisory council is now comprised of four dozen ambassadors from six continents who advise and participate in our programming.

Their interest and commitment to multilateral dialogue is a valued addition to the congressional study groups and provides a valuable outreach beyond our four core study groups.

In the past year, we have also formed the congressional staff advisory council. As former Members of Congress, we know the value of good staff. I always say my rod and my staff, they comforted me and prepared the papers for me in the presence of my constituents.

The staff advisory council formally recognizes the mutually beneficial relationships we have in offices across Capitol Hill. We are very grateful for the staff who participate in and support our programming, as we are for the Members of Congress.

Finally, I want to thank the institutions, foundations, and companies which support our mission. We would like to give particular thanks to Admiral Dennis Blair, Ms. Junko Chano of Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA, and Dr. Karen Donfried and Ms. Maia Comeau of the German Marshall Fund for their support as our international funders of the congressional study groups in 2015.

The congressional study groups are also grateful for the support of the international business community here in Washington, D.C., represented by each study group's business advisory council. I am going to briefly mention the companies of the 2015 business advisory council because they are the supporters. We do not get any money from Congress, and so it is those people who care very much about the work of the former Members' international programs.

They are Allianz, All Nippon Airways, Airbus Group, B. Braun Medical, Central Japan Railway Company, Cheniere Energy, Daimler, Deutsche Telekom, DHL, Fresenius, Hitachi, Honda, Lufthansa German Airlines, Marubeni America Corporation, Mitsubishi Corporation, Mitsui, Representative of German Industry and Trade, Sojitz, Toyota Motor North America, United Parcel Service, and Volkswagen of America.

Because of their support, our activities not only help to build vital bilateral relationships between legislatures, but also build bipartisan relationships within our own Congress. Mutual understanding and shared experiences among legislators are crucial to solving pressing problems, whether at home or abroad.

As former Members of Congress, we are proud to bring the important services provided by the congressional study groups to our colleagues still in office, and we are very proud to play an active role in our continued international outreach.

Thank you very much.

Ms. KENNELLY. Thank you, Connie.

In addition to these substantive and issue-specific international projects, our association also offers its members the opportunity to participate in group travel where our staff puts together the logistics and participating members assume all the costs. These trips are unique because they combine a tourist experience with more formal meetings that involve current and former government officials in the country we are visiting.

I will now yield to my good friend from North Carolina, Martin Lancaster, to report on his combined delegation.

Mr. LANCASTER. Thank you, Barbara.

For the 2014 fall study group, a contingent of former Members visited the beaches of Normandy, as well as World

War I battlefields in northern France and Belgium. The trip was to commemorate those troops who gave their lives during World War I and World War II on the 100th and 70th anniversaries of those horrible wars. The group of former Members and their spouses were privileged to share this moving experience with a group of former members from the Canadian Parliament and their spouses. This was our first and what we hope will be many joint study tours with our friends to the north.

At the opening reception in Paris, the two groups of former legislators first learned how their nations' sacrifices had a direct impact on the lives of Europeans when a friend of a former Member recounted her story of how her family was liberated by the Allies during the war.

After gathering in Paris, the group traveled to Normandy, first to Juno Beach, where the Canadian military landed for the D-Day invasion. It was an incredible experience to explore a German bunker and to walk the beaches where young Canadian soldiers landed 70 years ago. The following day the group spent a day on the Utah and Omaha beaches in the sands where the U.S. military landed, and we were humbled by the staggering number of losses reflected in the cemetery for the American soldiers.

The former Members held a moving wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and spent quite some time walking around the grounds and reflecting on the sacrifices made by so many.

While in the Normandy region, our group was treated to the hospitality of Count Denis de Kergorlay of Canisy at his chateau, which has been in his family's possession since the 11th century. The Count has been a friend and partner of our association for over 10 years, and many of you have had a chance to meet him during our Statesmanship Awards Dinners where, since 2004, he so generously has offered a four-night stay at this magnificent chateau at auction for our fundraising. I certainly want to thank him on behalf of the association for his many years of support and friendship.

Staying at Chateau de Canisy is like stepping back in time. This welcoming and memorable location provided a warm atmosphere for the national borders and the party affiliations within our international group to completely fade away. Each evening during dinner, conversations revealed our shared experiences as legislators and the moving common history of World War I and World War II. One special night, Count de Kergorlay treated us to a musical performance at the chateau thoroughly enjoyed by all who attended and hailed as one of the highlights of the trip.

The final two days of the trip were spent in northern France and Belgium, and the focus pivoted toward World War I. En route, we stopped briefly at the Normandy Museum in Cannes. A brief detour was made to Hallu, a small village in northern France where the recent discovery of the identity of several World War I soldiers in the backyard of a home there revealed they were from the same regiment as the president of the Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians, Leo Duguay, who was traveling with us. The group gathered in the home's backyard for a moving wreath-laying ceremony and flag presentation. Afterwards, the group was entertained at the mayor's office in Hallu.

Upon arriving in northern France, the group visited Vimy Ridge and the Canadian National Vimy Ridge Memorial, where we toured the trenches and learned about the pivotal battle that occurred in 1917 when the Canadians lost more soldiers than any battle in their history.

We also spent a few hours visiting the interactive Flanders Field Museum in Ypres, Belgium, which is an incredibly marvelous educational experience. The last event of the trip was participating in a ceremony in the town of Ypres at the Menin Memorial Gate to the Missing, where every night at 8 p.m. for the last 100 years, the road is closed and buglers sound ''The Last Post'' in memory of those whose graves are unknown. This was followed by a wreath-laying ceremony by a number of organizations, including our own. What a breathtaking way to conclude our travels.

This fall we are planning to travel to Havana, Cuba, for our study tour. There is such interest by our membership in this destination that we will offer a second trip in January. While our Canadian friends cannot join us in October, we would love to partner with them again maybe for the one in January because it was a great pleasure to get to know them and to form these friendships across the border.

Thank you, Barbara.

Ms. KENNELLY. Thank you, Martin.

The experience you had in Normandy with our friends from Canada certainly was extraordinary, and I have heard all about it. I am sorry I had to miss it, but I am signed up for the Cuba trip.

All of the programs you have heard about clearly require funding, and we have been very successful in growing our fundraising capabilities along with our programming. The most impactful single fundraising mechanism we have created is the Annual Statesmanship Awards Dinner. In March of this year, we hosted our 18th dinner. And just like the preceding 17, it was chaired by our good friend, Lou Frey of Florida. Lou was supported by a number of other co-chairs, including me, former Members Dennis Hertel, Martin Frost, and our association CEO, Pete Weichlein. I would like to invite Lou Frey to report on the highly successful 18th Statesmanship Awards Dinner, and I think you realize that Lou has been chairman of all of the 18 dinners we have had.

Lou Frey.

Mr. FREY. Barbara, thank you for all of the hard work you have put in. We have had many, many people working on this. This is an absolute great way to explain to your kids in terms of doing something. If you are going to do it, make sure you are going to be able to carry it through because this started with an idea of raising maybe $100,000, if that. We had no other source, we were going basically broke over a period of time. The idea, though, grew on its own. Not because of me. It didn't grow because of me, but it grew because each and every one of you, we are all winners. We are all people who succeeded in the toughest market going, and it has been just a wonderful thing to see how it has grown and how many people are now involved in it.

I just messed up someone's long, hard work in terms of what I said. But, Pete, you never thought I would stick to the script. No, I knew you wouldn't think that.

The last dinner, we had over 500 tickets sold. We raised more money than any of the preceding 17 dinners. It was just incredible. We had wonderful people up on the stage. We have decided to go ahead and present the next dinner under a theme of Salute to Service where we have different people involved in this process like we did the last time, like with Bob Dole's, and that will be the next one.

The highlight of the evening, I think, came when they had the debate or discussion, but the evening is a wonderful way to showcase our association and recognize outstanding public service. That is the whole basis of the dinner. If it makes it, we are in great shape. If it blows it, we are in bad shape. It is pretty black and white. We have a good base. I am looking forward to doing it. I would like to say and put it on the record, this is not Federal money. This is not government money. This is our money that we are using. It is money that is reaching out where nobody can criticize it. It came admittedly from an idea that I had to start with, and it is an idea that has really worked.

I think I ought to give you a little information about next year's dinner. I know we are looking at the clock, but I have more information about next year's dinner that you ought to know about. Again, it will be at the Mellon Auditorium on Constitution Avenue. What a great place to have a meeting, and we are going to do it there again. The theme of the 2016 dinner will be to honor individuals and entities who are actively supporting our men and women in uniform. Most all of us are involved in that. I am involved in Florida with a particular golf tournament that puts money back in through the program by playing golf. Dennis Hertel was here and talked about the tremendous job he is doing. Remember, we are raising this money. It is our money. That is the money that is going in.

The 19th dinner will be a different experience for me because it will be the first one in 19 years where I can actually sit back and relax. It has been my

special pleasure to work for the last 18 years to make this annual dinner the great success it has become. I have been able to enjoy a recent event, taking the family to Montana for awhile and spending time with kids whose names I now recognize, and one of them is here today. The dinner is an important event, and obviously we are not going to let the association down. I am not walking away, but 18 years, in all fairness, I have put some time in.

What we are doing in the event, and part of the event, is allowing the association to get the money we need so the association can fill all these great programs. But again, let me say again just in case you haven't heard me, if we don't raise the money with nongovernmental money, we are broke. Okay, just so we are all on the same page. Moving forward, I am going to do what I can while I am still able to do, and we have a great team. We have a great bunch of people working on it. It is nice to think they need me, but they really don't need me. In one sense, we're all part of it, however. We are turning over a machine that is really well oiled and can work well, a machine that knows how to do it, and it knows when to call out to people when something isn't going quite as well as it should. But that never happens with this.

Basically, I just want to also say that I can't tell you what an incredible feeling of involvement, of joy, of sorrow, continuing feeling that my life is better because of each and every one of you who I have been able to work with and we all have been trying to work with. We are doing God's work. We are putting back into what we have in this country. We will never put back 100 percent, but it really is part of it. So when we come to the 19th dinner, we have somebody rooting like heck for you on the sideline. But it is going to take people continuing to be involved. Thank you, thank you, thank you again.

Ms. KENNELLY. Thank you, Lou.

I can't even imagine chairing 18 dinners. But I will say I might not miss Lou Frey's calls when he tells me I haven't done a good enough job.

But Lou, you are not leaving us. In recognition of your 18 years chairing the Statesmanship Awards Dinner, and in recognition of your service on our board of directors for almost two decades, and in recognition of the great contributions you made to the organization as its president, the board of directors and the members of the United States Association of Former Members of Congress wish to bestow upon you our Lifetime Achievement Award.

There is no plaque large enough to hold all of the accolades you deserve based upon your service to this country, first in our military, then in Congress, and currently leading the charge to restore civic education in our Nation's classrooms. Your initiative on behalf of civic education is the foundation upon which we are basing a new association program, the Lou Frey Forum on Civic Engagement, which will translate the tremendous strides you have achieved in Florida into a nationwide effort utilizing our former Members network across the country.

I, therefore, cannot overstate how appreciative the leadership and membership of our organization are for all you have done for us, particularly as chairman of the Statesmanship Awards Dinner for 18 years. This Lifetime Achievement Award is one way we wish to recognize your tremendous service.

Also, we want to tell you there is going to be a Lou Frey Civics Scholarship, which will benefit a student at Winter Park High School, just a couple miles from your home. For the next 3 years, a graduating student who has taken AP civics and is accepted at a community college or university will receive a $1,000 scholarship in your name to help defray his or her college costs.

Lou, this Lifetime Achievement Award is highly deserved, and the plaque reads as follows:

This Lifetime Achievement Award is bestowed upon the Honorable Lou Frey, Jr., for his exemplary and inspiring service to his country as well as to the United States Association of Former Members of Congress. Lou Frey's public service began in the United States Navy in 1955 and culminated in a political career that spanned over three decades. He represented his Florida constituents with dedication, integrity, and dynamism. His optimism and can-do attitude never diminished in his post-congressional career, and transformed our association during his years as president, board member, and Statesmanship Awards Dinner chairman. For his lifetime of bringing about positive change, his friends and colleagues from both sides of the political aisle salute him.

Thank you, Lou.

Mr. FREY. Some of my family is here, and I want to thank them.

I am especially pleased to have my good friend and former chief of staff, Oscar Juarez, and his wife, Nancy, here representing those who made our congressional office a happy and productive place to work.

It really was. What a great opportunity.

Ms. KENNELLY. I also want to thank the many partners and supporters that made this possible. We are truly lucky to have this assembled group of corporations and foundations that believe in our work.

Also, I would be remiss if I did not thank the other members of our association's executive board: our vice president, Jim Walsh; treasurer, Martin Frost; secretary, Mary Bono; and our past president, Connie Morella. You have all made this association a stronger and better organization than it was ever before. I thank you for your time and energy. To administer all of these programs takes a staff of dedicated and enthusiastic professionals.

I am going to quickly mention them. They are wonderful.

Sean Pavlik is part of the international team and runs our Congressional Study Group on Japan. Unfortunately, we are losing Sean. He is pursuing an MBA at the University of Michigan, and we wish him the best.

Rachel Haas is our CEO's right-hand person, runs the entire office, makes sure that our money is spent appropriately and wisely, and played a huge role in making our Statesmanship Awards Dinner such a beautiful and memorable event.

Andrew Shoenig, our associate director of international programs, started out as an intern with us about 4 years ago and now is the linchpin in our incredibly successful program focusing on Germany, the EU, and all of the Ambassadors who participate in our Diplomatic Advisory Council.

Sharon Witiw, our domestic program director, oversees the smooth operations of projects such as the Congress to Campus program. She also is the one who keeps our membership updated through our Web site, email notifications, and the year-end newsletter.

Sabine Schleidt is our managing director, who spends most of her time on the current Member international programs, but also a lot of hours on implementing the strategic vision and fundraising goals.

And Peter Weichlein.

Peter, you are, to me, the most outstanding chief executive officer.

Peter has been with our association for 16 years. I am old enough for anything, but I am old enough to remember before Peter, and this organization has come so, so far. He keeps his enthusiasm. His staff is not that large. It is amazing that they can have all these programs and all these success. Peter is wonderful to work with.

Like many of you, I have been on many boards. In fact, for the last 9 years, I ran a board and had to report to a board of directors. Peter is exceptional. He keeps the board happy; he keeps the staff happy; and he never stops working. We are, indeed, fortunate to have Peter as our chief executive officer.

Also, every year at our annual meeting, we ask the membership to elect new officers and board members. I therefore will now read the names of the candidates for board members and officers. They are all running unopposed. I ask for a single ''yea'' or ''nay'' as I present to you the list of candidates as a slate.

For the association's board of directors:

Dave Camp of Michigan
Jim Coyne of Pennsylvania
Barbara Kennelly of Connecticut
Ken Kramer of Colorado
Ray LaHood of Illinois
Jim Matheson of Utah
Jim Moran of Virginia
Jim Slattery of Kansas
Karen Thurman of Florida.

All in favor of electing these former Members to our board of directors, please say, ''aye.'' Any opposed? Hearing none, the board has been elected.

Next, we will elect our executive committee. As president, I serve 2

years. I have already done 1 and will end my term in 2016. However, the other three elected members of the executive board are up for reelection for a 1-year term.

The candidates are:

Jim Walsh of New York for vice president

Martin Frost of Texas for treasurer

Mary Bono of California for secretary.

All in favor of electing these three former Members of our executive committee, please say, ''yea.'' Any opposed? Hearing no opposition, the slate has been elected by this membership.

The executive board is completed by Connie Morella, who is an unelected officer in her capacity as immediate past president.

Now it is my sad duty to inform the Congress of those former and current Members who have passed away since our last report in July. I ask all of you, including the visitors in the gallery, to rise as I read the names. At the end of the list, we will pay our respect to their memory with a moment of silence. We honor these men and women for their service to our country. They are:

Donald Albosta of Michigan
Bruce Alger of Texas
Herman Badillo of New York
Edward Brooke of Massachusetts
M. Caldwell Butler of Virginia
Thomas Cass Ballenger of North Carolina
Don H. Clausen of California
Phil Crane of Illinois
Lane Evans of Illinois
Bill Frenzel of Minnesota
Robert Griffin of Michigan
George Hansen of Idaho
Herbert Harris of Virginia
Jim Jeffords of Vermont
Robert W. Kastenmeier of Wisconsin
John Krebs of California
Arch A. Moore, Jr., of West Virginia
John M. Murphy of New York
John T. Myers of Indiana
Alan Nunnelee of Mississippi
Peter Peyser of New York
Marge Roukema of New Jersey
Fernando J. St. Germain of Rhode Island
Robert Tiernan of Rhode Island
James A. Traficant of Ohio
Jim Wright of Texas
C.W. Bill Young of Florida

Please observe a moment of silence.

That concludes the 45th report to Congress by the United States Association of Former Members of Congress. We thank the Congress, the Speaker, and the minority leader for giving us the opportunity to return to this revered Chamber and to report on our association's activities. We look forward to another active and productive year.

Thank you.

Mr. WALSH. The Chair again wishes to thank all former Members of the House for their presence and this continuing commitment to this high calling of public service.

Before terminating the proceedings, the Chair would like to invite those former Members who did not respond when the roll was called to give their names to the Reading Clerk for inclusion on the roll.

This concludes our meeting today. We stand adjourned.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker at noon.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, the Reverend Patrick J. Conroy, offered the following prayer:

Eternal God, we give You thanks for giving us another day.

We strive to be one Nation, indivisible, constant in vigilance, and seeking liberty and justice for all. Because we are too weak to find total accomplishment in these things, we place our trust in You. Help us to be a virtuous people, responsible for upholding the sound principles that brought our country into being.

May law and order not only be words echoing in the halls of government and the courts of this land but words describing how all Americans live out their citizenship and ownership of the commonwealth of our great Nation.

Bless the Members of this people's House, who have been entrusted by their constituents to usher an ever greater future into existence in our land. May they model for all Americans class, openness, and honesty in the work they do.

May everything done here this day be for Your greater honor and glory.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER. Will the gentlewoman from California (Ms. HAHN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. HAHN 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.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

The SPEAKER. The Chair will entertain up to 15 requests for 1-minute speeches on each side of the aisle.

REPEAL MEDICAL DEVICE TAX

(Mr. KATKO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KATKO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for bipartisan legislation before the House, the Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2015, to permanently repeal the onerous medical device tax.

This medical device tax has condemned our manufacturers of medical devices in the United States to less competition and being less competitive throughout the world. These manufacturers are now competing with one arm tied behind their backs because of this onerous tax. It has had serious consequences across this great land for companies—job losses, jobs moving overseas, less innovation, and fewer products coming to market.

This morning was another great example of that because I got word that the largest medical manufacturer in my district, Welch Allyn, was just bought out. Those jobs are now in jeopardy, hundreds and hundreds of well-paying jobs. They did this strictly because they couldn't compete at their size because of all of the things that were against them, including the medical device tax.

There is no question that the medical device tax played a role in their having to sell, and there is no question that the medical device tax has now put hundreds of well-paying jobs in jeopardy in central New York.

I ask my colleagues to join me in repealing this onerous tax.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN TOUCH

(Ms. HAHN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. HAHN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Sons and Daughters In Touch, an organization which supports and connects children whose parents were killed in battle, called Gold Star Children.

Sons and Daughters In Touch was founded by my friend Tony Cordero, who lost his father in Vietnam when he was just 2 years old. This past Monday, I laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington Cemetery and visited the grave of Tony's father, William.

Thousands of families rely on Sons and Daughters In Touch to help them through the process of healing and to honor the memory of their moms and dads. Sons and Daughters In Touch will celebrate its 25th anniversary this Father's Day, with a remembrance at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

We have a shared responsibility to care for the children whose parents have made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. I have introduced a resolution in honor of Sons and Daughters In Touch, recognizing the importance of this organization and the strength of the families it represents.

MARRIAGE

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, with the Supreme Court about to rule on the legal definition of marriage, I rise in support of States like Pennsylvania that have defined marriage as between a man and a woman.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was founded on religious tolerance by William Penn. In Europe, whoever was most popular and powerful in a given place and time tried to force minorities to violate their beliefs, and that was why so many different groups of people came to America and particularly to Pennsylvania, religious minorities such as the Quakers, the Amish, the Mennonites, the Moravians, and others.

Philadelphia has the most synagogues per capita of any city in the United States. Pittsburgh and Harrisburg also have significant Jewish populations. Pennsylvania continues the tradition of respecting each other, even when they disagree.

We hear a lot of talk about diversity these days, but many of those same people who tell us they want diversity are also trying to force their views on others by law. States that, through the democratic process, have defined marriage should not be overridden by five Federal unelected judges.

FUND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

(Mr. HIGGINS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, globally, the National Institutes of Health works to protect against bioterrorist attacks and disease outbreaks. Domestically, its groundbreaking research provides treatments and cures for devastating diseases, such as Alzheimer's and cancer; and the more than 400,000 jobs provided through the National Institutes of Health bolster our economy.

However, when we account for inflation, funding for the National Institutes of Health peaked in 2003. This budgetary reality has forced the NIH to administer fewer competitive research grants, to admit fewer new patients to its clinical trials, and to ultimately fall behind in scientific discoveries.

Mr. Speaker, America cannot afford to continue to underfund the National Institutes of Health. This is why I started the House NIH Caucus with Representatives ROSA DELAURO and PETER KING. I urge my colleagues to join us as we work together to develop a plan to increase the purchasing power of the National Institutes of Health. The time to act is now.

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

(Mr. MULLIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Speaker, men don't usually like to talk about their health, but the well-being of every man in the United States is an important topic.

Mr. Speaker, this week is National Men's Health Week, a time when we have the opportunity to have a serious conversation about our health.

Despite advances in medical technology and research, men continue to live an average of 5 years less than women. Even more, men are less likely than women to seek preventative care. As a co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Men's Health Caucus, I am also committed to teaching our youth the importance of eating right and getting exercise.

As we celebrate this week, Mr. Speaker, I encourage all husbands, brothers, fathers, sons, uncles—and we may even need to have a talk with ourselves—to make sure that we are taking the steps to stay healthy.

IRAN SANCTIONS

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about one of the greatest security threats that our Nation and world face today, the threat of a nuclear Iran.

I greatly respect all of the hard work that the White House, the State Department, and the Department of Energy have put forth in developing the framework for a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program, and I strongly urge them to continue these negotiations over the coming weeks. It is vitally important that the U.S. employ every means of diplomatic persuasion at their disposal in order to reach a peaceful resolution that prevents Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon.

I would also like to encourage all of the negotiating partners to ensure that a final agreement includes the following: unfettered inspections and a verification system, the disclosure of Iran's past military actions in pursuing a nuclear weapon, gradual sanctions relief that progresses only as Iran meets its obligations under the agreement, long-term nuclear weapons prevention, and the dismantlement of current nuclear infrastructure.

This agreement represents a turning point towards peace in the security of Israel, of the U.S., and of the world. Let's make sure we seize this historic opportunity.

LACROIX: FRANCO AMERICAN OF THE YEAR

(Mr. GUINTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUINTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an individual from Manchester, New Hampshire, who has been named Franco American of the Year.

Gerald Cardinal Lacroix was born in Quebec but moved to New Hampshire while still a young boy. Lacroix attended Catholic schools in Manchester, and he continued his studies at Saint Anselm College before receiving degrees in theology from Laval University in Quebec.

In 1975, he entered religious life by joining the Pius X Secular Institute. Ordained a priest in 1988, Father Lacroix served as a missionary in Colombia. He then returned to North America and was elected as director general of the institute.

Consecrated as a bishop in 2009, Lacroix began his service as an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Quebec. Two years later, he succeeded as archbishop of Quebec and primate of Canada, receiving his pallium from Pope Benedict XVI. Most recently, Pope Francis elevated Lacroix to the College of Cardinals, appointing him a cardinal-priest in Rome.

This is a tremendous accomplishment. On behalf of the Granite State, we are all proud of Cardinal Lacroix's accomplishments. He is truly worthy of the title ''Franco American of the Year.''

REAUTHORIZATION OF THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK

(Mr. KILDEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, in 2 weeks, at a time when every American has anxiety about the economy and is wondering how he is going to make ends meet, in 2 weeks, the Export-Import Bank, absent action by this Congress, will be allowed to expire and cost this country and our economy hundreds of thousands of jobs.

For the RECORD, let me read a comment by the President:

> Exports create and sustain jobs for millions of American workers and contribute to the growth and strength of the United States' economy. The Export-Import Bank contributes in a significant way to our Nation's export sales.

That is a comment from the President, President Ronald Reagan.

This is not an ideological debate between thoughtful participants in the legislative process. There are extreme voices for ideological purposes on the far right that oppose the Export-Import Bank and its work, but a majority of this Congress and a majority of the American people would like to see it reauthorized.

We were sent here to do the people's work, and I think it is long past time for the majority of Congress to have its voice heard and for the majority of the American people to have its interests represented.

We should reauthorize the Export-Import Bank and save hundreds of thousands of American jobs.

REPEAL THE INDEPENDENT PAYMENT ADVISORY BOARD

(Mr. GIBBS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Speaker, this week, the House will consider legislation to repeal another burdensome part of ObamaCare, the Independent Payment Advisory Board, also known as IPAB.

IPAB is tasked with finding ways to curb spending in Medicare, but in reality, it will ration care and cut services. While Medicare continues to eat up more of the budget and is in need of commonsense reforms, relying on a group of unelected bureaucrats is the absolute wrong thing to do.

Any reforms we make to health care should focus on three core ideas. One, strengthen the relationship between the doctor and the patient so they can work together to make healthcare decisions—what we don't need is a bureaucrat from Washington creating a wall between a patient and his physician; two, to drive down costs, we have to focus on market-oriented reforms, like making coverage portable across State lines and removing the individual and employer mandates; three, finally, we have to incentivize the use of health savings accounts to pay for routine and preventative care.

Repealing the IPAB is an important step in reining in an out-of-control bureaucracy, controlling the ballooning costs of health care, and returning healthcare decisions to patients and their doctors.

□ 1215

JUNE IS ALZHEIMER'S AND BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

(Mr. GALLEGO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GALLEGO. Mr. Speaker, the strength of our communities depends on the health and well-being of our families. Unfortunately, millions of families across our Nation, including thousands in Arizona, are impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia.

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. It is my hope that we can come together—Republicans and Democrats—and commit to give researchers the resources they need to combat Alzheimer's and other diseases, but also to make sure patients and families have the care and support they need.

Policies like paid leave, caregiver support, workforce training, and long-term care options must be expanded if we truly want to make a difference in the fight against Alzheimer's. These policies are especially important for women and communities of color. Hispanics are 1.5 times as likely to have Alzheimer's as their White counterparts, and African Americans are twice as likely.

Studies have also demonstrated that socioeconomic factors play a role in the disparities of Alzheimer's. This is completely unacceptable. Mr. Speaker, in America your health and the health of your family should not depend on your income or your ZIP Code.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure all American families—including those affected by Alzheimer's and dementia—have access to the support and care they deserve.

PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT OF 2015

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I am rising today in support of H.R. 160, the Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2015. What this will do is repeal the device tax.

Now, the device tax, the medical device tax, was a misplaced and disastrous tax that was put in as an ObamaCare mandate. What it will do is tax the medical device industry and those who utilize those components.

This is an industry that doesn't need to be taxed. It employs more than 400,000 workers nationwide and generates $25 billion in payroll. In my State of Tennessee, there are 10,000 individuals who work in this industry, and the Manhattan Institute estimates that unless we repeal this tax and get it off the books now, we will lose 1,000 of those jobs. That is a 10 percent reduction in a component, a part of the economy that generates good paying jobs, 40 percent higher than other manufacturing jobs.

I ask my colleagues to join me. Let's repeal the medical device tax.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on the importance of continuing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, otherwise known as DACA. This week marks the third anniversary of this action, DACA, an initiative that brings hundreds of thousands of aspiring, young Americans who were brought to the U.S. as children, through no fault of their own, out of the shadows.

These individuals want to work hard for a chance at the American Dream without fear of being torn away from their families. They want to be productive and contributing members of society. This program has allowed a segment of our population who are already a part of the American fabric to keep using their talents to move our country forward. They are an integral part of our society already.

The bottom line is: we need a long-term fix for our broken immigration system. We need comprehensive immigration reform and an act of Congress, which is the only way we can currently fix this failing system.

Now is the time for bipartisan, humane, permanent, comprehensive immigration reform. It is time we take action.

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE IS A VITAL PROGRAM

(Mr. BILIRAKIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my support for Medicare Advantage. Fifteen million Americans choose Medicare Advantage. Medicare Advantage has been successful for its enrollees. I stand with those seniors, including many in my district, who support this program. Medicare Advantage ought to be touted. Its focus on preventative medicine means healthier seniors and less healthcare spending.

Today and tomorrow, the House will consider a number of bills to strengthen Medicare, and in particular Medicare Advantage. I have 180,000 seniors in my district, and I know these pieces of legislation are important to them.

Traditional Medicare and Medicare Advantage are vital programs for our seniors, and I am hopeful we will see a strong bipartisan vote on all these bills. It is time to come together and support successful programs that harness the power of the free market.

DACA HAS GIVEN A LIFELINE TO DREAMERS

(Mr. POLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to mark the 3-year anniversary of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, also called DACA. Roughly 800,000 DREAMers across the country are able to work and go to school because of DACA. All these aspiring Americans want is to be able to contribute meaningfully to our society, and DACA has given them a lifeline to do that.

I want to mark this occasion by sharing two stories of DREAMers in my district whose lives DACA has transformed. Johana Mejias is a young woman who came to the U.S. from Venezuela. She grew up in Boulder and attended CU, where she was an exceptional student. During high school, she wasn't able to participate in leadership conferences because of difficulty traveling within the U.S., and after college her lack of status initially prevented her from sitting for the medical school exam and participating in medical internships. Luckily DACA provided relief for Johana, and I am proud to say that she is currently in medical school.

Marco Dorado is another young man in my district who attended CU. Marco came to the U.S. when he was 2 years old. DACA has provided a lifeline to Marco, enabling him to attend college and earn a degree in finance. He also served in student government as a tri-executive and president of external affairs.

DACA has been a catalyst for so many aspiring Americans, but only

Congress can fix our broken immigration system. I call on us to do so.

JUNE IS NATIONAL GREAT OUTDOORS MONTH

(Mr. DOLD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOLD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize June as National Great Outdoors Month. As an Eagle Scout and a scoutmaster, I know firsthand why we must all work to strengthen conservation programs and other policies to protect our environment.

As a scoutmaster, I teach Boy Scouts the principle of leaving areas better than when we found them. That is why this week I will be introducing the Great Lakes Water Protection Act to ban sewage dumping in the Great Lakes. The Great Lakes Water Protection Act is a commonsense, bipartisan solution to fulfill this pledge with one of our country's greatest natural resources. This resource holds 95 percent of the country's fresh surface water and provides drinking water to over 30 million people.

Mr. Speaker, I care deeply about protecting our environment and ensuring the well-being of our Great Lakes and its ecosystem. Preserving our environment should not be a partisan issue. In fact, it is not a partisan issue.

I call on my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to join me in this important initiative that is already endorsed by the Sierra Club, the National Wildlife Federation, and more, so that we can preserve our outdoors for generations to come.

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF LEROY KING

(Ms. PELOSI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great personal sadness that I rise today to pay my final tribute to San Francisco's much beloved LeRoy King, who died on June 12 at the age of 91. A distinguished labor and civil rights African American leader, King's passion for justice and commitment to equality improved the lives of working men and women in San Francisco and throughout the country. From inviting Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to speak in San Francisco in 1967 to his casting my electoral college vote in 2008 for President Barack Obama as the first African American President of the United States, LeRoy King was more than a witness to historic progress; he made history.

During World War II, King served with courage and honor in the Army and dedicated his entire life to preserving and strengthening the great democracy he fought to protect. Even in his 80s, in the tradition of great American leaders, he was arrested for an act of civil disobedience on behalf of hotel and restaurant workers.

King served as northern regional director of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, ILWU, for more than 30 years. It was important to him to overturn a discriminatory system that elected only Whites to union office, and he helped create a fully inclusive, integrated workforce. King organized with legendary labor leader Harry Bridges, was a staunch supporter of civil rights champion Cesar Chavez, was a supporter of Reverend Martin Luther King, and in 2009 he was honored with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Award for promoting peace and advancing social and economic justice by embodying Dr. King's inclusive leadership and nonviolent participation.

Mr. King, whether it was for ending discrimination and promoting affordable housing to community development to jazz, he has been honored. His accomplishments are memorialized in locations throughout San Francisco. My revised remarks, for the RECORD, will go more into that.

It has been a great privilege for me to know such a deeply principled and exemplary human being and to call him friend. I will miss him. My family, my husband and my daughter Christine, my entire family will miss him terribly.

I hope it is a comfort to his daughters, Rebecca King Morrow and Carolyn King Samoa; his son, LeRoy King Jr.; his grandchildren, and great grandchildren that so many San Franciscans, indeed beyond San Francisco, and other people loved and admired LeRoy King, and they share their tremendous loss.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great personal sadness that I rise to pay final tribute to San Francisco's much beloved LeRoy King, who died on June 12th at the age of 91. A distinguished labor and civil rights leader, King's passion for justice and commitment to equality improved the lives of working women and men in San Francisco and throughout the country.

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During World War II, King served with courage and honor in the Army—and dedicated his entire life to preserving and strengthening the great democracy he fought to protect. Even in his 80s, in the tradition of great American leaders, he was arrested for an act of civil disobedience on behalf of hotel and restaurant workers.

King served as Northern Regional Director of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) for more than 30 years. King became a member of ILWU Local 6 in 1946, one of the first African Americans to serve in the local leadership. In the 1950s he led a coalition of members to overturn a discriminatory system that elected only whites to union office and helped create a fully inclusive, integrated workforce. Mr. King sought to create a world where others could live free of discrimination, bigotry and injustice.

King organized with legendary labor leader Harry Bridges and was a staunch supporter of civil rights champion Cesar Chavez. In 2009 the National Education Association honored King with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Award for promoting peace and advancing social and economic justice by embodying King's inclusive leadership and nonviolent philosophy.

Mr. King served on the San Francisco Redevelopment Commission for more than 30 years where he fought to preserve the African American and Japanese American heritage of the Fillmore District. His efforts helped lay a foundation for a more inclusive, more welcoming home for all San Franciscans.

King was instrumental in the creation of the St. Francis Square Cooperative Housing development, which opened in 1963 in the Fillmore District and was a national model of racially integrated housing for working families. King and his family lived there from the time it opened until he died.

King's accomplishments are memorialized in locations around San Francisco. The City's 108-year old carousel at Yerba Buena Gardens was renamed the LeRoy King Carousel, an homage to one of the many sites King helped shape while serving on the Redevelopment Commission. A bronze bust of King at the Jazz Heritage Center in San Francisco's Fillmore District honors his work preserving the neighborhood's African American and Japanese American heritage.

It has been a great privilege for me to know such a deeply principled and exemplary human being and to call him my friend.

I hope it is a comfort to his daughters Rebecca King Morrow and Carolyn King Samoa, his son LeRoy King Jr. and his grandchildren and great grandchildren, that so many San Franciscans who loved and admired LeRoy share their tremendous loss.

WE MUST DEFEAT BOKO HARAM

(Ms. WILSON of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, the threat of Boko Haram and ISIS is real. Remember, they are now one. The threat is great; the threat is imminent.

Just yesterday, a New York City college student was arrested for plotting to attack the city in the name of the Islamic State. Last week, a high school student from suburban Virginia pled guilty to conspiring to provide material support to the Islamic State. Federal authorities said the Virginia case was a chilling reminder of Islamic State's pervasive online presence and ability to woo American youth.

How long before we hear headlines about American teenagers pledging allegiance to Boko Haram? Remember, they are now one. How long before we hear about attacks on American soil made in the name of Boko Haram?

We must do all that we can to defeat Boko Haram and break its unholy alliance with ISIS. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor H. Res. 147, as amended, to defeat Boko Haram, and remember to tweet, tweet, tweet #bringback ourgirls, #joinrepwilson.

WE MUST REAUTHORIZE THE EXPORT-IMPORT BANK NOW

(Ms. ADAMS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. ADAMS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of reauthorizing the Export-Import Bank. Since 2009, the Export-Import Bank has created or sustained 1.3 million private sector jobs, many of which are small businesses. In my district alone, from 2007 to 2014, more than 28 companies, 800 jobs, and more than $123 million in exports were supported by the Export-Import Bank. In addition to creating jobs, the Export-Import Bank is self-sustaining. At the end of this month, the Bank's charter will expire, hampering growth of small business exports.

Foreign companies are supporting their own like never before, Mr. Speaker. In stores across America, that is evident. It is time for our foreign competitors to see more ''made in America.'' Our American companies deserve a fair chance at success. We must reauthorize the Export-Import Bank now.

CELEBRATING THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF DACA

(Mr. CÁRDENAS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CÁRDENAS. Mr. Speaker, today we celebrate the third anniversary of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, otherwise known as the DACA program. Today is also another day of mourning Congress' failure to pass comprehensive immigration reform. DACA is working; 640,000 DREAMers are already part of our American fabric and are contributing to our economy every day thanks to DACA.

In fact, this summer two DACA beneficiaries are interning in my office—Monica moved from Jalisco, Mexico, when she was 7. Her father was deported, but she worked hard and will graduate this fall from Cal State University Northridge with a degree in political science. DACA allowed her to get her driver's license so she could work to pay for her education.

Stephanie was born in Mexico City, moved to Santa Barbara when she was 10, and is pursuing a degree in political science at the University of California Los Angeles, UCLA, and is researching the economic impact of DACA. Thanks to DACA, every day DREAMers like Monica and Stephanie help drive our Nation's economy forward.

□ 1230

CONGRATULATIONS TO VIRGIN ISLAND GRADUATES

(Ms. PLASKETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. PLASKETT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate not only the students, but the community of the Virgin Islands on so many graduates of our high schools these last weeks. While I have not been able to be there in body for some of the graduations, I am there in spirit and in heart.

The Gifft Hill School, AZ Academy, Good Hope Country Day, St. Croix Central High School, St. Croix Educational Complex, St. Croix Seventh-day Adventist School, St. Joseph High School, Antilles School, All Saints Cathedral School, Charlotte Amalie High School, Church of God Academy, Ivanna Eudora Kean High School, Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral School, Seventh-day Adventist High School, the Virgin Island Montessori School and Peter Gruber International Academy, and the Wesleyan Academy.

Students, you know that you are our future, we love you, that you represent the best of us all as a community, and that we expect great things for you. You are entering a world at war, a nation with challenges and conflicts, and our islands in crisis. But we know that, with your passion for learning, discipline, and an ability take risks, we are in great hands.

PRINTING OF PROCEEDINGS OF FORMER MEMBERS PROGRAM

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the proceedings during the former Members program be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the proceedings have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 160, PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT OF 2015, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1190, PROTECTING SENIORS' ACCESS TO MEDICARE ACT OF 2015

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 319 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 319

Resolved, That upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 160) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in part A of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution, shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. Upon adoption of this resolution it shall be in order to consider in the House the bill (H.R. 1190) to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. The amendment printed in part B of the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution shall be considered as adopted. The bill, as amended, shall be considered as read. All points of order against provisions in the bill, as amended, are waived. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill, as amended, and on any further amendment thereto, to final passage without intervening motion except: (1) one hour of debate equally divided among and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means and the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; and (2) one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. POLIS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 319 provides for a rule to consider two separate bills, which will address two of the most flawed and ill-conceived provisions contained within the so-called Affordable Care Act.

The rule provides for 1 hour of debate on H.R. 160 dealing with the repeal of the medical device tax, equally divided between the majority and minority on the Committee on Ways and Means, as well as the standard motion to recommit provided for the minority.

The rule further provides for 1 hour of debate on H.R. 1190, which would repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board. This is equally divided between the majority and minority of both the Committee on Ways and Means and the Committee on Energy and Commerce. Further, the rule provides that the Pitts amendment, which will cover the cost of repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board by using the Affordable Care Act's prevention fund, a slush fund for the Secretary, which has been used to pay for everything from urban gardening to lobbying for higher cigarette taxes, be added to the bill. As with H.R. 160, the standard motion to recommit is also provided to the minority on H.R. 1190.

It is well documented that many provisions contained within the Affordable Care Act will have negative consequences on patients, both in access to care and in affordability. Yet two provisions have been so universally criticized that, on a large bipartisan nature, their repeal was called for almost immediately after the passage of the Affordable Care Act in 2010. One such provision was the tax contained within the bill on medical device manufacturers.

It seems illogical that within a piece of legislation that was purported to make medical care more accessible to all Americans, the Federal Government would want to tax the very providers of medical innovation that creates the devices to improve the delivery of health care. Nevertheless, the President and then-Majority Leader HARRY REID in the Senate included this provision in order to pay for part of the astronomical price tag that accompanied this massive bill.

This tax is an unfair burden that actually increases the cost that consumers will pay at the doctor's office. The tax has also been cited by dozens of medical device manufacturers who have or are considering moving their operations overseas so that they can continue to innovate without the heavy burden of the Internal Revenue Service stifling their growth. This tax slows the creation of new techniques, slows the creation of new devices, all of which could make the delivery of medicine more efficient. It also puts at risk the jobs associated with the creation of those devices.

And lest anyone think that we are merely talking about the largest and most expensive pieces of technology found within a hospital, such as the MRI or the CAT scanner and surgical equipment, let's be clear that this tax covers every piece of medical equipment from those large machines to the smallest of items, including the syringes that are used to deliver life-saving antibiotics and vaccines. In my own district, I have met with a number of constituents, including the owner of Retractable Technologies, which makes those very syringes, and have been shown firsthand how this tax is creating a burden on the growth of his company.

The medical device tax has led to the elimination of thousands of good-paying jobs, and repealing it would be the first step in bringing those jobs back to stem the loss of future jobs within an industry that is vital to the country in helping to mitigate the rising cost of health care due to other burdensome provisions within the Affordable Care Act.

Mr. Speaker, plain and simple, this is a tax on business, a tax on small business, a tax on consumers, a tax on innovation. To date, 33,000 jobs have been lost in the medical device industry since the passage of the Affordable Care Act, and it is projected that well over 100,000 additional jobs are on the chopping block.

Actually, who could be surprised about this? Excise taxes, which this tax is, are meant to lead to a reduction in the consumption of the good being taxed. We place an excise tax on cigarettes to discourage their use, making it burdensome to afford a smoking habit. Did the President and HARRY REID intend to make it more burdensome to use more efficient medical devices?

Of course, not only is this burdensome tax ill-conceived as a concept, it was ill-conceived in a practical sense as well. Last year, a Treasury inspector general audit found that the Internal Revenue Service issued 217 erroneous penalties to device companies in a 6-month period. We have all seen how poorly much of the Affordable Care Act was written. One need only to look at the most recent Supreme Court cases for that determination. But how difficult is it to write a clear-cut tax provision? Apparently, for HARRY REID, it is quite difficult.

H.R. 160 has bipartisan and bicameral support and currently has 282 cosponsors. In fact, 18 Democrats in this body sent a letter to Speaker JOHN BOEHNER and Minority Leader NANCY PELOSI calling for the timely passage of this bill. Republican leadership in the House heard their requests and the calls from many other Members of this body and is moving this bill in a responsible way to put Americans back to work and lower the cost of health care for all.

The second bill contained in today's rule, H.R. 1190, repeals one of the most poorly thought-out ideas ever to come out of Congress, and that is really quite impressive considering the many disquieting ideas that have originated in the Pelosi-led House of Representatives. The Independent Payment Advisory Board is an unelected, unaccountable board dedicated to set up within the Affordable Care Act for the sole purpose to cut Medicare payments to providers if Medicare targets within the bill are not met.

Let's be very clear about this. President Obama, Majority Leader HARRY REID, Speaker NANCY PELOSI created a board of unelected officials in order to ration Medicare, to cut Medicare, and every Democrat who supported the Affordable Care Act voted in favor of this Board.

The Independent Payment Advisory Board is a regulatory board composed of 15 health professionals appointed by the President. There is no requirement that any of these professionals have ever actually practiced medicine a day in their lives, and we are well aware that this President prefers academics to those who have real-world experience.

The Board's stated responsibility is to develop proposals to reduce the growth of Medicare spending. What does that mean? It means seniors will face cuts to their health care with no recourse if they don't agree with what the Board proposes.

Former Office of Management and Budget Director Peter Orszag, the President's top budget adviser, called the Independent Payment Advisory Board the single biggest yielding of power to an independent entity since the creation of the Federal Reserve. Think about that. Let that sink in. The Independent Payment Advisory Board has been given the authority to do for Medicare policy what the Fed is able to do with monetary policy. That should be terrifying to every American.

The Independent Payment Advisory Board is set to recommend cuts, amounting to one-half of 1 percent of Medicare spending, and then the number rises until it hits 1½ percent. It makes these cuts by reducing the rates that Medicare pays for medical procedures and drugs, which means the Independent Payment Advisory Board can only make cuts to providers' reimbursements. Instead of being allowed to make real lasting structural reforms that could actually help the solvency of Medicare, this Board's approach to saving money is one of the clumsiest, most bureaucratic ways of achieving this goal.

The Independent Payment Advisory Board has massive structural and constitutional defects in its design. If Congress fails to act on the Board's recommendations, they automatically go into effect. And even if the Congress did pass a bill countering the Board's cuts to Medicare, the President can simply veto the bill. And the judiciary—and how this passes constitutional muster, I seriously question—specifically the judiciary, is forbidden to review the Independent Payment Advisory Board's recommendations.

For these and many other reasons, over 500 organizations have urged Congress to get rid of this thing—repeal the Independent Payment Advisory Board—including the American Medical Association, the American College of Surgeons, and the Veterans Health Council.

Repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board would protect seniors' access to Medicare, encourage us to do real Medicare reforms, and put an end to the constitutionally questionable Board of unelected bureaucrats—right now under the President's healthcare law—the very decisions that they are empowered to make changes to Medicare.

All Americans will benefit from the repeal of this draconian idea. It is a clumsy way that then-majority Democrats were able to buck their responsibility at addressing cost concerns over entitlements. Government by bureaucrats instead of government by the people, government by bureaucrats instead of government by representatives, it is no way to run this country. And yet that is how then-Majority Leader HARRY REID and then-Speaker NANCY PELOSI preferred that we operate.

□ 1245

The Independent Payment Advisory Board's design undermines seniors' access to Medicare and the health care that they need and have paid for throughout their working lives.

This Board should have been repealed years ago, but so long as HARRY REID was majority leader in the Senate, the Independent Payment Advisory Board continued to live. Last year's election created a sea change over in the other body, changed the majority leader in the Senate, and now, the American people may finally see their government begin to work for them yet once again.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas for yielding me the customary 30 minutes, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today, I rise in opposition to the rule which, once again, deprives Members of this body the opportunity to debate amendments that will improve the underlying legislation.

I rise in opposition to this body's misguided priorities. Again, the American people are seeing Congress rehash the same tired debates. How many references were there to people that were Speakers of this House, that were Senate majority leaders, to healthcare reform, which has already withstood several elections and is the law of the land?

What we have before us today are two more bills that repeal part of the Affordable Care Act. We have now considered over 60 bills to repeal, defund, or dismantle the Affordable Care Act, rather than improve and build upon it.

With all the work that remains to be done, we could be debating legislation to renew our expiring highway trust fund and repair our crumbling roads and bridges.

We could take up legislation to renew the charter of the Import-Export Bank, and we will be offering that soon on the previous question.

We could consider a bill to repair our broken immigration system or help the millions of Americans who are living below the poverty line, even though they work two jobs and it is increasingly hard to support their families; or we could take on the critical matter of climate change and confront the fact that it has contributed to one of the worst droughts in our Nation's history.

But, oh, no, it is more important to have the 61st and 62nd repeal of parts of the Affordable Care Act, rather than move forward with a future-oriented agenda for the American people.

Now, let's get into some of the specifics of the underlying legislation. The most recent estimate by the Congressional Budget Office found that a total of 27 million people will gain access to healthcare coverage through the Affordable Care Act over the next 10 years, who otherwise would not have had coverage.

That is to say nothing of the additional millions of Americans who benefit from the Affordable Care Act by having coverage for preexisting conditions for the first time in their lives, are no longer subject to lifetime caps that could leave them bankrupt if they get a serious illness, or people that are able to stay as young adults up to age 26 on their parents' plan.

Constituents from all areas of my district have shared stories of their success using our State's health exchange, Connect for Health Colorado, and described how the Affordable Care Act's coverage provided by the ACA has improved their lives.

I have heard from constituents like Morgan, from Nederland, Colorado, who used the exchange to enroll in the exact same plan she had before the Affordable Care Act, but her premiums decreased, and the services that were covered expanded—more value for her money.

Or Donna, who recently moved to Boulder, Colorado—Donna is an outdoor enthusiast, like so many in my district, but was afraid to make her way to the mountains until she had secured healthcare coverage.

Through Connect for Health Colorado and the premium tax credits she has access to under the Affordable Care Act, she is now enrolled in a comprehensive medical and dental plan that ensures she won't become bankrupt if she sustains an injury.

These are far from isolated cases. In my home State of Colorado, 16.5 percent of people lacked health insurance before ACA. According to a recent study of the Kaiser Family Foundation, that figure has dropped to 9 percent by last year.

The success is not limited to my State. According to a Gallup poll released in April, the percentage of Americans lacking health care nationwide has dropped by more than a third since the marketplace opened at the end of 2013, from 18 percent to under 12 percent.

The Affordable Care Act is working; instead of continuing in that vein, once again, the Republican Congress is seeking to repeal various parts of that law, rather than move forward and improve it.

The first of today's two bills, the so-called Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act, doesn't protect anyone's access to anything. The Advisory Board it seeks to repeal, which has been vilified and completely mischaracterized in the past, is actually something far more mundane and important to the processes of Medicare.

It is a board of advisers who make nonbinding recommendations to Congress about how we can reduce healthcare costs and strengthen Medicare solvency over the long term, without sacrificing the quality of care, something that all of us, as cost-conscious Members of Congress, should be interested in seeing.

Now, we can debate all day the exact composition of the Board or which committees in Congress should have jurisdiction over its recommendations. Those are valid considerations—or, instead, we can discuss repealing the Board in its entirety, which is what we are talking about here today. This Advisory Board will provide critical advice to help Congress reduce the cost of providing health care.

Now, interestingly enough, this amendment pays for the $7 billion cost of eliminating this Board by slashing nearly $9 billion in funding from the prevention and public health fund. This fund is used for vital preventative health programs, like childhood vaccines, helping people quit smoking, stroke prevention, and maternal wellness. The cornerstone of health savings is preventative medicine.

In fact, I cosponsor a bill with my friend, Mr. BURGESS, who is managing the bill on the other side, that would allow the Congressional Budget Office to account for the long-term savings of preventative health initiatives when it scores legislation.

If Mr. BURGESS' own bill were to become law, and I hope it does, it would show that the so-called way that we are paying for this repeal is illusory. Eliminating the preventative healthcare program actually can cost money in the long run. Under the congressional scoring model that we both support, it would likely not even register as a cost saving, or if it did, it would be much less than the $9 billion.

The second bill being considered, the Protect Medical Innovation Act, aims to do something that many of us on both sides support, repealing the Affordable Care Act's excise tax on medical devices. The medical device tax is one of the measures originally included by the Senate in the Affordable Care Act to fund the badly needed consumer protections and benefits that form the core of the bill.

Now, again, it is easy to support tax cuts. This body has put before us many, tax cut after tax cut after tax cut that are unfunded. The whole discussion about how you can afford to cut taxes is how you pay for it. What government waste do you cut? What other taxes or income do you use to offset the cost of these tax cuts?

Of course, we don't want to slow the pace of progress with unnecessary costs and burdens, and we want to make sure that medical device manufacturers have every incentive to increase their research and development and not pass these costs along to consumers.

Unfortunately, even though I, along with ALMA ADAMS from North Carolina and MATT CARTWRIGHT from Pennsylvania, offered an amendment in the Rules Committee that would have paid for repealing the medical device tax using a commonsense approach that wouldn't suppress economic growth, our amendment was not allowed to even be discussed here on the floor of the House.

Not only would our amendment to pay for the medical device repeal have avoided adding nearly $30 billion to our

deficit, as this bill would do before us today, but it also would have helped bring balance to our Nation's energy sector by stopping the government from choosing winners and losers in energy and lessen our dependence on fossil fuels.

Unfortunately, under this rule, we don't get a vote or debate on the floor. We are left with two bad choices. We can, of course, leave in place a tax that many of us want to remove; or we can add $25 billion to our deficit. Neither of those are the right answers for the American people or for medical device companies or the consumers who use medical device products.

The American people deserve better. If we defeat this rule, an open process will allow Republicans and Democrats to offer real, constructive, better ideas of how to improve upon these two pieces of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BUCSHON), a member of our Committee on Energy and Commerce.

Mr. BUCSHON. Mr. Speaker, in Indiana, the medical device industry employs over 20,000 Hoosiers in over 300 medical device companies. These are good-paying jobs that pay 56 percent more than the average wage.

As Indiana Governor Mike Pence recently put it in a letter to our delegation: ''This industry is vital to Indiana's economy and the health and well-being of people across the Nation and the world.''

Unfortunately, this critical industry is living under the shadow of a job-killing tax put in place to pay for the Affordable Care Act. In fact, companies in Indiana have already halted research projects and plans for expansion.

The medical device tax is crippling innovation of lifesaving products like the ones I used as a surgeon, and it is putting patients and jobs at risk. This is about patients, at the end of the day, and their access to health care.

We have had broad bipartisan support for repeal of the medical device tax in both Chambers before. It is time to put an end to this onerous tax once and for all.

I also support an IPAB repeal. As a physician, I urge my colleagues to support the rule and the underlying bills.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I will offer an amendment to the rule to allow for the consideration of legislation that would reauthorize the Export-Import Bank for 7 years.

To discuss our proposal, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. MAXINE WATERS), the distinguished ranking member on the Committee on Financial Services.

Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Colorado, as well as Leader PELOSI and Whip HOYER, for their unyielding support for thousands of American jobs and businesses.

I rise to urge my colleagues to defeat the previous question in order to force a vote on legislation sponsored by myself, Mr. HECK, Ms. MOORE, Mr. HOYER, and 186 other Democrats that will renew and reform the Export-Import Bank's charter for the long term.

Mr. Speaker, Congress has just 5 days to act before the Export-Import Bank shuts down. We are in the eleventh hour, and despite a recent bipartisan vote in the Senate and broad support across the aisle in this House, we are still fighting to keep this engine of job creation and economic growth alive.

It is interesting to note that, contrary to most of the disagreements that take place in this Chamber, in the debate over the Export-Import Bank, the facts remain undisputed.

Over the past 5 years, it is estimated that the Bank has created or sustained more than 1.3 million private sector jobs, 164,000 in the past year alone. In 2014, the Bank returned more than $674 million back to the American taxpayers, an amount totaling $6.9 billion over the past two decades.

Democrats, Republicans, business, and labor all understand the important role that the Export-Import Bank plays in our economy. Presidents, ranging from Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush to Bill Clinton, have been outspoken in their support for the Bank's ability to create and sustain American jobs and keep our businesses competitive.

Ex-Im levels the playing field with countries like China, Russia, and countless others, all of which have their own version of the Bank supporting American competitors.

Mr. Speaker, Democrats are coming to the floor today to implore our numerous Republican colleagues who support the Export-Import Bank, starting with Speaker BOEHNER, to stand up for jobs, businesses, and American competitiveness by standing up to the extremists who want to close the Bank.

Let's send a strong message to America's manufacturers, businesses, and workers, that we are committed to preserving an institution that, for decades, has helped this Nation create jobs and grow the economy.

I would urge a ''no'' vote on the previous question.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), a valued member of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule for H.R. 160, the Protect Medical Innovation Act. Last August, I held two 21st Century Cures roundtables in my district in the Tampa Bay area.

The second roundtable featured healthcare providers. One participant was Lisa Novorska, CFO of Rochester Electro-Medical. Rochester Electro-Medical is a medical device manufacturer in my district, and it is a small business.

The medical device tax, originally included in the President's healthcare law, is devastating to these small businesses. Eighty percent of the device manufacturers in Florida have less than 25 employees. In total, Florida has 662 device manufacturers, and one-third of them are in the Tampa Bay area, as I said, in the area that I represent in the Congress.

This bill has over 280 bipartisan cosponsors. Voting for this rule and bill should be easy, despite the administration's veto threat. Let's support device manufacturers and give them the flexibility to innovate and help our constituents.

□ 1300

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. HECK), a leader in the effort to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank.

Mr. HECK of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the previous question so that we might, indeed, get to H.R. 1031, the Promoting U.S. Jobs through Exports Act of 2015.

H.R. 1031—which, as it has been indicated, reauthorizes the Export-Import Bank—is a deficit-cutting, job-creating machine. And why is it important that we get to it? Because, indeed, the charter of the Bank expires in 5 legislative days.

Last week, I was at home and had occasion to be channel surfing, and I came across, inarguably, one of the top 10 movies in all of the history of American cinema, ''Blazing Saddles.'' And there is this wonderful scene where the actor, Cleavon Little, rides into town, and he is not met very favorably by the townsfolks. They all pull their guns on him. And in response, he pulls his revolver, and he puts it to his head, and he says, Stop, stop, or I will shoot myself.

Well, of course, what he was doing, given the situation, was completely turning logic on its ear and confusing everybody in his presence. And that is how I feel about this.

Those who want to end the Export-Import Bank purport to be in favor of cutting the deficit. But the Export-Import Bank has reduced the Federal deficit by $6 billion over the last 20 years. Those who want to terminate the Export-Import Bank say they are in favor of faster economic growth. But the Export-Import Bank supported 164,000 jobs just last year alone in virtually every congressional district in this great land.

Make no mistake, if the Bank expires, we will lose jobs; and we will lose jobs immediately here and there and everywhere.

And stop and think about that. What is more important than a job? It is the means by which we provide for ourselves. We are self-sufficient.

Is anyone suggesting we have too many jobs? Is anybody suggesting that work isn't worthwhile?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. POLIS. I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. HECK of Washington. I will never forget when former Vice President Mondale once said, You want to know how important work is in this society? Stop, ask yourself what is the first thing you ask somebody when you meet them. ''What do you do?''

Work is important. Jobs are important. The Export-Import Bank creates jobs. Vote ''no'' on the previous question. Reauthorize the Export-Import Bank. We have 5 legislative days to go.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX), the vice chairman of the Committee on Rules.

Ms. FOXX. I thank my colleague on the Rules Committee, who handles our rules and legislation so effectively on the floor.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the rule and the underlying bills. When the Democrat-controlled Congress rammed the so-called Affordable Care Act through this Chamber, I joined my Republican colleagues in expressing our grave concerns over the effects of the law's tax increases. Specifically, we warned that the excise tax on medical devices would hinder innovation as well as restrict growth and job creation in an industry that has improved the quality of life for millions around the world.

And just as we cautioned, this tax on devices that restore mobility, keep hearts in rhythm, and help doctors diagnose life-threatening diseases earlier than ever before has cost us local jobs and reduced research capabilities.

Cook Medical is a privately owned company, with facilities around the world. It employs about 500 people in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where the company focuses on endoscopic and urological medicine.

Since the medical device tax was levied in 2013, Cook Medical has paid roughly $13 million annually. As a result, the company has pulled back on capital improvements as well as research and development investments. They have also considered moving manufacturing capacity outside the United States.

Scott Sewell, vice president of technology acquisition and development for the company's Winston-Salem office, recently told the Triad Business Journal that if the medical tax device is repealed, they would look at expanding operations in North Carolina with a new plant in Winston-Salem.

I would like to submit for the RECORD this May 1 article from the Triad Business Journal.

[From Triad Business Journal, May 1, 2015]

DEVICE TAX THWARTS EXPANSION IN WINSTON-SALEM

(By Owen Covington)

The push to repeal an Affordable Care Act tax on the sale of medical devices appears to be gaining steam with a prominent device manufacturer with a strong Triad presence recently lobbying Congress for action.

In written testimony to a Senate committee this month, Cook Medical Board Chairman Stephen Ferguson said the company has had to pull back on capital improvements and R&D investments because of the tax. Cook is also considering moving manufacturing capacity outside the country.

''Make no mistake about it: We want to develop and manufacture our devices in the U.S., but this tax is preventing this growth in this country,'' Ferguson wrote.

I caught up with Scott Sewell, vice president of technology acquisition and development at Cook Medical's Winston-Salem operation, where the focus is on endoscopy and urological medicine.

Just for further explanation, the tax is a 2.3 percent levy on the sale of many medical devices that's expected to generate $29 billion during its first 10 years.

Proponents have argued that increased health insurance coverage will mean more sales for these companies, which also have the option of passing that increase along to consumers rather than absorbing it themselves.

Sewell said that since the tax was levied in 2013, Cook Medical has paid roughly $13 million annually. That accounts for only a portion of Cook's overall sales, since it isn't paid on the roughly 60 percent of Cook's products that are sold abroad.

Both Sewell and Ferguson said that uptick in sales hasn't occurred, and the company has generally been unable to pass along the cost of the tax to consumers, which are typically very cost-conscious hospitals. That's meant pulling back on plans to expand in Winston-Salem and elsewhere, Sewell said.

''I think if the device tax were repealed, in the next couple of years, we would probably be looking at a new plant in Winston-Salem,'' he said.

Cook's arguments are grabbing the attention of more in Congress. That said, advocates of the tax say claims like those of Cook are overblown.

''A manufacturer can't avoid the tax by shifting production abroad, doesn't pay the tax for devices it produces here but sells abroad, and suffers no competitive disadvantage from foreign producers, who also have to pay the tax for devices that they sell here,'' wrote Chad Stone, chief economist of the left-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in U.S. News & World Report.

Ms. FOXX. It is clear that ObamaCare's medical device tax has directly and negatively impacted the people who live in North Carolina's Fifth District, as well as people around the country and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, this tax must be repealed, and its harmful effects undone.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE).

Mr. KILDEE. I thank my friend from Colorado for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in opposition to the previous question in order to make in order a vote to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank.

For Americans, the Export-Import Bank means jobs. It means economic growth. Failing to reauthorize Ex-Im threatens American jobs, threatens American businesses, threatens our economy.

Supporting Ex-Im used to be a bipartisan issue. Just read a little history: Dwight Eisenhower supported it. Ronald Reagan supported it. If you want a more recent example, George W. Bush supported it.

This never has been a partisan issue until just recently, where even the House leadership—the Speaker, I think, supports it—has now been captured by a small group of very far right-leaning ideologues to whom, apparently, much is owed because we can't get a floor vote on a piece of legislation supported by a majority of the House of Representatives that helps American business and helps American workers. What is wrong with this picture? This makes no sense whatsoever.

The Export-Import Bank is an essential part of a growing economy, and particularly in supporting American businesses to grow their exports and put Americans to work.

In my home State alone, 228 companies, $11 billion in export value, are at risk if we don't reauthorize the Export-Import Bank, and we have 5 days to do it. But we could do it in 5 minutes if we defeat the previous question, bring to the floor of the House legislation, H.R. 1031, that would reauthorize the Export-Import Bank through 2022.

Let's let the will of the American people and, frankly, the will of a majority of the United States Congress, be manifest in our policy. A majority of Congress supports the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank. Bring a vote to the floor of the House. Let's put America to work, support American business, support American workers, and support the Export-Import Bank.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 1 minute.

Mr. Speaker, previously it was brought up about the prevention fund, which was being used as one of the offsets for the repeal of the Independent Payment Advisory Board. And I just wanted to give the Congress a sense of some of the activities that have been funded under the Secretary's so-called prevention fund.

How about pickle ball? I didn't even know what that was. I had to Google it after that came to light in our committee. Massage therapy, kickboxing, kayaking, and Zumba—a separate grant was given for that. A grant for signage for bike lanes. A grant to promote free pet neutering. A grant for urban gardening. A grant to lobby for a soda tax in New York, block construction of job-creating fast food small businesses, and another grant to boost bike clubs.

These are the types of activities that are being funded in the prevention fund, not actual activities that would result in the prevention of disease. This is a good use of these dollars, and I urge adoption.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. POLIS. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE), the ranking member on the Financial Services Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade.

Ms. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, the clock is ticking on the global competitiveness of U.S. workers, and the GOP has yet—has yet—has yet to put to a vote the reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank.

The Export-Import Bank levels the playing field globally for U.S. businesses to compete with subsidized foreign competitors. Our U.S. exporters and workers will pay the price if this majority, this Republican Congress fails to reauthorize the Bank. My Milwaukee exporters will pay the price if this Republican Congress fails to reauthorize the Bank.

Yes, deals will still be made with the other 60 or so credit agencies around the world, but they will be done without U.S.-made goods and services.

You know, it is so ironic that we have all kinds of deals being cut to get partnership trade agreements with these 12 different Pacific countries so we could export jobs to other places in the world. But there are no deals being made so that we can export U.S.-made goods and services to other parts of the world. That is probably why we have such a huge trade deficit.

With the leadership of Ranking Member WATERS, Representatives HECK of Washington, HOYER, and I, we have introduced H.R. 1031, the Promoting U.S. Jobs Through Exports Act. It makes targeted and prudent reforms to the Bank that enhance its mission, including promoting additional small business participation, greater transparency, and improved governance.

Defeat the previous question. Bring the Export-Import Bank deal to the floor. The American people deserve an opportunity to work.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire as to the time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Texas has 13 minutes remaining, and the gentleman from Colorado has 12 minutes remaining.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time to close.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the remainder of my time.

First, with regard to the comments of the gentleman from Texas on the preventative health fund, I want to give a few examples of the important ways that fund helps reduce health care costs. For instance, expenditures on hospitals promoting breast-feeding, on breast and cervical cancer early awareness and diagnosis.

So, I mean, again, the fund community initiative that support breast-feeding mothers has a demonstrable effect in reducing the incidence of disease in infants and promotes better health.

With regard to early identification: breast cancer screenings, outreach through State, territorial, and tribal health organizations, chronic disease self-management—again, making sure that people have better compliance with their regime that can reduce health care costs.

So there are a lot of items in there that I am confident, if our bill were to pass—the bill that I cosponsor with the gentleman from Texas—clearly that $9 billion in savings is illusory. Now whether that will come back as a net-positive program or not, under the new CBO scoring, we will just need to pass our bill to see. But it wouldn't be $9 billion. Again, maybe it would be $3 billion in savings. Maybe it would be $1 billion. Again, maybe it would be a negative amount because these preventative expenditures could very well save more than they cost because if you can get an early diagnosis around breast and cervical cancer, not only does it lead to a better outcome for the patient but saves a lot more money, as does making sure that people are able to successfully manage their chronic diseases and not wind up in emergency rooms at a very high cost.

We have before us—no bones about it—two more partial repeals of the Affordable Care Act.

So far this year, the Republicans have brought to the floor $586 billion in unpaid-for tax extenders and special interest tax expenditures. Those bills have blown through the sequestration caps, all while continuing to cut funding for education programs, violence prevention initiatives, and medical research.

This bill adds another $25 billion to that $586 billion. Again, everybody likes to have their cake and eat it too. But unfortunately budgets have to work, and numbers have to add up.

□ 1315

That is why I was particularly disappointed that the Rules Committee didn't allow my amendment that would have simply paid for the medical device tax repeal to come forward. Instead, the Republicans are insisting on adding $25 billion on top of the $586 billion in expenditures that they are blowing through the deficit with and increasing the size of the deficit by half a trillion dollars.

This bill also provides for consideration of a bill that cuts $9 billion from the preventative health initiatives to repeal an advisory board. Again, I would argue that we won't know if that is truly paid for or not until our other bill passes, and I hope that we can bring forward the bill I share with Mr. BURGESS to allow for the proper scoring of that.

So I am ready to say that I don't know if it is paid for or not. I suspect it is not. I suspect that it might cost us more money in the long run to repeal the important expenditures around breast and cervical cancer early diagnosis and chronic disease self-management, but the only way to know that for sure would be to change the way that the CBO scores the bills to allow for preventative measures to show the savings that are reasonably estimated by experts absent any particular bias.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is a lot of interest in reforming the Advisory Board, and I think that is a valid conversation to have: What should its priorities be? What should the reporting process be? What should the membership be composed of? But repealing it and adding costs and preventing simple, cost-saving recommendations from even coming to Congress, how does that make sense? And how does that further the goal of providing high-quality health care to the American people at the lowest cost possible?

We also shouldn't be taking funding away for programs that help Americans prevent injuries or illness in order to pay for the repeal of an advisory board that makes nonbinding recommendations to Congress.

Mr. Speaker, a vote for this rule is yet another vote for misplaced priorities, for increasing the Federal deficit, and for passing policies that are at odds with the needs of the American people and constitute the 62nd time that this body has chosen to repeal part of the Affordable Care Act rather than move forward with a future-oriented agenda to help the American people. This is a vote to add billions of dollars to our deficit at the expense of the basic healthcare needs of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD along with extraneous material immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, this body can do better. If we defeat this rule, we might have an opportunity to do something about the deficit, to do something about it by going back and getting a rule that if this body chooses to proceed with repealing the medical device tax allows a commonsense way for that to be paid for. If we repeal this rule, we can go back and look at improving the advisory panel rather than repealing it in its entirety, making sure that, if there are costs associated with that, that they are paid for in a real way rather than a way that is illusory.

Mr. Speaker, if we repeal this rule, we can go back and bring forward Mr. BURGESS' and my bill that would allow proper scoring around preventative health care. That would allow a proper discussion on whether this way of paying for a repeal of the advisory panel is even a real way of paying for anything or not.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote ''no'' and defeat the previous question.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, we have talked a lot about the Affordable Care Act here on the floor of this House, and one of the reasons we have talked a lot about it is because, very famously, it was passed before we read it. We had to pass it to find out what was in it. Let me just talk about a couple of those things because I think they are germane to our discussion today.

This is June 17. Around the country, many Members' offices are being contacted by groups asking why Congress

itself isn't following the law that Congress passed. I am referring specifically to section 1312(d) in the bill. It says:

Members of Congress in the exchange requirement notwithstanding any other provision in law, after the effective date of this subtitle, the only health plans that the Federal Government may make available to Members of Congress shall be health plans that are, number one, created under this act, or two, offered through an exchange established unto this act. The term ''Member of Congress'' means any Member of the House of Representatives or the Senate.

The fact of the matter is most people don't follow the law. I did, Mr. Speaker, and I think it was important to follow the law. I bought my health care in the individual market, in healthcare.gov, started October 1 of 2013. You may remember that night. That was the night the fiscal year ended and the famous government shutdown began. I began early that morning in trying to sign up for the Affordable Care Act because I knew, as a Member of Congress, we were supposed to sign up through healthcare.gov, an unsubsidized policy in the individual market. So I performed as indicated.

It took 3½ months for the check to clear the bank. It was one of the most uncomfortable, god-awful experiences I have ever been through in my life. What is the final result? I have a bronze plan in the individual market in healthcare.gov, the Federal fallback provision in the State of Texas.

Mr. Speaker, that plan cost $560 a month the first year that I was enrolled, and then it went up 24 percent the next year. It is now up to $700 a month for me for an individual. These are after-tax dollars. Do you know the worst part, Mr. Speaker? The worst part is that the deductible is $6,000.

Now, some people have asked me, they say: Well, gee, are you worried about the fact that the networks are so narrow on these plans that you can't see your doctor?

I honestly don't know. I don't know if my doctor is included on the plan. I haven't looked because I ain't going. At a $6,000 deductible, someone will have to drag me in the backdoor by the time I am dying.

What has happened, Mr. Speaker, is we have created a whole subset of individuals in this country who are functionally uninsured because the cost of their care is so high. Had Members of Congress followed the law, they would be as aware of that as our constituents are.

Mr. Speaker, today's rule provides for the consideration of two bills that begin to right some of the many wrongs included in the Affordable Care Act: H.R. 160, repealing the Independent Payment Advisory Board charged with cutting Medicare; and H.R. 1190, repealing the medical device tax. These are two steps that the House can take this week to help lower the rising costs of health care created under the President's healthcare law.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the adoption of the rule before us and the passage of the two important pieces of legislation.

The material previously referred to by Mr. POLIS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 319 OFFERED BY MR. POLIS OF COLORADO

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1031) to reauthorize the Export-Import Bank of the United States, and for other purposes. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Financial Services. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 4. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 1031.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's Precedents of the House of Representatives (VI, 308–311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as ''a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge.'' To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that ''the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition'' in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: ''The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition.''

The Republican majority may say ''the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever.'' But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: ''Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule . . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment.''

In Deschler's Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives, the subchapter titled ''Amending Special Rules'' states: ''a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate.'' (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: ''Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon.''

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES FROM IRAQ AND SYRIA

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the order of the House of Tuesday, June 16, 2015, I call up the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 55) directing the President, pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, to remove United States Armed Forces deployed to Iraq or Syria on or after August 7, 2014, other than Armed Forces required to protect United States diplomatic facilities and personnel, from Iraq and Syria, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the concurrent resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of Tuesday, June 16, 2015, the concurrent resolution is considered read.

The text of the concurrent resolution is as follows:

H. CON. RES. 55

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring),

SECTION 1. REMOVAL OF UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES FROM IRAQ AND SYRIA.

Pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution (50 U.S.C. 1544(c)), Congress directs the President to remove United States Armed Forces deployed to Iraq or Syria on or after August 7, 2014, other than Armed Forces required to protect United States diplomatic facilities and personnel, from Iraq and Syria—

(1) by no later than the end of the period of 30 days beginning on the day on which this concurrent resolution is adopted; or

(2) if the President determines that it is not safe to remove such United States Armed Forces before the end of that period, by no later than December 31, 2015, or such earlier date as the President determines that the Armed Forces can safely be removed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The concurrent resolution shall be debatable for 2 hours equally divided among and controlled by Representative ROYCE of California, Representative ENGEL of New York, and Representative MCGOVERN of Massachusetts or their respective designees.

The gentleman from California (Mr. ROYCE), the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL), and the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) each will control 40 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to submit statements or extraneous materials for the RECORD on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H. Con. Res. 55. But while I am opposed to this resolution, I do want to commend its author, Mr. MCGOVERN, for his constant and principled attention to the issue of U.S. military engagement in Iraq and Syria and the role of Congress in making this decision. These are some of the most important and challenging issues that we face and that we struggle with as an institution.

I know the gentleman from Massachusetts is frustrated. I have listened to him on the floor of the House. In many ways, I share his frustrations. ISIS is making too many gains. Critical cities have fallen. But this resolution, I believe, would take us in the opposite direction of where U.S. policy should be.

If the United States were to remove all of our forces from the theater, as this resolution calls for, ISIS would surely grow stronger. ISIS would surely accelerate on a process of decimating all in its path, placing women under brutal oppression and, I have no doubt, further strengthening their position and further threatening our European allies and even the U.S. homeland. More battlefield victories would support ISIS propaganda, which would support its recruitment, which would make it more deadly by the day.

Mr. Speaker, no one is eager for this commitment, but ISIS is on the march; and this radical jihadist group is taking more territory, more weapons, and more resources, threatening the government in Baghdad and, indeed, threatening to destabilize this entire critical region.

Now, H. Con. Res. 55 calls for the unilateral withdrawal of U.S. forces from the fight against ISIS, halting all U.S. strikes against the terrorist group in Iraq and Syria. It would also leave ISIS unchecked—not only unchecked by U.S. airpower, but it would allow this brutal terrorist group, as I say, to gain strength, to destabilize the critical region, and to create a safe haven from which ISIS can plot attacks against the United States.

□ 1330

H. Con. Res. 55 has nothing to do with authorizing the use of military force against ISIS but would unilaterally withdraw U.S. forces from the fight.

Last year, debating another Iraq measure offered by Mr. MCGOVERN, I said: ''Never has a terrorist organization itself controlled such a large, resource-rich safe haven as ISIS does today. Never has a terrorist organization possessed the heavy weaponry, the cash, the personnel that ISIS does today, which includes thousands of Western passport holders.''

Well, unfortunately, it is worse today. Just weeks ago, Ramadi, a city only 75 miles from Iraq's capital, was overrun by ISIS and by its suicide bombers who led that first wave.

ISIS's goals are very clear: wreck every person opposing it, establish a caliphate, and then fight to expand it. ISIS has unleashed a campaign of brutal and depraved violence, not only against Shia Muslims and fellow Sunnis who do not share their radical beliefs, but against vulnerable religious and ethnic minorities. As one witnessed testified to the Foreign Affairs Committee the other day: ''We cherish ethnic and religious diversity. ISIS hates it.'' And they hate in some of the most brutal ways possible.

Mr. Speaker, many Americans may not realize that Iraq and Syria are home to dozens of ethnic and religious minorities, with ancient cultures with very deep roots. These communities—Assyrian and Chaldean Christians, Yazidis, Alawites, and many others—are under mortal threat in their ancestral homelands.

The mass execution of men, the enslavement of women and young girls as concubines, and the destruction of religious sites is part of the ISIS effort to destroy these communities. Their plan is to make it as if those societies never existed, those religions in that area never existed. In fact, ISIS maintains a special battalion—they call it the ''demolition battalion''—charged with obliterating religious and historic sites and artifacts that it considers heretical.

And ISIS has used the ''virtual caliphate'' on the Internet to recruit foreign fighters at an unprecedented rate. Some 20,000 of their fighters are, in fact, from offshore, are foreign fighters drawn to the area from some 90 countries. Those are the numbers that now are swelling its ranks. According to intelligence estimates, this includes at least 150 Americans that we know of.

Yet over the last 10 or so months, the administration has put forth a reluctant and half-hearted and ineffective effort to assist our partners there on the ground. I think we all recognize that this is up to the Iraqi Government to fight to win this. We understand that. They are in the lead. But they desperately need help. And I am not prepared to say that we shouldn't be providing any military support to the Kurds strung along a 180-mile, or several hundred mile, front, with 180,000 soldiers. Thirty percent of those Kurdish soldiers are female. And those young women are down there with small arms trying to hold off ISIS fighters along that line. I am not prepared to say that we should not be providing any military support for those Kurds or for the Iraqi forces and any air support whatsoever. That is what this resolution does.

It didn't have to be this dire. Well over a year ago, when ISIS was building its force in the desert in Syria, it wasn't bombed and devastated when it could have been. It should have been. Many called for an effort at that point to have an air campaign by the U.S. and our partners to pummel ISIS as it moved across the desert in these long columns and begin the process to take city after city. It came out of Syria. First it headed to Fallujah, and there was a call to use air power to suppress and use ISIS then. That step was not taken. And for 14 separate cities, city after city, all the way to Mosul, we watched every time the request be made for air power, and that was turned down.

Well, we are where we are now. And, frankly, the air campaign by the U.S. and our partners isn't pummeling the enemy now, as it should. Daily airstrikes against the Islamic State are one-sixth of what they were in the first campaign against the Taliban back in 2001. U.S. Special Forces should be authorized to call in airstrikes. Most Americans would be puzzled to learn that Canadian Special Forces are doing this, but we are not.

Pilots complain of having their hands tied. It has been estimated that three-quarters of U.S. aircraft return to base without discharging their weapons because of overly restrictive rules of engagement that don't allow them to engage ISIS. As one observer notes, with just ''piecemeal attacks, the Obama administration has been systematically squandering our air power advantage.'' I think that is right.

Adding to the problem, the regional forces on the ground that these airstrikes are supposed to be supporting

are badly undersupplied. After 10 months of fighting, there are still too many reports that the Kurdish Peshmerga, our allies, are outgunned on the front lines against ISIS. I have met with their foreign minister three times now as he has made this case. Again, 30 percent of his battalions, Kurdish battalions, are female battalions, and they can't obtain the anti-tank weapons, the artillery, the mortars to use against ISIS in this battle.

While U.S. forces have been training some Iraqis, that has been done way behind the front lines. Rather than pairing up with smaller units and deploying with them to push them to the front—and that is, by the way, a technique that has proven effective in Afghanistan and Iraq in the past—this has not been done. U.S. advisers are unable to bolster Iraqi units when they come under attack or to call in airstrikes by U.S. planes. We don't have the capacity to do that. And that limitation tragically helped Ramadi fall.

Mr. Speaker, our friends and allies and partners in this region of the world are in serious trouble from the threat of ISIS. They need our help. Employing our air power like we should, getting those weapons to the front lines that are needed by the Kurds, putting more U.S. Special Forces into place, would help turn this around.

But that is not at all what this measure calls for. As I say, it is quite the opposite. It calls for the President to remove United States Armed Forces deployed to Iraq or Syria on August 7 or after.

The Foreign Affairs Committee has held many hearings on ISIS and instability in the region. We haven't heard any witnesses make the case that complete withdrawal is what is needed.

What would happen to Iraq, what would happen to Jordan, what would happen to civilians in the theater? I think we can all agree that situation would compound.

This is the question in front of us today: Do we pull the modest number of our modest presence out of this theater and see ISIS run wild across the Iraqi desert with no help from the United States? I don't think so.

There is no military-only answer to the ISIS challenge. The Iraqi Government must do far more to reconcile with Sunnis, building confidence and empowering them to take on ISIS. ISIS must be attacked financially, and its propaganda must be relentlessly challenged. And Arab leaders need to lead. But just as there is no military-only answer, there is no answer without a military component of helping the Kurds and helping those who are fighting ISIS. And, right now, the U.S. role, as much as we may regret it, is needed desperately.

Mr. Speaker, in the national security interest of the United States, I ask all Members to oppose H. Con. Res. 55.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in opposition to H. Con. Res. 55.

Let me first say that I believe Congress needs to do its job and pass an AUMF, which is the Authorization for Use of Military Force. We should have acted on this months ago. So this is the right message. But, with only the highest respect to my colleague from Massachusetts, I believe that withdrawal by a date certain at this time is the wrong policy.

This measure would direct the President to remove all U.S. Armed Forces deployed to Iraq or Syria since August 7, 2014, except those needed to protect American diplomatic facilities and personnel. That is no way to defeat ISIS or to help the people of Iraq and Syria. I cannot vote for a policy I do not support. However, I share the frustration voiced by Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. LEE, and many others.

I have said time and time again that Congress should pass a new AUMF. We owe it to the American people, we should do our job, and we owe it to our men and women in uniform. Congressional inaction on an AUMF is inexcusable. Congress has had months to consider the President's language, and it is well past time we act.

Right now, the administration is using the resolution we passed after September 11, 2001, as the legal justification to fight ISIS. This is deeply problematic.

First of all, the 2001 AUMF has none of the limits many of us are seeking. The American people have no stomach for another large-scale, open-ended commitment of American troops in the Middle East. It was our disastrous intervention in Iraq last decade that set the stage for the rise of ISIS in the first place. This is a new challenge, and we need new parameters to define our mission and our goals.

At the same time, using a 2001 authorization for a 2015 conflict sets a terrible precedent. What happens in 5 years when the next administration does the same thing and 5 years after that and 5 years after that? We didn't vote for perpetual war, and we need a new AUMF.

We cannot allow that outcome. With a new AUMF, I hope it will be a bipartisan effort. I hope it will be the hallmark of our work on the Foreign Affairs Committee.

I commend my friend, Mr. MCGOVERN, for taking a stand on this issue, and we are in agreement that the United States must avoid another failed open-ended war in the Middle East. But there is a role for the United States in this region, and we should not just vote to withdraw. I believe that would be cutting off our nose to spite our face.

The United States has already made a difference by supporting the Iraqis and the Syrians who are fighting ISIS. It is a difficult fight, but I don't think we can walk away.

With American leadership, we were able to prevent a wholesale slaughter of Yazidi people. With American help, our Iraqi partners were able to maintain control of the Mosul Dam, which, if breached by ISIS, could have resulted in the death and displacement of up to 2 million people. With American assistance, the Iraqi Security Forces and the moderate Syrian opposition are taking back territory, too slowly, but they are taking back territory, particularly in the south.

The Foreign Affairs Committee just had a hearing earlier this morning and we saw horrific situations of children being gassed in Syria. There is no good side in Syria. We have got to somehow let the Free Syrian Army or the rebels, the well-vetted moderate rebels, we have got to help them, and that is why I believe there is still a role for us to play. A precipitous withdrawal by turning our heads away because we are fed up and disgusted, I think, is not the right move.

So this fight is far from over, and the United States has a critical role to play. We need an authorization that defines a role for the United States, a limited role, and that is the measure I will support.

I, again, do want to thank Mr. MCGOVERN for bringing this issue to the floor. He is a thoughtful, effective colleague. And while I appreciate his resolution, I commend him for focusing this Congress on this important issue.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1345

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 55, which comes before the House today under the provisions of the War Powers resolution. Along with my colleagues WALTER JONES and BARBARA LEE, we introduced this bipartisan bill to force a debate on how Congress has failed to carry out its constitutional duty to authorize our military engagement in Iraq and Syria.

Last August, the President authorized airstrikes against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. For over 10 months, the United States has been engaged in hostilities in Iraq and Syria without debating an authorization for this war.

On February 11 of this year, over 4 months ago, the President sent to Congress the text for an Authorization for Use of Military Force on combating the Islamic State in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere; yet Congress has failed to act on that AUMF or to bring an alternative to the House floor, even though we continue to authorize and appropriate money for sustained military operations in those countries.

This is unacceptable. This House appears to have no problem sending our uniformed men and women into harm's way. It appears to have no problem spending billions of dollars for the arms, equipment, and airpower to carry out these wars, but it just can't bring itself to step up to the plate and take responsibility for these wars.

Our servicemen and -women are brave and dedicated. Congress, however, is guilty of moral cowardice. The Republican leadership of this House whines and complains from the sidelines, and all the while, it shirks its constitutional duties to bring an AUMF to the floor of this House, debate it, and vote on it.

This resolution requires the President to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq and Syria within 30 days or no later than the end of this year, December 31, 2015. If this House approves this resolution, Congress would still have 6 months in which to do the right thing and bring an AUMF before the House and Senate for debate and action—6 months.

Either Congress needs to live up to its responsibilities and authorize this war, or by its continuing neglect and indifference, our troops should be withdrawn and should come home. It is that simple.

Two weeks ago, General John Allen, the U.S. envoy for the U.S.-led coalition that is fighting ISIL, said that this fight may take ''a generation or more.'' According to the Pentagon, we have spent more than $2.74 billion in the fight against the Islamic State. That is roughly $9.1 million each and every day. We have approximately 3,500 boots on the ground, and that number is rising.

If we are going to invest a generation or more of our blood and our treasure in this war and if we are going to continue to tell our Armed Forces that we expect them to fight and die in these wars, it seems to me the least we can do is stand up and vote to authorize these wars or we should end them.

We owe that to the American people. We owe that to our troops and their families. We owe that to the oath of office that each of us took to uphold the Constitution of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to hear all kinds of crazy today about this resolution. Some Members will say that it demands the withdrawal of our troops in 30 days. That is true if you only read half of a sentence in the bill. The other half makes clear that the President has until the end of the year to withdraw our troops.

Some Members will claim that this resolution will undercut our troops while they are carrying out bombing campaigns and training Iraqi and Syrian soldiers under dangerous conditions. They will claim it will deny the Iraqis and the Kurds our critical support in the fight against the brutal terror and threat of ISIS. They will claim that it will leave ISIS unchecked by U.S. airpower and allow them to overrun the region.

Mr. Speaker, the truth is that it is precisely these threats and these challenges that make this debate so urgent. With such compelling issues at hand, how can Congress stand by and do nothing? How can Congress not have this debate and vote on an authorization for this war?

By setting a clear deadline Congress cannot ignore, this resolution provides a strong guarantee that Congress will finally do its job, that Congress will honor its duty to our troops and to all Americans by debating and voting on an authorization for this war. Our troops deserve a Congress that has the courage to stand with them.

I see the courage and sacrifice of our uniformed men and women, but I see nothing but cowardice from the leadership in this House. If they believe we should send our military forces to Iraq and Syria to fight ISIS and possibly die over there, then, for heaven's sake, we should do our duty—we should do our job—and bring an AUMF to the House floor, debate it, and take some responsibility for this war.

That is all this resolution is trying to do. Give the leadership of this House a deadline that even it can't ignore. Either enact an AUMF over the next 6 months or withdraw our forces from Iraq and Syria, one or the other.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 2 minutes.

Again, the resolution before us today has nothing to do with an Authorization for Use of Military Force; it is a withdrawal resolution. I don't want to leave some of the oversimplified Authorization for Use of Military Force rhetoric here unaddressed.

The real question that the proponents are begging is: What should the United States be doing to combat ISIS? The answer with regard to today's resolution would be nothing and that we should withdraw from combating the ISIS threat. That would be irresponsible and dangerous.

I don't disagree that the current state of the legal authorities the President is using against ISIS is less than ideal from our institution's perspective, but that does not equal illegal and unconstitutional. I say this as someone who is deeply concerned about the President's weak and unstrategic response to the ISIS threat.

The President has short-circuited this debate by claiming complete authority under prior statutes to use our Armed Forces against ISIS. His administration has made the case that ISIS, which was previously known as al Qaeda in Iraq, ''has been an enemy of the United States within the scope of the 2001 authorization—continuously—since at least 2004.'' He has made the case that ISIS grew out of al Qaeda in Iraq and, in point of fact, that that is where ISIS came from.

No AUMF we could draft could give the President more operational authority than he already claims. Indeed, the draft text he sent asks us to constrain the authority that he already has and complicating, by the way, the effort to reach consensus.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield myself an additional 2 minutes.

Mr. Speaker, just last week, this body considered a Defense Appropriations amendment that would have used Congress' constitutional power of the purse to force the AUMF issue, cutting off funding if Congress does not enact an ISIS-specific AUMF within the next year. That proposal failed in this institution.

The reality is that Congress has made decisions that amount to, in a practical view, disagreeing with the authors of this resolution. Allowing the President to use current force authorities against ISIS is preferable to refusing to confront the threat ISIS poses to our national security altogether.

Now, I will continue to work with Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL and all of our colleagues to see if we can find a way forward on a revised and updated authorization that is focused on the vicious and growing threat posed by ISIS. That is what we need to be working on together.

Merely acting without a credible way forward is foolhardy. It is not brave. A divisive and unsuccessful AUMF process would be perceived by our allies, our partners, and our enemies as a vote of no confidence in the fight against ISIS, resulting in a significant blow to the national security of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER), who chairs the Armed Services Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mrs. HARTZLER. I thank the chairman.

Mr. Speaker, while I respect my colleague who offered this amendment, I oppose this resolution and urge my colleagues to vote in opposition.

This unwise resolution would call for the unilateral withdrawal of U.S. forces from the fight against ISIL and leave this growing evil to continue to expand, terrorizing millions.

This resolution would do more than halt all U.S. strikes against the terrorist group in Iraq and Syria, removing the approximately 3,500 U.S. trainers from Iraq; it would unwisely deny the Kurdish Peshmerga critical support to fight against the brutal and barbaric terrorist group, leaving them alone to stop this threat.

This resolution would leave ISIL unchecked by U.S. airpower and allow the vicious terrorist group to gain strength as it would further destabilize the region by threatening allies, such as Jordan, and create a largely uncontested safe haven from which ISIL could plot attacks against the United States.

It would allow the continued brutality of a group that beheads innocents, including Americans, that forces women and children into sexual slavery, that destroys religious heritage sites, and that targets Christians and others.

This resolution has nothing to do with authorizing the use of military force against ISIL; instead, this resolution simply unilaterally withdraws our U.S. forces from fighting back against this evil.

I urge opposition to this resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, again, let me say that what we have here, as well-intentioned as I know it is, is a unilateral withdrawal, clean and simple. I understand the frustration, but this is like cutting off your nose to spite your face. I think we need to be very, very careful before we do these things unilaterally.

It is now my pleasure to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CONNOLLY).

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank my good friend ELIOT ENGEL from New York, the distinguished ranking member of the full committee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and I thank my friend ED ROYCE, the chairman of the full committee. They are both distinguished men, and I echo their sentiments.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in reluctant opposition to the measure offered by my friend from my home State of Massachusetts, Mr. MCGOVERN, whose sincerity can never be questioned in this body.

I understand the purpose underlying this legislation, and I identify with the frustration that it expresses as, I think, do all of us.

Proponents of the measure want Congress to debate and vote on the use of military force in Iraq and Syria, and so do I. Proponents of this measure believe that Congress has failed to perform its constitutional duty by not taking up the Authorization for Use of Military Force against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and so do I.

In fact, I believe the failure to debate an AUMF against ISIL is a continuation of a sad but 60-year pattern of Congress' abrogating one of its most fundamental constitutional roles and responsibilities. For an institution that constantly laments its subjugation at the hands of the executive branch, the retreat from its constitutional responsibility on this matter, frankly, is jaw-dropping.

It is time Congress makes crystal clear to the administration, to our allies, to our constituents, and to our military families the circumstances and parameters under which we would, once again, authorize engagement for our and by our men and women in uniform in this tumultuous region of the world or, for that matter, anywhere; but one cannot endorse the tactic of this measure.

This is constructed to be a sort of sword of Damocles that threatens us, Congress, with the automatic withdrawal of our forces in the region in order to force congressional action with an AUMF.

Congress should not heed such a message, nor should it cater to such a sword hanging over its head in order to do its job. An ill-defined mission with no clear mandate and conflicting objectives is hardly a formula for a military or a political victory.

We should welcome a robust and transparent debate on the matter of an AUMF but not at any cost on the battlefield itself—a withdrawal, as this resolution proposes, mandated irrespective of battlefield reality, of battlefield progress lately against ISIS, a withdrawal mandated irrespective of our commitments to the Kurds or, for that matter, to the Iraqi Government itself.

□ 1400

That would be irresponsible and unworthy of a great power, however noble the underlying cause is. We have responsibilities on the ground.

This resolution was drafted, as they say in Latin, ceteris paribus—all other things being equal. That is to say, in a perfect world. We don't live in a perfect world. Our engagements are what they are. Our commitments are what they are.

I don't share the distinguished chairman's criticism of this administration. It is a murky region to begin with. Our leverage is limited; our choices are dark and complicated. But we are making progress in the region as we speak. To simply ignore all of that and insist we withdraw, in my view, would be irresponsible and unworthy of this great Nation.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me just say to my colleagues, while I appreciate their thoughtful statements, this resolution that we are debating here today would have no standing if there were an AUMF. We wouldn't even be allowed to bring this to the floor.

I guess my question is: What do we have to do? What do Members of this House, both Democrats and Republicans, have to do to force the leadership here to bring to the floor an AUMF so we can do our job? That is all we are asking for. And, yes, this is a blunt instrument to do it, but I don't know what else it will take to force this issue. I think we owe it to our servicemen and -women to have this debate and to have this vote.

I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES), a cosponsor of this resolution.

Mr. JONES. I thank Mr. MCGOVERN for the time.

Mr. Speaker, as many people have said today, even those who are for the resolution and against the resolution, we have a constitutional duty. That duty is to debate. I want to quote James Madison, to put the context on what we are trying to say today: ''The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature.'' Not the executive branch, but the legislature.

The frustration that we have felt goes back to August of 2014, when JIM MCGOVERN and BARBARA LEE and WALTER JONES wrote asking the Speaker of the House to allow us to have a debate. That is why Mr. MCGOVERN, BARBARA LEE, and I have put this resolution in today, to force a debate. We wouldn't be talking about the Middle East if it weren't for this resolution.

In September, I sent my own letter to Speaker BOEHNER and asked for a full debate on an Authorization for Use of Military Force in the region. None of these letters have been answered. None of them. Last September, Speaker BOEHNER told The New York Times that he wanted to wait until 2015 to bring an AUMF to the floor of the House for a debate and a vote to avoid bringing it up during a lame duck session. Okay, I can accept that, that makes good sense. It does.

In December, Speaker BOEHNER said the House Republicans would work with the President to get an AUMF request approved if the President sent one to Congress. As Mr. MCGOVERN just said, he did send us one in February. Most people—Democrat and Republican—didn't particularly like what was in the AUMF, but at least it was the vehicle for the debate. But then in February when the Speaker of the House received it, he didn't do anything with it. Nothing has happened.

As has been said by speakers before me, last month JIM MCGOVERN, BARBARA LEE, and I sent another letter to the Speaker of the House asking for a debate. Nothing happened. That is the reason this resolution is on the floor. It is because, as Madison said: House, do your job. He didn't say: Executive branch, do your job. He said the legislative branch. That is us. We need to do this on behalf of the Constitution and on behalf of our young men and women in uniform who will give their life for this country.

As has been said before me, it has been 314 days since President Obama started launching airstrikes and putting troops in Iraq and Syria without receiving the authorization by Congress. According to the Pentagon, we have spent over $9 million a day fighting ISIS, for a total of $2.7 billion. Isn't this another reason that we should be debating the Middle East and our role in the Middle East? I think so.

Let me repeat James Madison: ''The power to declare war, including the power of judging the causes of war, is fully and exclusively vested in the legislature.''

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from North Carolina.

Mr. JONES. In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I bring these pictures to the floor of those who give their life for this country. This is a flag-draped coffin being pulled off a transport plane in Dover, Delaware, and it is time that we meet our obligation and debate this issue of war because we are not doing our job. We owe it to the American people, to the Constitution, and to those who wear the uniform.

I thank Mr. MCGOVERN for the time.

THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT,
Washington, DC, June 17, 2015.

Hon. JIM MCGOVERN,
House of Representatives,
Hon. WALTER JONES,
House of Representatives,
Hon. BARBARA LEE,
House of Representatives,

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES MCGOVERN, JONES AND LEE: We write to applaud you for your efforts to compel Congress to exercise its constitutional responsibility to decide on war. For ten months President Obama has prosecuted the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) under a specious legal claim that Congress authorized it fourteen years ago. Congress has done no such thing. It is high time that Members weighed in.

We take no position on grave policy choices about whether to continue to use military force against ISIL, and if so how. But Congress must. The Framers vested the war power in the legislative branch precisely because they believed that young Americans should only be put in harm's way when the people, through their representatives' collective judgment, approved it.

We know this is the most difficult issue that Members face. It is also your most important responsibility. If Congress agrees that U.S. service men and women should be engaged in battle, it is Members' constitutional duty to say so. If Congress disagrees, those men and women should come home. What Congress cannot do is continue to avoid the question. We support H. Con. Res. 55 because it would force this long-overdue debate and vote.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, via Scott Roehm at The Constitution Project, with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

MICKEY EDWARDS,
Vice President, Aspen Institute; former Member of Congress (R–OK) and Chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee; co-chair The Constitution Project War Powers Committee

LOUIS FISHER,
Specialist in Constitutional Law, Law Library of Congress (ret.); Scholar in Residence, The Constitution Project

VIRGINIA SLOAN,
President, The Constitution Project.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. WILSON), a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and chairman of the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities of the Committee on Armed Services.

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. I thank Chairman ROYCE for his leadership, along with Ranking Member ELIOT ENGEL.

I am in opposition to H. Con. Res. 55, which would withdraw U.S. forces currently deployed to Iraq and Syria, which are providing regional stability to protect American families. Sadly, this resolution will undermine America's current campaign to fight terrorists overseas. It would end our air campaign in Iraq and Syria, stop our training and equipping of Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga and Sunni tribal forces, as well as moderate Syrian opposition forces, and abandon our commitment to our partners in the region.

The resolution would promote ISIS/Daesh's momentum, create safe havens for terrorists to attack American families, and increase the Tehran regime's influence of a murderous ideology that declares: Death to America, death to Israel. It would allow Daesh to become an even bigger threat to American families, as we have seen with attacks from New York to Boston. Retreating will create safe havens to enable more attacks on American families. We must remember September the 11th in the global war on terrorism. Unilateral withdrawal will not stop the war, as our enemies will continue their attacks.

The resolution does not consider the situation on the ground in Iraq or Syria or the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Indeed, this morning, Chairman Martin Dempsey said that withdrawing the troops would be a mistake and put America at greater risk.

As the grateful dad of two sons who have served in Iraq, I would prefer a clear strategy of victory for our mission in Iraq and Syria. We should not abandon the efforts of peace through strength. I want to work with Members across the aisle to develop a better approach. It is my hope we will take steps to accomplish this.

While Operation Inherent Resolve has shortcomings, it is the only course of action that takes steps toward stopping jihadist extremists overseas. I am opposed to House Concurrent Resolution 55 and urge my colleagues to vote against it as well.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE), a rising star on the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania. I thank the ranking member and also the chair of our committee. I also want to thank the sponsor and author of this resolution, Mr. MCGOVERN. Thanks to him, we finally have a chance to discuss and debate this issue right here on the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, before I entered this body, when I was a State legislator and a candidate, I noticed back last August-September, as the ISIS/Daesh movement was growing in Iraq and Syria and other parts of the Middle East, the British Parliament rushed back to London to debate a war resolution. I was deeply disappointed, as an American citizen, and, quite frankly, shocked that the United States Congress did not do exactly the same thing; to come here and outline and debate the parameters by which we would authorize the President to wage war against this evil and barbaric threat. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

Several months ago—I think it might have been back in January—President Obama did submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, of which I am proudly a member, an Authorization for Use of Military Force. Unfortunately, that AUMF, somewhat predictably, got attacked by some on the right as insufficient in some areas; and, frankly, got attacked by some on the left as insufficient in other areas. Both sides had legitimate discussions and concerns.

What went wrong after that is that we didn't actually have that discussion or debate right here on the House floor. It was too easy for Members of this body to just say: This is too difficult; we are going to let the President handle it, and we are going to shirk our responsibility. That is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, let me be clear. I do not support the resolution that is in front of us and will not be voting for it. I think an outright withdrawal of troops within the next 6 weeks would be a terrible mistake and is not the approach that we should take, but I do believe it is about time we do our duty and responsibility and have this discussion and debate. It is about time we, the Congress of the United States, on a bipartisan basis, come up with an actionable plan to fight and defeat ISIS, one that is consistent with our values and at the same time one that does not inadvertently commit us to 5 and 10 years down the road responsibilities that we do not envision today.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), who believes Congress ought to do its job and pass an AUMF.

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. JONES, Ms. LEE, I thought the House would be screaming at the opportunity to justify sending young men and women to a part of the world that we believe is of danger to the entire community.

I am so amazed that people are saying that this resolution calls for the immediate withdrawal of our troops. I don't read it that way because I don't know of anything that justifies them being there, and this could be screaming for a reason why the administration and Members of Congress want these troops there.

I have no clue as to why people believe that these people, who have been fighting each other for thousands of years, are a threat to my Nation's national security. I don't know of any of my constituents that go to sleep at night worried about ISIS invading their jobless community.

I do know—because I am old enough to remember—that when the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor, immediately President Roosevelt called the Congress to declare war, and America, with pride, came out to support our Nation and our President.

Now, I don't see the connection between ISIS and being struck by Japanese and Germans, but I know one thing: When an American dies, when

they lose their lives, when we send them overseas, when they come back wounded or deranged, we have an obligation in this body to justify why we have done it.

I may be wrong, but the reason I think we run away from this responsibility is because we don't really feel the pain of the people we are sending all over the world and exposing them to losing their lives. Why don't we feel it? Don't we say, ''Thank you for your service''? Do we thank the people who don't come back? Do we explain and go to the funerals that I go to as to why they were there? Do we explain that the President of the United States and the Members of this House believe it is important for them to be there? All you have to do is come here, declare war, or justify why the security of the United States is being threatened, and I then will be prepared to send somebody else's kids to fight this war to protect the rest of our country. We don't have a draft. We don't pay for the war.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. I yield an additional 30 seconds to the gentleman from New York.

□ 1415

Mr. RANGEL. I conclude by saying that, when issues are serious enough for us to draft other people's kids, when they are serious enough for us to say that we are not going to borrow money from Communist China to pay for these wars, then I can be convinced, even if I disagree, that when this Congress and this President believes my country is being threatened, you count me in.

Until such time, we are waiting to hear about the threat to our national security so that we can make up our minds.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. ZELDIN), a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Mr. ZELDIN. Mr. Speaker, only in Congress do you have a resolution presented to deauthorize the use of force because you want to authorize the use of force.

It is, quite frankly, pretty insulting that you would present a proposal to this body to withdraw troops and then accuse the other side of having moral cowardice for opposing the resolution.

There needs to be more mention of the President's strategy to defeat ISIS—or lack thereof. We have a duty here in Congress to set our troops up to succeed, not to fail.

There has been a lot of debate with regard to the Authorization for Use of Military Force. I am proud to serve on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Chairman ROYCE has had multiple hearings discussing the Authorization for Use of Military Force.

Secretary Kerry was before the committee. He was asked: ''Does this authorization authorize offensive action?''

He said: ''No.''

There was a five-paragraph letter since—with the authorization request—talking about the need to use Special Forces. We can't get a straight answer from this administration as to whether or not he is referring to ours.

Yes, we have a duty to set our troops up to succeed, and not fail. We had a Marine general in front of the Foreign Affairs Committee. When asked whether or not the general in charge of our troops overseas in Iraq has the ability to authorize the mission to take out Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or capture actionable intelligence, he read a paragraph that simply said that that general can make a recommendation.

What is further insulting is just how many people don't even know the name of that two-star general. Not only does he not have the flexibility and resources he needs to accomplish the mission from the administration that is in charge right now, led by the Commander in Chief, my constituents—Americans—don't even know that gentleman's name.

Yes, there has been a lot of debate. We have a need to protect our troops. That is why I oppose this resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Let me just reiterate that I agree that Congress should do its job and pass a new AUMF. The question is: Is this the best way to do it? We ought to pass the right AUMF, not just any AUMF, and we are told we should force the issue.

I had a friend who used to say: ''Be careful what you wish for.'' If we pass this resolution, it is more than possible the Republican leadership will force through language that we on this side of the aisle cannot accept, something that does not have the limits the Democrats are seeking, or worse, just ratify the administration's argument that the 2001 AUMF applies to ISIL.

We need to pass an AUMF, I agree, but we need to pass the right AUMF, even if that means we can't do it within 6 months. I hope we can get together and do that—and we should—and that is why I think this debate is good; but I think passing any AUMF is like buying a pig in a poke, and I am not ready to go down that line.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, we should have passed an AUMF before we got into this latest war. We have been at it for 10 months. We are asking Congress to do its job in the next 6 months. How much longer do we want?

I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MASSIE).

Mr. MASSIE. I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for yielding.

I think some words from James Madison are instructive to this debate. He said:

> In no part of the Constitution is more wisdom to be found than in the clause which confides the question of war and peace to the legislature, and not to the executive department. Beside the objection to such a mixture of heterogeneous powers, the trust and the temptation would be too great for any one man . . . War is in fact the true nurse of executive aggrandizement. In war, a physical force is to be created; and it is the executive which is to direct it. In war, the public treasures are to be unlocked; and it is the executive hand which is to dispense them.
>
> Hence, it has grown into an axiom that the executive is the department of power most distinguished by its propensity to war; hence, it is the practice of all States, in proportion as they are free, to disarm this propensity of its influence.

That was a warning that he gave us. Unfortunately, after being in this conflict for several years without an authorization from Congress, we have devolved into the dystopian condition that he warned us about.

I don't think anybody in this body seeks to weaken our powers or give them to the President. What we are debating here is when to have the Authorization for Use of Military Force or a declaration of war. The time to have that was 2 years ago. It was years ago, before the President acted.

To the people who are against this resolution, I say you could be right. You might be right. If this resolution fails, I hope you are right, that this resolution wasn't necessary, and we do assert our constitutional prerogative, our responsibility, and have that debate and therefore instruct the President on the reasons for this engagement and what his directives are.

I just want to remind my colleagues this is a strategy, this is a parliamentary tactic that is necessary to force the debate, and let's have the debate.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, Judge POE, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I, like the author of this resolution, am concerned about our troops that have been in Iraq and Afghanistan for a long time.

In my office, I have photographs of the 37 Texans with connections to my district who have been killed in Iraq or Afghanistan, of all races, both sexes, and all branches of the service. Here we are, years later, and we are still there.

I am also concerned about this group ISIS. The question is: Is ISIS a national security threat to the United States? I believe that it is. They are doing things to other people that we haven't seen in world history since the barbarians, and they are doing things much worse than even the barbarians did.

ISIS wants to establish a caliphate in the Middle East. It wants to kill us in the United States. They have made that clear.

If ISIS is a national security threat to the U.S., which I believe it is, then let's have a plan to defeat them, a plan now. Why are we waiting years to make this decision? Have the debate on the House floor: Are they a national security threat? If yes, go after them; if

not, then do something else. Meanwhile, people of all nations are dying.

I believe that ISIS will continue as long as there is not someone to stop them. It is in our national security interest to defeat them. The United States needs to have a plan. People of all nations are dying. We need to make a decision.

We need to make a decision as soon as possible, and we need to pick a horse and ride it, and we need to do it now. This bill is not the answer to doing that. Passing this legislation weakens us and weakens our national security. I oppose it.

And that is just the way it is.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. FRANKEL).

Ms. FRANKEL of Florida. Mr. Speaker, this debate is personal to me. I watched my son Ben, then a proud United States marine, being sent off to two wars, Afghanistan and Iraq. My family was blessed; he returned safely.

Both sides of the aisle know the price of the battle: too many killed, too many deeply scarred, too many lives of loved ones disrupted, trillions of dollars spent, and the reputation of our country at stake—sometimes for good reasons and sometimes in tragic error.

I will agree with those who say that, when terror strikes in the world, it is our concern and it does require our leadership. There are times when we must risk brave lives to save many more. With that said, when I came to Washington, I vowed not to send anyone else's son or daughter in harm's way unless I understood the mission and the end game, too.

We owe this to all our children. That is why I urge my colleagues to take the time to deliberate and debate on the use of force against the terrorists who threaten the security of our country and our allies. Congress has no greater responsibility.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI).

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution is clear: Congress, and Congress alone, shall have the power to declare war.

Make no mistake, the current campaign against ISIS is a war.

Mr. Speaker, our esteemed colleague from Texas made a very cogent argument about why we need clarity. The inability to have a clear plan is based upon the fact that Congress has not yet articulated an authorization to use force that would lay out the parameters and the extent of what we would expect the President to do.

The President says he has the authorization under the 2001 and 2002 authorizations. Ambiguity, clearly, is present. I disagree with the President on those as an authorization. I have argued for more than 10 months that our military operations against ISIS need their own authorization.

The President did his part. He submitted a draft to us in February. Since then, we have had a few committee hearings, but no real action. Leadership in both Houses has refused to schedule votes on this issue, either in committee or on the floor. That is unacceptable.

We have already run up significant costs, $2.7 billion on operations to continue the fight against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. We have begun delivering $1.7 billion of weapons. More importantly, we have lost 7 servicemembers already.

This has to change. This resolution is to force us, the Congress, to uphold our constitutional duty to debate and vote on the authorization for the use of force in Iraq and Syria. I have no doubt that if this resolution passes, an appropriate authorization to use force will be passed, and we will have clarity as to the scope and conduct of this war.

I thank my colleagues for introducing this legislation.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. HOLDING).

Mr. HOLDING. I thank the chairman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose the resolution in front of us today.

If passed, the pressure we the United States have been able to apply against ISIS would be stopped, and our allies in the region would be left out in the cold.

There is no doubt about the true wickedness of ISIS in both Iraq and Syria. Their twisted views and thirst for blood have spread instability in the Middle East, leaving a wake of destruction.

The United States, along with our partners, has struggled to beat back ISIS' advances, and the adoption of this resolution would effectively end our operations against ISIS, thus creating a direct threat to our national security and our interests.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is misguided and unwise, and I urge my colleagues to oppose it.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. CICILLINE).

Mr. CICILLINE. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the resolution brought to the floor by my colleague, Mr. MCGOVERN.

No one disputes the horrific nature of the activities being described today and the sickening violence in this region of the world. No one disputes they must be defeated. The question is: What is the best strategy to defeat them and what authorization is required to accomplish this objective?

This is exactly the purpose of a full, thoughtful debate on the use of military force.

□ 1430

My constituents expect Congress to do its job, and we have failed for 4 months to act on the President's draft for the Authorization for Use of Military Force.

There is no more serious duty that we have than the declaration of war, and I thank my friend from Massachusetts for taking an action intended to force the House to perform its constitutional responsibility and debate the use of military force in Iraq and Syria. This resolution is our only vehicle to force the House to do what it has failed to do.

Over the past 14 years, the United States has lost more than 6,000 heroes who served our Nation in Iraq and Afghanistan. Mr. Speaker, I am deeply concerned about the possibility that we could continue to commit more brave American men and women in uniform to a conflict without carefully considering, seriously debating, and properly authorizing that use of military force.

Allowing this military action to continue without a real public debate is failing our most solemn responsibility as Members of Congress. This is the only way that we will ultimately develop and implement a successful strategy—a rigorous debate in full public view.

We absolutely must ensure that any additional involvement in any way has clearly defined goals and objectives, is properly limited in scope, and is fully explained to and supported by the American people. That is what Mr. MCGOVERN's resolution attempts to do, to force this House over the next several months to undertake its constitutional responsibility to debate, to carefully consider, and to ultimately authorize the use of military force. We should not shirk this responsibility.

I thank the gentleman from Massachusetts for giving us the opportunity to make our voices heard. I thank the gentleman from New York.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE).

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, this hour, this minute, this second is actually a gift to the American people. I thank the proponents of this resolution because it recognizes, first and above all, that this little document, the Constitution, albeit small, creates mountains of responsibility on behalf of the American people.

This moment, this minute, this second we are giving the American people their due and their respect, and that is to acknowledge that there must be a full debate on sending our treasure continuously to Iraq and Syria. There is no divide between us on the vileness of ISIS and all of the terrorist groups and the willingness of the American people to be empathetic, sympathetic, and helping the Iraqis and Syrians and those who are suffering and those who are bleeding.

But the question has to be, after 6,000 wounded, hundreds who have been killed particularly in my State, and thousands more across the Nation, we have to find the pathway where all of us know what we are doing.

This is an important resolution. We need the debate, and we need to understand that our soldiers need to be protected and ultimately brought home.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Con. Res. 55, directing the President, pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, to remove United States Armed Forces deployed to Iraq or Syria on or after August 7, 2014, other than Armed Forces required to protect United States diplomatic facilities and personnel, from Iraq and Syria.

This resolution provides a procedural mechanism for Congress to do its job.

Specifically, the resolution gives the House leadership 6 months to take up an AUMF, debate it and vote up or voted down.

This time frame allows the President the opportunity to revise the AUMF to state his objectives and goals for consideration by Congress.

As a senior member of the Homeland Security Committee and the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations, I stand in strong support of our country's armed forces' might and our valiant soldiers and armed personnel who have fought to protect our country.

I also stand with the American people and taxpayers, who have placed their trust in the President and his Administration through war and peace.

After all, not too long ago, he was one of us grappling with the war logic we were presented by the prior administration.

President Obama inherited this war, along with a problematic economy and we applaud all his good faith efforts to do ''damage control'' to fix a problem he did not create as it relates to ending war and facilitating a better economy for the American people.

I recognize that it is not an easy feat to fix our problematic war policies under enormous pressure from both sides of the aisle.

We recognize that the President has been thoughtful, deliberative and judicious about our presence in Iraq and Syria.

We appreciate the threat to the United States posed by the current instability in the Middle East, especially with events in the recent past: the Arab Spring, ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

We have spent nearly trillions of dollars in wars against ISIS in Iraq and Syria.

Let me be clear the threat of ISIS and terrorism is clear.

That is why we need to have a full clear and comprehensive debate on what the plan is.

We have six months to do it and thus we can be thoughtful and deliberate about it.

To keep our homeland safe, we must be able to defeat and destroy ISIS.

Over 7,000 fallen heroes have sacrificed their lives to protect our country and help facilitate democracy in Iraq and Syria.

Their devotion to our country is remarkable and inspiring.

The Islamic State, also known as ISIS is gobbling up land in Iraq and Syria.

In 2007, I introduced H.R. 930, the ''Military Success in Iraq and Diplomatic Surge for Political and National Reconciliation in Iraq Act of 2007'' (MSIA).

Among other things, H.R. 930, would require a diplomatic full-court press designed to engage all six of Iraq's neighbors—Iran, Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait—more constructively in stabilizing Iraq. These countries are already involved in a bilateral, self-interested and disorganized way.

The MSIA Act would ensure that never again will the American people or the Congress be bamboozled into rubber-stamping an ill-advised, ill-planned, preemptive war.

In the Eighteenth Congressional District of Texas alone, more than 300 Texans have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Indeed, more than 3,000 Texans have been wounded.

The cost of war is brutal on our communities.

In my state, of the over 3,000 lives that have been lost, I can assure you that thousands more lives are affected.

To date, the war in Iraq alone has claimed the lives of over 4,000 brave servicemen and women. More than 30,000 Americans have been wounded, many suffering the most horrific injuries.

The mothers, fathers, wives, brothers, sisters, children, cousins, aunts, uncles and friends of those of our fallen soldiers are affected.

How do they manage?

How do they cope after losing their loved ones?

How does a mother deal with the reality of burying her son or daughter?

How does a father mourn the loss of his adult child, whose bright future carried a lot of his aspirations for a better and safer America?

That is just the human cost.

We are grateful to various U.S. agencies and non-profit organizations like the wounded warriors organizations that are helping these brave men and women attempt to put the pieces together.

We made the point that it was essential for this and prior Administrations to develop ''a plan'' for any war we sought to embark upon.

Yes, we understand that the Armed Forces of the United States is unparalleled on the battlefield and would decisively defeat Iraq's forces and remove Saddam Hussein, which in fact we did.

But the existential question was what do we do next?

This resolution allows time for the President to come up with a plan for Congress to look at and consider.

Just consider these facts. Since the war began in Iraq and Syria:

In addition to our American causalities, hundreds of thousands of Iraqi and Syrian civilians have been killed.

About 13.6 million people, equivalent to the population of London, have been displaced by the conflicts in Syria and Iraq, and many are without food or shelter according to the UNHCR.

More than a trillion dollars has been expended on both wars;

On the operations against ISIS, it is estimated that we are spending as much as $22 billion a year.

Could this money be put to better use? Well, consider the following:

How about fully funding the last week's Trade Adjustment Bill we voted on to protect over 280,000 American workers displaced by U.S. involvement in global trade;

A well funded TAA is designed to help train American workers displaced into new career paths so that they are able to make a living and support their families;

Programs funded by the TAA provide a path for employment growth and opportunity through aid to U.S. workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade;

The TAA provide our trade-affected workers with opportunities to obtain the skills, resources, and support they need to become re-employed;

According to the DOL, over 5 percent of Americans are still looking for work and are unemployed or underemployed;

That means 1.5 million Americans are struggling financially;

This translates to millions of families.

Should we not be working to improve the livelihood of Americans?

Mr. Speaker, opponents of the resolution before us contend that it gives comfort to the enemy and undermines the President's strategy for success in war in Iraq and Syria.

What we need is a solid strategy that is supported by the Administration, Congress and the American people.

This starts with a plan put forth by the President and debated and approved by the Congress.

This is why we should afford the President the opportunity to come up with this plan.

Mr. Speaker, as I mentioned before, exiles and militia leaders have found their way into Iraq and Syria in the likes of ISIS and are now a menace to peace loving people everywhere.

Peace, security, and the protection of lives is and should be our priority.

That is why I strongly and proudly support our magnificent, heroic, and selfless service men and women.

That is why I strongly support H. Con. Res. 55 which provides a procedural mechanism for Congress to do its job, by giving House leadership 6 months to take up an AUMF, debate it and vote up or voted down.

I urge all members to support the resolution before the House.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KINZINGER), a member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, who also served in the U.S. Air Force in Iraq and Afghanistan and was one of the earliest voices calling for airstrikes against ISIS.

Mr. KINZINGER of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his leadership on this issue for, unfortunately, the long time that we have been having to deal with this.

I am surprised. We watch the news. We see what is happening overseas and from afar, and we see the human tragedy occurring; yet we are here debating an isolationism resolution to withdraw all military actions from the Middle East at a time when we see utter human tragedies. This is not the time, in fact, to halt military operations.

I would like to speak out quickly on an issue that I think underlines this whole debate. There are some that believe that if our foreign policy were simply nicer, if our foreign policy were more accommodating or less focused on military power, then the world and, more importantly, our enemies would suddenly view America in a much different light, or that the problems that we are facing today, we wouldn't be facing them at all. This is a view of pacificism or disengagement in the world,

and it represents at best a naive world view, and I think it is certainly an illusion.

Ironically, as we debate the merits of this resolution, we have a case study in the illusion of pacifism or disengagement. The President laid down a red line against Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and, in fact, the Russians supposedly gave the President an off-ramp in which he was able to exit and allow Bashar al-Assad to simply give up his chemical weapons.

When we saw that nicer new engagement by the United States, we did not see a peaceful Bashar al-Assad emerge realizing that he had simply misunderstood the United States. We saw the same brutal dictator that murdered his own people continued to be brutal and murderous.

Before we withdrew troops completely from Iraq, many implored the President to leave a residual force. We didn't do it, and we have now the next iteration of al Qaeda, named ISIS. Now, that may be a bit of an oversimplification, but it is, in essence, what we see.

I think it is fine to have a debate about AUMF in this Chamber, and we should. What the President gave us was an AUMF that not only limited his ability to fight ISIS, but limited the ability of the next President of the United States to fight and destroy ISIS. I personally won't be a party to tying the President's hands.

Mr. Speaker, I was in Iraq just a few months ago, and I saw the human tragedy that occurred. I stood in the U.N. refugee camp and had a little girl come up to me and explain through a translator how her parents were killed by ISIS and how she ran away fleeing for security, and I realized the important role that the United States of America plays, the unfortunate burden that we must bear for world security.

Mr. Speaker, we either stand up and fight ISIS now, or we sit on our knees and cower before them later.

Mr. ENGEL. I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN), a senior member of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is unacceptable that we have not debated in committee and on the floor of this House an AUMF and a foreign policy designed to fit current circumstances, designed to fit an Assad regime that has killed nearly 200,000 of his own people, designed to fit ISIS, which either is or isn't a part or a former part of al Qaeda. Instead, we operate under a resolution passed in the wake of the attacks in 2001.

The resolution before us I do not think is the answer to the fact that Congress has not debated a new AUMF.

The reason I rise to oppose it is because I urge Members to read it. It says that all forces must be withdrawn in 30 days unless there is some threat to their security. It says that it ends all deployment, but it is not clear how it applies to Air Force operations or Naval air operations. Presumably, we would stop all bombing under all circumstances.

How does it apply to the rights of the President under current law to deploy our forces for 60 to 90 days if there would be some further outrage from the Assad regime?

We need a new resolution that does Congress' best job to deal with the current circumstances. What we don't need is the idea that blaming Obama for everything constitutes a foreign policy strategy.

The fact is that it was the Bush administration that installed and left al-Maliki in power. It is al-Maliki that expelled all our forces and would not allow a residual force. Would we have gone to war with the Iraqi Army under al-Maliki if he expelled our forces? I have yet to hear that suggested by the blame Obama side.

The fact is that we cannot leave our forces in a country that will not sign a status of forces agreement with us.

The great problem with Iraq today is what al-Maliki did to that country, and the person who installed al-Maliki was the former President of the United States, President George W. Bush.

So I look forward, first, to the defeat of this resolution but, second, to consideration of a new AUMF that focuses on whether we will do anything about Assad or only go after ISIS, whether we will use ground forces, which I oppose, or just use our Air Forces. That debate needs to start in our committee, but this resolution is not an answer.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I don't appreciate this resolution being mischaracterized. The troops don't have to be withdrawn for 6 months, and the point of this resolution is to force this House to do its job and pass an AUMF. If my colleagues are so upset that we haven't debated and voted on an AUMF, they ought to support this resolution because it is the only way we are going to force the leadership in this House to do its job.

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. O'ROURKE).

Mr. O'ROURKE. Mr. Speaker, this is the best way I can think of of supporting our servicemembers and their families in this time of war, because I can think of no greater way to support them, to ensure that we have a strategy with defined, achievable goals when we are going to put their lives on the line. Today, I don't know that we have that.

Do we have a partner in Iraq that has the will to fight? Do we have the resources necessary across two different battlefields in Iraq and Syria to achieve the President's goal of degrading, defeating, and destroying ISIS? Do we have a strategy that is worthy of the loss of even one American servicemember's life?

I think all of those questions are worthy of discussion and debate, a debate that would hopefully lead to an intelligent use of military force with that defined strategy.

This, Mr. Speaker, I believe, is our way of supporting soldiers and their families. It is also a way that the American people can hold us accountable by making the most important, awesome decision that a Member of Congress can, which is to put an American servicemember in harm's way.

I want to make sure that we can source the judgment and wisdom of the people that we represent. I, for one, if we have that debate and have that vote, will go back to my community. I will talk to veterans who have served in our wars. I will talk to the parents of future servicemembers whose children's lives will be put on the line, some which will be lost, some which will be changed forever. I think that is the minimum responsibility that we must meet.

I wish that an AUMF were brought to the floor in some other way, but today this is the only way to get there. For that reason, I will support this.

Mr. ROYCE. I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. WALORSKI), a member of the Armed Services and the Veterans' Affairs Committees.

Mrs. WALORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I just came from an Armed Services Committee meeting where the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs both agreed that under no circumstances should this House consider this resolution at this time, which is conceivably an immediate withdrawal of our troops from Iraq and Syria. This causes, they discussed, an immediate risk to our homeland and our allies.

We would not be here today debating this issue if the Commander in Chief had articulated a strategy to the American people. We would not be debating this concept.

Even so, Mr. Chairman, this is dangerous for America, and this is not the way to go on a plan for an immediate withdrawal with our allies and with our homeland being at risk.

The world is watching today. The world has watched for the last several years our lack of a foreign policy plan, but today the world is watching to see if this U.S. House is going to stand together in a bipartisan manner and reject this resolution and stand together for the safety that we were sworn to stand together and uphold, which is the safety of the United States of America.

I ask my colleagues to reject this resolution.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from California (Mr. SHERMAN).

□ 1445

Mr. SHERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I don't want to characterize the resolution. I want to read it.

It requires the President of the United States to remove all of our forces, except those needed to protect our diplomatic facilities—and here are the words—''by no later than the end of the period of 30 days beginning on the day on which this concurrent resolution is adopted.''

Now, that certainly applies to all our naval forces and all our air forces. But then it goes on to say, if the President determines that it is not safe to remove forces, he can have an additional period up to the end of the year. That assumes that our ground forces cannot be withdrawn within a 30-day period.

Our forces are mobile. They are capable. They are currently behind the front lines. And they can, indeed, leave within 30 days. So clause 2 is applicable only to a military that is engaged in combat or is immobile. Our military is neither.

Clause 1: ''30 days beginning on the day on which this concurrent resolution is adopted.''

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I urge my colleagues to read the resolution because basically what it does, it gives the President up through the end of the year, if he so chooses. I mean, that is what the resolution says. And I would hope that in 6 months we could come together and pass an AUMF. I would hope that all my colleagues—who are complaining here that we don't have an AUMF—would actually come together in the next 6 months to do something because it hasn't happened in the first 10 months. We can point fingers all we want, but it is not getting done.

And this is a way to force this Congress to do its job. It is that simple.

This is not about walking away from the conflict in the Middle East. This is about making sure that the men and women who serve in the United States Congress live up to our constitutional responsibilities and do our job.

I am sorry that so many people think that is a radical idea, but we haven't done our job. And I think it is a disservice to the men and women who serve in our Armed Forces, and it is a disservice to our duty as Members of Congress.

With that, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. NOLAN).

Mr. NOLAN. Mr. Speaker, Members of the House, one of the great failures of this Congress in our time has been the abdication of our responsibility, which could not be more clearly defined by our Founders, for declarations of war and, subsequently, resolutions authorizing the use of force.

Clearly, the time is long overdue for this Congress to step up and assume its responsibility for these declarations, these seemingly endless wars of choice that are so costly in blood and in treasure. It is time that this Congress step up and have that debate on whether or not it is in our interest to continue our involvement in these wars. We need to be presented with a rationale. We need to be presented with a strategy. Or, in fact, it is time to put an end to them and to bring our troops home.

Mr. Speaker, my fellow colleagues, we owe it to our taxpayers, who have spent trillions of dollars in these ventures. We owe it to our Founders, who knew and understood the importance of having the Congress make these decisions—not executives. And we owe it to our troops.

It is time to have that resolution debated and decided here, or it is time to bring the troops home, Mr. Speaker.

As Judge POE would say, ''And that is just the way it is.''

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I will continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), one of the coauthors of this resolution.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me first thank Congressman MCGOVERN for yielding and for his tireless effort and leadership. Also, I am proud to join with Congressman WALTER JONES and, again, Mr. MCGOVERN on this bipartisan resolution.

This resolution calls only for the withdrawal of U.S. Armed Forces from Iraq and Syria by the end of the year absent, mind you—absent—the passage of an Authorization for Use of Military Force against ISIS.

However, this resolution is also about reclaiming a fundamental constitutional responsibility: the constitutionally protected right of Congress to debate and determine whether and when this country enters into war.

For the last 10 months, our Nation has been fighting yet another war in the Middle East, a war that Congress has yet to authorize or even to debate. We have been patient, and we have given the House leadership plenty of time to develop a strategy to bring up an authorization.

When this war began, Congressman MCGOVERN and I wrote to the Speaker, calling for an immediate debate and vote. Nothing happened. Then at the beginning of this Congress, the Speaker said that the President had to send to Congress an authorization. More than 4 months ago, the President did just that. Once again, nothing happened.

In the 10 months since the war began, we have had no real debate and certainly no vote. This is outrageous.

Now, let me be clear about what we are trying to do with this resolution. This is not about making a political point. This is about forcing Congress to take up an Authorization for Use of Military Force by the end of the year and to follow through on its constitutional responsibility. It is about making us do our job. It is unfortunate that we have to do that.

The timeline included in this bill gives the leadership of the House 6 months to bring forward an AUMF, but the clock is ticking.

Just last week, the President announced he authorized the deployment of 450 more American troops to train and assist Iraqi forces in the fight against ISIS.

Mr. Speaker, this is textbook mission creep.

Mr. Speaker, we are here to say, enough is enough. After more than a decade of wars in the Middle East, thousands of U.S. lives and billions of dollars lost, the need for Congress to reclaim its war-making powers is more critical than ever.

Members of Congress are sent to Washington, D.C., to make hard decisions, but in the case of war, Congress, instead, has chosen to duck its responsibilities.

And let me just say, the 2001 Authorization for Use of Military Force—which is a blank check for endless war—has been cited as the authorization for the ongoing war against ISIS. That is why, of course, I voted against it 14 years ago and have introduced legislation every Congress to repeal this blank check for endless war.

Keeping this authorization on the books indefinitely without repealing or replacing it has allowed Congress to avoid its constitutional responsibility to bring up an authorization against ISIS.

From what I remember, we only had 1 hour of debate in 2001. At least, Mr. Speaker, we have 2 hours now to debate whether or not to debate an Authorization for Use of Military Force.

Congress must have a role in how we do our work and what we are required to do, and that is exactly what this resolution is about. Many of us agree that a robust debate and a vote is necessary, long overdue, and must take place.

During the full committee markup last week of the Defense Appropriations bill, I offered a sense of Congress amendment that simply reaffirmed that Congress has a constitutional duty to debate and determine whether or not to authorize the use of military force against ISIS. This amendment was adopted with the support of six Republicans on the committee.

While we may all not agree on what an AUMF should look like, we know there is bipartisan agreement around the need for Congress to debate on a specific AUMF.

We need to do our job. We know full well there is no military solution in Iraq or Syria, for that matter, and that any lasting solution must be settled in the region among warring factions.

The American people deserve to know the costs and the consequences of this new war, and Members of Congress should represent their constituents by saying ''yes'' or ''no.''

This resolution is a procedural mechanism. It is unfortunate, again, that we have to do this to make us live up to our constitutional job and duty in the matters of war and peace.

We need to vote ''yes'' on this resolution. It is simple. It is bipartisan. It just requires us to do our job and to exercise our constitutional responsibilities. Enough is enough. We cannot allow the American people to have no voice in what is said and what is being done with their taxpayer dollars.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Texas

(Mr. MCCAUL), the chairman of the Committee on Homeland Security.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Speaker, the resolution before us here today, in my judgment, is dangerous and should be defeated.

For months, Congress and the American people have demanded a strategy from this administration to defeat and destroy ISIS, a barbaric and growing terrorist empire that threatens not only the people of Iraq and Syria but also the United States.

Today the Secretary of Defense testified that ''ISIS is a threat to the homeland because of its avowed intentions to strike and recruit in this country. ISIS must be and will be dealt a lasting defeat.''

But this President does not have a strategy to accomplish this. We continue to fight the terrorists with one hand tied behind our back, and the only thing worse would be to disengage completely, which is exactly what this resolution would do.

I recently led a bipartisan delegation to the Middle East, where I visited Iraq, ground zero in the fight against ISIS, a week before Ramadi was overtaken by ISIS, and I spoke with Prime Minister Abadi. Unfortunately, the current strategy, in my opinion, relies too heavily on Shia militias, a proxy of Iran, to defeat ISIS.

We now have over 3,000 American servicemembers there to advise and assist the Iraqi national military. But the President has restricted our ability to take the fight to the enemy because he is more committed to his campaign pledge to end the wars in the Middle East than he is to ending ISIS. The President has, in fact, made the situation more dangerous. His failure to negotiate a status of forces agreement and the complete failure of Prime Minister Maliki to govern effectively created a vacuum that ISIS now fills.

In Syria, a civil war continues to rage. There too ISIS has filled the void. Islamist fanatics from more than 100 countries have traveled overseas to fight with groups like ISIS and al Qaeda. Thousands of these jihadists carry Western passports and can exploit security gaps to return to the West and the homeland, where they plot attacks against the United States.

Meanwhile, Iran is actively engaged in both Iraq and Syria, embedding Shia fighters in Sunni communities in Iraq and doing Assad's bidding in Syria.

As Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu recently told our delegation: ''Iran and ISIS are competing for the crown of militant Islam.''

This resolution would ensure that Iran and ISIS will continue to dominate in the region while thousands of innocent civilians suffer and die.

Just ask the Yazidi Christians in Iraq if they support leaving security in the hands of ISIS and the Iranians. Thousands of Yazidis would have been killed last summer if it weren't for U.S. airstrikes to repel an ISIS advancement against them. Nothing could be more irresponsible or damaging to our interests.

But let me say this in response to those who say this is a vote to urge an AUMF vote. I personally support a strong AUMF, an authorization, but one to defeat and destroy ISIS.

We met the White House counsel. He presented a very different AUMF that would restrict further the President's current abilities to destroy and defeat ISIS. I cannot support that.

And this resolution, with all due respect, is the wrong way to accomplish the goal of defeating ISIS through a strong Authorization for Use of Military Force.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I now yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER), my friend and colleague.

Mr. NADLER. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution, and I commend the sponsors, Mr. MCGOVERN and Ms. LEE, for introducing it. And I do so not because I necessarily think we ought to withdraw all our troops in 6 months. Maybe we should. I am not sure of that yet. But I do know that we are waging a war that is probably unconstitutional, as we did in Libya.

Since World War II, we have time after time gotten away from the constitutional command that Congress shall declare war. The Framers said war is too important to allow one person—the President—to decide on it. But we have gotten away from that. We got away from it because we didn't have time. That was the excuse. With the missiles flying over the poles, you couldn't call Congress into session.

But then came Iraq. We had a resolution for the use of military force. Then came Libya. No excuse. Plenty of time to consult with NATO. Plenty of time to consult with Arab countries. No time to consult with Congress. I believe that was an unconstitutional—and a foolish, as it turns out—but an unconstitutional use of force.

□ 1500

Mr. Speaker, now we have this force in the Middle East, in Iraq and in Syria. We are getting more and more into a war. I am not commenting on the intelligence of that right now. It may be that we have no choice but to fight ISIS. Maybe, as the Republicans seem to want without saying so, we should have a lot of boots on the ground, because that is what they are really saying when they say the President is doing it halfway. Or maybe the bigger threat is Iran, and we should turn our attentions to Iran instead of tacitly allying with Iran against ISIS. Or maybe we should say it is up to the Middle Eastern people—they can handle it—and pull our troops out altogether. That is the debate we ought to have. And what are the limits of our commitment, if any? That ought to be debated in Congress. Congress ought to make these decisions in the name of the American people, not the President.

Now, because we haven't had an AUMF on the floor, we must have this resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 1 minute.

Mr. NADLER. This resolution is not intended to force a pullout in 6 months. It is intended to force a debate in Congress in 6 months. Let us get back to our constitutional tradition. Let Congress do its job, and if the President submitted an AUMF that is too strong or too weak, let's bring up a different one. But it is our job to make those decisions. It is our job to stand before our constituents to say we believe this is important enough to go to war with ISIS or with Iran, to send more troops there or not, and here is why and here are the limitations, we shouldn't have boots on the ground or we should.

Mr. Speaker, these are our decisions to make, and our decisions we shouldn't be able to avoid. That is what this is about. We have had 10 years of war, 13 years of war. The 2001 AUMF cannot possibly be relevant now. We thought we were voting for 3 weeks of strikes against bases in Afghanistan. The 2002 AUMF was to topple Saddam Hussein. He is gone. I didn't think that was a good idea, but it is over. The consequences are not over.

We ought to debate this. We ought to debate an AUMF. We ought to pass one or not. That is our decision, but let's pass this resolution that supports that decision on us.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. LEWIS).

Mr. LEWIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this resolution.

First let me thank the gentleman from Massachusetts, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE), and the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for their tireless leadership on this issue.

Thank you, Mr. MCGOVERN.

For 14 long years, our Nation has been at war. Our people are sick and tired of war. This resolution simply opens the door to bring American soldiers home.

Let me be clear. We must maintain a strong national defense. We have a responsibility to protect our borders, our diplomats, and Americans at home and abroad. But the end to terrorism is not found through the barrel of a gun or more boots on the ground. More weapons cannot stomp out the root causes of terrorism, and more bombs cannot eradicate the seeds of hate.

Over and over again, I have stood on this very floor and reminded my colleagues that the use of force cannot—must not—be taken lightly, especially when the needs at home are so great and the sea of terrorism is so vast.

President John F. Kennedy once said, ''Those who make a peaceful revolution

impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.''

Many years ago, I shared my concerns with you that young people in the Middle East would never forget the violence that they have experienced in their youth. I feared then—and I say it again—that they would grow up hating our children, our grandchildren, and generations yet unborn. I feared those young people would have very little faith in the idea of democracy, in the values of inclusion, or the hope for lasting peace.

''Hate begets hate,'' as Martin Luther King, Jr., would say, ''violence begets violence; toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love.''

These young people must be our focus. We must lift them up and listen to regional voices for peace. We must counter the consequences of violence by demonstrating that diplomacy and the spread of true democracy are the most effective weapons against terrorism.

Yes, I will say it again. Our people are sick and tired of war. I hope that all of my colleagues will support this resolution and vote ''yes'' for a method to build a peace for long a time and for years and generations to come.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. It is my pleasure to yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, Ms. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend from New York for yielding to me. I have something special to say.

Mr. Speaker, as the United States has increasingly drifted into war without the usual congressional authorization, I appreciate that today's resolution permits the House to assert its appropriate role. I only ask that the residents of the District of Columbia be permitted to be heard in the same way as other Americans. My colleagues will not only speak today, they also will vote the will of their constituents. Although District residents are already serving in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, I am limited to speaking without a vote.

What an outrage, especially to our veterans. That outrage is amplified, considering that District residents pay $12,000 annually per capita in Federal taxes, more in Federal taxes than the residents of any State in the Union, to support our government in war and in peace. Regardless of what is decided on this resolution, Mr. Speaker, District residents will be there for America, as they have been for every war ever since the Nation was created. It is time that the Congress was there for District residents.

Nearly 200,000 D.C. residents have fought for America's freedom in time of war, yet our residents, including our veterans, are still denied a vote in the national legislature that sent them to war. In fact, D.C. servicemembers fought and won the vote for citizens in Iraq and Afghanistan, yet our veterans came home without the same voting rights for themselves. The Nation willingly accepts their sacrifices and demands their tax dollars but denies them representation in Congress.

D.C. residents have not only given their lives for this country since its creation as a nation, they have died in disproportionate numbers in all of the 21st century wars; yet these veterans, among the 650,000 Americans who live in the District of Columbia, still have no vote on national security, no vote on defense spending, no vote in the decision to send our country to war, and no vote on anything else in this House.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentlewoman an additional 1 minute.

Ms. NORTON. I protest, Mr. Speaker. I protest continuing to demand full citizenship costs from the residents of our Nation's Capital while denying them the vote granted to all other Americans that come with those costs.

I thank my friend for yielding.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. SANFORD.)

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Massachusetts for offering this important proposal that he is joined with by colleagues from California, New York, North Carolina, and other places.

I am a Republican who stands proudly with this Democrat because I think he is hitting the nail on the head. I do so because, in this instance, it has been argued against as a blunt instrument. But what the Founding Fathers were incredibly deliberate about—very blunt about, if you will—was that only Congress had the ability to declare war. And so this one blunt instrument is ultimately about backing up the bluntness of the Constitution in absolutely being declarative in suggesting that only Congress has the power to authorize war.

What the Founding Fathers knew was that, at the end of the day, body bags don't come back to Washington, D.C., when something goes wrong in some far-off battlefield; they come back to congressional districts across this country. So they wanted a check and a balance wherein people from those local districts could report into Congress and say that this is or this isn't working for folks back home.

Again, the Founding Fathers were so blunt. I look here at a document that is 250 days beyond the authorization of war that is even granted in the War Powers Act. I look at an administration and the Congress that is hinging, it is building and sustaining of war in the Middle East based on a 14-year-old document, in essence, a blank check, and there are no blank checks in this process.

I look at what James Madison said years ago. He said: ''The Constitution supposes what the history of all governments demonstrates, that the executive is the branch of power most interested in war, and most prone to it. It has accordingly, with studied care, vested the question of war to the legislature.''

This proposal is about cost. It is about saying we have spent $2.5 trillion in the Middle East. The Harvard study says 6 trillion.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the gentleman an additional 30 seconds.

Mr. SANFORD. Mr. Speaker, for all these different reasons, we need to stop and pause, not necessarily to bring troops home, but, as has been suggested by others, to force a debate on Congress' role. This is something Republicans and Democrats ought to equally care about: Do we or don't we have proper lanes in the channel? Is the executive exceeding its authority or not?

This is something Republicans absolutely ought to care about. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, again, I commend the gentleman from Massachusetts for his work on this and ask for this bill which is so important for, simply, Congress' authorization of war effort.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I, too, reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I first would like to insert in the RECORD a letter of support from the Constitution Project, which is signed by our former colleague, Republican Mickey Edwards of Oklahoma; a letter in support of this resolution from the Council for a Liveable War; a letter of support from Win Without War; and a letter of support from the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

THE CONSTITUTION PROJECT,
Washington, DC, June 17, 2015.

Hon. JIM MCGOVERN,
House of Representatives.
Hon. WALTER JONES,
House of Representatives.
Hon. BARBARA LEE,
House of Representatives.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVES MCGOVERN, JONES AND LEE: We write to applaud you for your efforts to compel Congress to exercise its constitutional responsibility to decide on war. For ten months President Obama has prosecuted the war against the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) under a specious legal claim that Congress authorized it fourteen years ago. Congress has done no such thing. It is high time that Members weighed in.

We take no position on grave policy choices about whether to continue to use military force against ISIL, and if so how. But Congress must. The Framers vested the war power in the legislative branch precisely because they believed that young Americans should only be put in harm's way when the people, through their representatives' collective judgment, approved it.

We know this is the most difficult issue that Members face. It is also your most important responsibility. If Congress agrees that U.S. service men and woman should be engaged in battle, it is Members' constitutional duty to say so. If Congress disagrees,

those men and women should come home. What Congress cannot do is continue to avoid the question. We support H. Con. Res. 55 because it would force this long-overdue debate and vote.

Please do not hesitate to contact us, via Scott Roehm at The Constitution Project, with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

MICKEY EDWARDS,
Vice President, Aspen Institute; former Member of Congress (R–OK) and Chairman of the House Republican Policy Committee; co-chair The Constitution Project War Powers Committee.

LOUIS FISHER,
Specialist in Constitutional Law, Law Library of Congress (ret.); Scholar in Residence, The Constitution Project.

VIRGINIA SLOAN,
President, The Constitution Project.

COUNCIL FOR A LIVABLE WORLD,
Washington, DC, June 16, 2015.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE MCGOVERN, Later this week, Congress has the opportunity to take action it has conspicuously avoided: debate and vote on the war in Iraq and Syria.

While America has dropped thousands of bombs, deployed 3,500 troops—with plans to send 450 more and spent billions of dollars in our latest war, Congress has failed to perform its most basic constitutional responsibility: to debate and vote on war.

But this week, Reps. Jim McGovern (D–MA), Walter Jones (R–NC), and Barbara Lee (D–CA), are demanding that Congress do its job.

They have introduced a bipartisan resolution, H. Con. Res. 55, which could force the House of Representatives to debate and vote on the war.

If adopted, the legislation would direct the President to withdraw all American military personnel from Iraq by December 31, 2015 unless Congress votes to authorize the use of force.

The right of Congress to declare war is fundamental to our Constitution, yet Congress has avoided taking a stand on our most recent war in the Middle East. In addition, Congress holds the power of the purse, and yet the war is costing at least $9 million per day without congressional approval. Congress owes it to the thousands of Americans we have put into harm's way to ensure it is for the right reasons.

The President should not be permitted to wage war without Congressional approval; he should not be able to claim outdated authorizations for the use of military force dating to 2001 and 2002 as his cover for war.

We urge you to support H. Con. Res. 55, the McGovern-Jones-Lee resolution. It is time for Congress to take a stand.

Sincerely,

ANGELA CANTERBURY,
Executive Director.

JOHN ISAACS,
Senior Fellow.

WIN WITHOUT WAR,
Washington, DC, June 16, 2015.

On behalf of the Win Without War coalition and our 11 million members, we urge Rep. Jim McGovern to SUPPORT H.Con.Res.55.

This bipartisan resolution, introduced by Reps. McGovern (D-MA), Jones (R-NC), and Lee (D-CA), would force Congress to debate the use of military force in Iraq and Syria. We expect the resolution to be on the floor tomorrow, June 17.

While America has dropped thousands of bombs, deployed 3,500 troops, and spent billions of dollars in our latest war, Congress has failed to perform its most basic responsibility to debate and vote on the war in Iraq and Syria. After ten months of bombing Iraq and Syria, it is past time for Congress to do its job and debate and vote on this war. It is simply unconscionable that we are asking our men and women in uniform to risk their lives in a war that Congress has not voted on.

The McGovern-Jones-Lee Resolution would force Congress to vote on the war in Iraq and Syria, and, importantly, if Congress continues to shirk its constitutional duty, it would bring our troops home. In the words of Rep. McGovern, ''if this House doesn't have the stomach to carry out its constitutional duty to debate and authorize this latest war, then we should bring our troops home. If the cowardly Congress can go home each night to their families and loved ones, then our brave troops should receive that same privilege.''

However one feels about this latest war in the Middle East, we can all agree that it is long past time for Congress to do its job and finally debate and vote on the war in Iraq and Syria.

Congress needs to fulfill its constitutional duty of debating and voting on this war. We hope you will SUPPORT H.Con.Res.55.

As always, if we can be of any additional assistance as your office considers this important resolution, please let us know.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN MILES,
Advocacy Director, Win Without War.

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION,
Washington, DC, June 17, 2015.

Today your boss will take an important vote on war authority. The House is expected to consider H.Con.Res.55, a privileged resolution led by Reps. Jim McGovern, Walter Jones, and Barbara Lee. By exercising Congress' ability under the War Powers Resolution to urge cessation of hostilities absent a congressional authorization of force, the resolution would serve as a forcing mechanism for Congress to finally debate the war against ISIS that has lasted more than ten months without specific congressional debate and authorization.

Nearly ten months ago, the Obama administration sidestepped its constitutional mandate to seek authority from Congress before engaging in new military hostilities. This greatly expanded the scope of the 2001 AUMF and the scope of executive war powers. Further, it deprived the American people and their elected representatives of an opportunity to express opposition, or to ask important questions about the overall strategy, and why more war will solve the region's problems, when it has failed to do so any other time.

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) urges your boss to take this opportunity to debate the war, to vote for the re-establishment of congressional war power, and to vote in favor of H.Con.Res.55. It's time for Congress to weigh in on this issue.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us at Elizabeth@fcnl.org if you have any further questions or concerns.

Thanks,

MAGGIE O'DONNELL,
Program Assistant, Militarism and Civil Liberties, Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the right to close.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I have great respect for the gentleman from California and the gentleman from New York. I know that if it were left up to them, they could fashion an AUMF that could get 218 votes here. Quite frankly, we wouldn't be here today if we had done our job, because the only reason why you can bring up a privileged resolution under the War Powers Resolution is if our troops are in harm's way and we haven't acted. This could end right now if the Speaker of the House or the majority leader would give us a date certain by which we would debate and vote on an AUMF.

Mr. Speaker, I am deeply troubled by our policy in Iraq and Syria. I do not believe it is a clearly defined mission, and I fear that it might be just more of the same.

□ 1515

I am not convinced that by enlarging our military footprint, we will end the violence in the region, defeat the Islamic State or address the underlying causes of unrest.

Regardless of whether you support the war or oppose the war, believe we should escalate our involvement or place restrictions on it, the bottom line is that Congress needs to debate an AUMF and vote on it. That is our duty. That is our job. If we don't have the guts to do so, then we should at least have the decency to bring our troops homes to their families and to their loved ones.

I hope that each Member of this House, before they come down to this floor to vote on this resolution, takes a minute to look in the mirror. Ask yourself: Why do we get to go home to our families when our troops don't have that privilege?

They have been sent to Iraq and Syria to fight in our name, but we don't have the courage to stand up for them and to authorize the war, and we don't have the guts to bring them home.

Take a minute and ask: We are willing to send our troops into danger; we are willing to spend billions upon billions upon billions of borrowed money for this war, but we are not willing to carry out our constitutional duty, the same Constitution we keep asking our troops to put their lives on the line to protect? How can we keep asking them to sacrifice for us when we are not willing to put anything on the line for them?

I have had colleagues come up against this resolution and say: We share your frustration over the fact that we have not debated and voted on an AUMF.

I appreciate that, but I would ask them: What in the world can we do in a bipartisan way to force this question to come to the floor? What is it going to take to get the leadership of this House to say, I am going to schedule an AUMF, and we are going to debate it and vote on it?

We have been involved in this latest war for over 10 months. Our resolution would give them another 6 months to come up with an AUMF, and if they didn't, then we bring our troops home.

This resolution before us, I admit, is a bit of a blunt instrument; but if Congress had lived up to its responsibilities, we wouldn't need to be so blunt. Congress needs a clear deadline for a debate on an AUMF for Iraq and Syria.

That deadline is the withdrawal of our troops by the end of this year. It gives this House, it gives this Republican leadership 6 entire months to get an AUMF enacted. It gives this House and this leadership 6 more months in which to simply do their job.

A vote for this resolution is not a vote to pull out, as some have asserted; it is a vote to give House Republican leadership a deadline that they cannot ignore, to force them to do their duty as leaders of this House by finally bringing an AUMF to the floor for a vote.

I heard some of my colleagues complain that they don't like the President's policy in Iraq and Syria; yet rather than trying to bring an AUMF to the floor to define that policy better, they are simply content to sit back and criticize from the sidelines. That is not what we are here to do. That is not our job.

This is important stuff. War is a big deal. We ought to treat it like it is a big deal. War has become too easy for this Congress. I see no other way to force this issue than by supporting this resolution before us.

I urge my colleagues to vote in support of H. Con. Res. 55, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume to close.

Let me, first of all, I will conclude the way I began. I want to commend my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN), for raising this issue. It is an issue that has to be raised, and I am in sympathy with many of the things that he said. I don't really think we are really disagreeing here; we are just disagreeing on tactics.

As I have said, the intentions behind this resolution are commendable, but I cannot support this policy which, when you all boil everything down, would require a straight withdrawal without conditions. That is not the right policy for this country, a straight withdrawal without conditions.

I share my colleague's frustration that we haven't acted on a new AUMF. We need to pass an AUMF, but we need to pass the right AUMF.

If we pass this resolution, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle will be pushed to pass their own language overriding this measure. What will it look like? I would wager that it won't include the limitations that many of us on this side would like to see.

Worse still, we could just rubberstamp the argument that the 2001 AUMF applies to ISIS in 2015. Again, that is why I said we have to be careful we don't cut off our nose to spite our face.

Now, the President sent us an AUMF. I thought it was a good starting point. I know it was panned on both sides—Republicans thought it was too light; Democrats thought it was too harsh—but it was a good starting point.

There are many things in an AUMF we have to consider. We need to consider time, geography; we need to consider what we do with the previous AUMFs. These are issues that should be debated, and I hope we will debate, but I think the White House put forth a good starting position.

The American people expect us to do our job and pass a new AUMF. They expect us to keep the United States out of another large-scale open-ended war and pass a responsible policy for degrading and defeating ISIS. Voting for withdrawal is not the right way forward. I believe that with all my heart.

Let's vote down this resolution and go back to the drawing board. Chairman ROYCE and I will work together in a bipartisan way, as we have so many times in the past, and let's put before this Congress the right policy to get this job done.

I urge my colleagues to oppose the resolution, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I very much appreciate Mr. MCGOVERN for his consistency. Even when we may disagree on substance, I have worked with him on policies with respect to human rights in Africa and, frankly, across the world on many, many issues. I agree that an AUMF would be good, but only the right AUMF.

I would make this point: the White House hasn't helped the case to move an AUMF. Indeed, as soon as the President sent up his draft AUMF text to the Congress in February, the White House said he has all the legal authority he needs to conduct these operations, regardless of what the Congress does, undercutting our effort to build a consensus, but we should not give up in terms of our effort to build this consensus.

To that end, I intend to continue to work with Mr. ENGEL and others and craft a bipartisan and successful AUMF that sends a message of unity, that sends a message of resolve.

To that end, I would point out that the committee has held seven full committee hearings and nine subcommittee oversight hearings on the ISIS threat. We have discussed the AUMF; we have discussed the U.S. and coalition response, but given the wide range of views, including the view that we have no military business in Iraq, reaching an agreement on a bipartisan AUMF that authorizes the actions needed to defeat ISIS may not be possible, but it may be possible. For that reason, we are going to redouble our effort.

There would, though, be a price paid for failure on this floor, signaling disunity. As we work towards the effort to build a consensus, we have passed legislation to directly arm the Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga forces who are fighting ISIS on the ground.

We have worked to strengthen U.S. defense cooperation with our regional ally Jordan, to help prevent Americans who join and fight for ISIS from returning home to the homeland—we passed that legislation—and to combat the cultural genocide being perpetrated by ISIS forces.

As I say, we will continue to work with our colleagues to try to find a way forward on a revised and updated authorization focused on the vicious and growing threat posed by ISIS, but acting without a credible way forward would be foolhardy, not brave. A divisive and unsuccessful process would be perceived by our allies, our partners, and our enemies as a no-confidence vote in the fight against ISIS, resulting in a significant blow to the national security of this country.

For that reason, I would ask Members to contemplate for a moment what the world would look like should ISIS, should our forces, our airstrikes against ISIS, be pulled out of that region because I remember what it looked like when we did not have airstrikes on ISIS before they went into Mosul, and members of our committee, in a bipartisan sense, called for airpower to be used against ISIS on that desert path as they were headed to Mosul.

Here is what we saw when they took that city: mass killings, beheadings, abductions, forced conversions, torture, rape, sexual assault, using women and children as human shields, people being burned alive and buried alive, women and girls the age of 13 being taken as captives to be sold as sex slaves and put into forced marriages with ISIS fighters. That is what we witnessed after the fall of that great city.

The question I would ask is: If we are to abandon our airstrikes in support of these Kurdish units on that 600-mile front—50,000 of those troops are women fighting against ISIS, and they no longer have U.S. air support to support them in their effort to turn back ISIS—what will become of them? What will become of others?

Because this is no longer simply a terrorist organization—it is now a full-blown army seeking to establish a self-governing state through the Tigris and Euphrates valley in what is now Syria and Iraq and Lebanon and seek to expand that further.

We know a lot now about its leader, Abu al-Baghdadi, in Syria. He is a designated global terrorist under U.S. law. His mission, he clearly states, if you want to go online and see the blueprint of ISIS.

Part of that is to gain resources and recruits and create a safe haven to attack the United States. Yes, this certainly goes to the direct security interest of the United States if we were to pull off and give a breather to Abu al-Baghdadi and to ISIS.

In Iraq, we are taking less than half measures to assist the ISF, the forces there fighting ISIS, with insufficient trainers and advisers, as I said, with no forward air controllers, with insufficient plans to train the Sunni tribes, and insufficient arms to the Kurds and Sunnis, something we are trying to do something about with our legislation. The balance of power in the Middle East is shifting against the U.S. regional interest and certainly against U.S. security.

As stated, there are no simple answers or solutions; we discussed this in this debate, but without our involvement—without our involvement—our adversaries will continue to be emboldened, and our friends out of fear are susceptible to poor decisions, while the Middle East region and the world become a more dangerous place.

This organization ISIS is simultaneously a strategic threat to the region and to the world and a genocidal terror movement. I recall us saying on the floor of this House, never again with respect to genocidal terror, and we are watching genocidal terror.

I would just close with this argument, Mr. Speaker, and that is let's work together to get an Authorization for Use of Military Force, which the President already claims he has under our prior authorization that we gave for him to attack al Qaeda and any al Qaeda affiliate, but let us not pull out our airpower that is being used right now to slow the advance of ISIS as it tries to take over that region and as it attacks civilians throughout the Middle East.

I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to the order of the House of Wednesday, June 16, 2015, the previous question is ordered on the concurrent resolution.

The question is on adoption of the concurrent resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, this 15-minute vote on adoption of the concurrent resolution will be followed by 5-minute votes on ordering the previous question on House Resolution 319, and adopting House Resolution 319, if ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 139, nays 288, answered ''present'' 1, not voting 5, as follows:

[Roll No. 370]

YEAS—139

Adams
Bass
Becerra
Benishek
Beyer
Blum
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Brady (PA)
Burgess
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clawson (FL)
Clyburn
Cohen
Conyers
Cummings
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Dingell
Doyle, Michael F.
Duncan (TN)
Edwards
Ellison
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gallego
Garamendi
Garrett
Grayson
Griffith
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Huffman
Hurt (VA)
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson, E. B.
Jones
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Labrador
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Massie
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Moore
Mulvaney
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Nugent
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Posey
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (SC)
Roybal-Allard
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sanford
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Sensenbrenner
Serrano
Sires
Slaughter
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Velázquez
Visclosky
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Wilson (FL)
Woodall
Yarmuth
Yoho

NAYS—288

Abraham
Aderholt
Aguilar
Allen
Amodei
Ashford
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Beatty
Bera
Bilirakis
Bishop (GA)
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Bost
Boustany
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Bustos
Butterfield
Calvert
Carney
Carson (IN)
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clay
Cleaver
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Connolly
Cook
Cooper
Costa
Costello (PA)
Courtney
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Crowley
Cuellar
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis (CA)
Davis, Rodney
Delaney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Deutch
Diaz-Balart
Doggett
Dold
Donovan
Duckworth
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Engel
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Gabbard
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Graham
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hoyer
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Israel
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (PA)
Kilmer
Kind
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Langevin
Latta
Levin
Lipinski
LoBiondo
Loebsack
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lowey
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Meeks
Meng
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Moulton
Mullin
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Norcross
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perlmutter
Perry
Peters
Peterson
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Price (NC)
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Scott, David
Sessions
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Sinema
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Smith (WA)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Welch
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Yoder
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

ANSWERED ''PRESENT''—1

Amash

NOT VOTING—5

Byrne
Hanna
Johnson (GA)
Kelly (MS)
Sanchez, Loretta

□ 1606

Messrs. ABRAHAM, MEADOWS, CRENSHAW, GRAVES of Louisiana, DUFFY, McCAUL, COFFMAN, RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, HARDY, CROWLEY, AL GREEN of Texas, RYAN of Wisconsin, and KLINE changed their vote from ''yea'' to ''nay.''

Messrs. FARR, COHEN, Mses. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, ADAMS, Messrs. NEAL, RICE of South Carolina, Mses. KAPTUR, KELLY of Illinois, Messrs. THOMPSON of California, MURPHY of Florida, and LABRADOR changed their vote from ''nay'' to ''yea.''

So the concurrent resolution was not agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

Stated for:

Mr. HANNA. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 370 on H. Con. Res. 55, I am not recorded

because I was absent for personal reasons. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 160, PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT OF 2015, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1190, PROTECTING SENIORS' ACCESS TO MEDICARE ACT OF 2015

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The unfinished business is the vote on ordering the previous question on the resolution (H. Res. 319) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 160) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices, and providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1190) to repeal the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act providing for the Independent Payment Advisory Board, on which the yeas and nays were ordered.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 241, nays 186, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 371]

YEAS—241

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Burgess
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe
Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NAYS—186

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—6

Byrne
Curbelo (FL)
Hanna
Johnson (GA)
Kelly (MS)
Sanchez, Loretta

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WESTMORELAND) (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1614

So the previous question was ordered.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

Stated for:

Mr. CURBELO of Florida. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall No. 371, I was in a meeting. Had I been present, I would have voted "aye."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the resolution.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

RECORDED VOTE

Mr. POLIS. Mr. Speaker, I demand a recorded vote.

A recorded vote was ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. This is a 5-minute vote.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—ayes 241, noes 186, not voting 6, as follows:

[Roll No. 372]

AYES—241

Abraham
Aderholt
Allen
Amash
Amodei
Babin
Barletta
Barr
Barton
Benishek
Bilirakis
Bishop (MI)
Bishop (UT)
Black
Blackburn
Blum
Bost
Boustany
Brady (TX)
Brat
Bridenstine
Brooks (AL)
Brooks (IN)
Buchanan
Buck
Bucshon
Calvert
Carter (GA)
Carter (TX)
Chabot
Chaffetz
Clawson (FL)
Coffman
Cole
Collins (GA)
Collins (NY)
Comstock
Conaway
Cook
Costello (PA)
Cramer
Crawford
Crenshaw
Culberson
Curbelo (FL)
Davis, Rodney
Denham
Dent
DeSantis
DesJarlais
Diaz-Balart
Dold
Donovan
Duffy
Duncan (SC)
Duncan (TN)
Ellmers (NC)
Emmer (MN)
Farenthold
Fincher
Fitzpatrick
Fleischmann
Fleming
Flores
Forbes
Fortenberry
Foxx
Franks (AZ)
Frelinghuysen
Garrett
Gibbs
Gibson
Gohmert
Goodlatte
Gosar
Gowdy
Granger
Graves (GA)
Graves (LA)
Graves (MO)
Griffith
Grothman
Guinta
Guthrie
Hardy
Harper
Harris
Hartzler
Heck (NV)
Hensarling
Herrera Beutler
Hice, Jody B.
Hill
Holding
Hudson
Huelskamp
Huizenga (MI)
Hultgren
Hunter
Hurd (TX)
Hurt (VA)
Issa
Jenkins (KS)
Jenkins (WV)
Johnson (OH)
Johnson, Sam
Jolly
Jones
Jordan
Joyce
Katko
Kelly (PA)
King (IA)
King (NY)
Kinzinger (IL)
Kline
Knight
Labrador
LaMalfa
Lamborn
Lance
Latta
LoBiondo
Long
Loudermilk
Love
Lucas
Luetkemeyer
Lummis
MacArthur
Marchant
Marino
Massie
McCarthy
McCaul
McClintock
McHenry
McKinley
McMorris Rodgers
McSally
Meadows
Meehan
Messer
Mica
Miller (FL)
Miller (MI)
Moolenaar
Mooney (WV)
Mullin
Mulvaney
Murphy (PA)
Neugebauer
Newhouse
Noem
Nugent
Nunes
Olson
Palazzo
Palmer
Paulsen
Pearce
Perry
Pittenger
Pitts
Poe (TX)
Poliquin
Pompeo
Posey
Price, Tom
Ratcliffe

Reed
Reichert
Renacci
Ribble
Rice (SC)
Rigell
Roby
Roe (TN)
Rogers (AL)
Rogers (KY)
Rohrabacher
Rokita
Rooney (FL)
Ros-Lehtinen
Roskam
Ross
Rothfus
Rouzer
Royce
Russell
Ryan (WI)
Salmon
Sanford
Scalise
Schweikert
Scott, Austin
Sensenbrenner
Sessions
Shimkus
Shuster
Simpson
Smith (MO)
Smith (NE)
Smith (NJ)
Smith (TX)
Stefanik
Stewart
Stivers
Stutzman
Thompson (PA)
Thornberry
Tiberi
Tipton
Trott
Turner
Upton
Valadao
Wagner
Walberg
Walden
Walker
Walorski
Walters, Mimi
Weber (TX)
Webster (FL)
Wenstrup
Westerman
Westmoreland
Whitfield
Williams
Wilson (SC)
Wittman
Womack
Woodall
Yoder
Yoho
Young (AK)
Young (IA)
Young (IN)
Zeldin
Zinke

NOES—186

Adams
Aguilar
Ashford
Bass
Beatty
Becerra
Bera
Beyer
Bishop (GA)
Blumenauer
Bonamici
Boyle, Brendan F.
Brady (PA)
Brown (FL)
Brownley (CA)
Bustos
Butterfield
Capps
Capuano
Cárdenas
Carney
Carson (IN)
Cartwright
Castor (FL)
Castro (TX)
Chu, Judy
Cicilline
Clark (MA)
Clarke (NY)
Clay
Cleaver
Clyburn
Cohen
Connolly
Conyers
Cooper
Costa
Courtney
Crowley
Cuellar
Cummings
Davis (CA)
Davis, Danny
DeFazio
DeGette
Delaney
DeLauro
DelBene
DeSaulnier
Deutch
Dingell
Doggett
Doyle, Michael F.
Duckworth
Edwards
Ellison
Engel
Eshoo
Esty
Farr
Fattah
Foster
Frankel (FL)
Fudge
Gabbard
Gallego
Garamendi
Graham
Grayson
Green, Al
Green, Gene
Grijalva
Gutiérrez
Hahn
Hastings
Heck (WA)
Higgins
Himes
Hinojosa
Honda
Hoyer
Huffman
Israel
Jackson Lee
Jeffries
Johnson, E. B.
Kaptur
Keating
Kelly (IL)
Kennedy
Kildee
Kilmer
Kind
Kirkpatrick
Kuster
Langevin
Larsen (WA)
Larson (CT)
Lawrence
Lee
Levin
Lewis
Lieu, Ted
Lipinski
Loebsack
Lofgren
Lowenthal
Lowey
Lujan Grisham (NM)
Luján, Ben Ray (NM)
Lynch
Maloney, Carolyn
Maloney, Sean
Matsui
McCollum
McDermott
McGovern
McNerney
Meeks
Meng
Moore
Moulton
Murphy (FL)
Nadler
Napolitano
Neal
Nolan
Norcross
O'Rourke
Pallone
Pascrell
Payne
Pelosi
Perlmutter
Peters
Peterson
Pingree
Pocan
Polis
Price (NC)
Quigley
Rangel
Rice (NY)
Richmond
Roybal-Allard
Ruiz
Ruppersberger
Rush
Ryan (OH)
Sánchez, Linda T.
Sarbanes
Schakowsky
Schiff
Schrader
Scott (VA)
Scott, David
Serrano
Sewell (AL)
Sherman
Sinema
Sires
Slaughter
Smith (WA)
Speier
Swalwell (CA)
Takai
Takano
Thompson (CA)
Thompson (MS)
Titus
Tonko
Torres
Tsongas
Van Hollen
Vargas
Veasey
Vela
Velázquez
Visclosky
Walz
Wasserman Schultz
Waters, Maxine
Watson Coleman
Welch
Wilson (FL)
Yarmuth

NOT VOTING—6

Burgess
Byrne
Hanna
Johnson (GA)
Kelly (MS)
Sanchez, Loretta

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There are 2 minutes remaining.

□ 1620

So the resolution was agreed to.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REMOVAL OF NAME OF MEMBER AS COSPONSOR OF H.R. 2588

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to have my name removed as a cosponsor of H.R. 2588.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT OF 2015

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 319, I call up the bill (H.R. 160) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 319, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in part A of House Report 114–157, is adopted and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 160

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 ''Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REPEAL OF MEDICAL DEVICE EXCISE TAX.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 32 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by striking subchapter E.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

(1) Subsection (a) of section 4221 of such Code is amended by striking the last sentence.

(2) Paragraph (2) of section 6416(b) of such Code is amended by striking the last sentence.

(c) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of subchapters for chapter 32 of such Code is amended by striking the item relating to subchapter E.

(d) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall apply to sales in calendar quarters beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 3. BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act shall not be entered on either PAYGO scorecard maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN) and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. RYAN of Wisconsin. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. PAULSEN), the author of this legislation, be permitted to control the time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Wisconsin?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker and Members, defibrillators, operating room monitors, insulin pumps, pacemakers, heart valves, artificial hips, x ray machines, ventilators, and ultrasound machines, these are life-improving and lifesaving technologies that have reduced costs for the improved health of millions of Americans.

Unfortunately, the President's healthcare law implemented a new tax on all of these innovative devices, a tax on medical devices. Only in Washington, Mr. Speaker, would you impose a tax on lifesaving medical technology and think you will actually reduce healthcare costs. This is bad tax policy, and it needs to be repealed.

The medical device industry is truly an American success story, employing more than 400,000 people. In my State of Minnesota, 35,000 people are employed in this industry, 400 companies alone in the State of Minnesota; 80 percent of device manufacturers are small businesses with less than 50 employees; 98 percent of all these companies have less than 500 employees.

It can take these small startups 10 to 15 years to even achieve profitability or earn one penny of profit because they rely on investment and the promise of a future of earnings to survive.

The device industry is a net exporter. We have a trade surplus with our exports. Most importantly, these companies are producing lifesaving and life-improving devices for millions of our patients across the world.

Medical advancements have helped add 5 years to U.S. life expectancy in the last two decades. It has helped slash the death rate from heart disease by a stunning 50 percent and cut the death rate from stroke by 30 percent.

Devices have contributed to a 16 percent decrease in mortality rates and an astounding 25 percent decline in elderly disability rates in just the last 20 years of innovation. Medical innovation is leading and will continue to lead the way we improve lives for our seniors who have chronic disease.

Despite all the benefits that this industry provides, a 2014 Harvard Business Review article recently found that the device industry now faces one of the most uncertain competitive environments in the entire country. Instead of hurting this industry, we should be empowering this industry, creating more jobs, producing more innovation, and helping more patients.

We often hear that America needs to start making things again to help

jump-start the economy, and one of the best ways to protect American manufacturing and spur innovation is to repeal this harmful medical device tax because here is what the tax is doing: it is costing us jobs.

One company that I spoke with said they have never laid off any employees in the last 22 years of their history of business, but they laid off 25 employees, and they refrained from hiring another 15 employees because of the tax.

If you take it to a bigger, larger picture, up to 39,000 jobs have been lost because of the tax since it has been imposed. These are high-paying jobs, Mr. Speaker, that pay nearly $20,000 more than the national average.

□ 1630

And the 2.3 percent excise tax, it may not sound like much, but here's the problem: it is taxing revenue; it is not taxing profit.

A small device manufacturer, they may not be making any money, but they still have to pay that tax. One company I spoke to, they have 20 employees. They recently said they are borrowing $100,000 a month from the bank just to pay the tax. That doesn't make any sense.

Mr. Speaker, it is also raising tax rates. Medical device companies now have to pay one of the highest effective tax rates of any industry in the world. Recent testimony in the Joint Economic Committee, there was a small company from Minnesota that now says because of the tax, they have a 79 percent effective tax rate. Who here can justify that?

It is also harming innovation because instead of investing in the next generation of innovative devices that can literally save people's lives, companies are spending money on compliance and accountants instead of on research and development, which is the lifeblood of this industry.

Members should know that this is separate from the debate about how we reform health care. This is about a bipartisan effort today on the floor to promote American innovation to protect and promote American manufacturing and research and development jobs because Democrats and Republicans, conservatives and liberals in both parties, in the House and the Senate, favor repealing this tax. It is a bad tax policy that is killing jobs. It is hurting our seniors, and it is harming innovation.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to protect our American seniors, American patients, and American innovation and repeal this destructive tax.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I shall consume.

There are certain basic facts here. One is this industry participated in the creation of healthcare reform. They, like other providers, were involved; and like other providers, they said that they would participate in helping to pay for it. That is a fact. Now they want out.

Another fact is that they have benefited from it. According to a recent analysis by Ernst & Young, the industry's revenue increased by $8 billion in the year the tax took effect.

Also, there has been a reference to R&D. R&D, according to that report, spending by the industry, also increased by 6 percent in the same year.

There has also been reference to employment. The analysis of Ernst & Young also says that, in that year, employment increased, and the overall employment has increased by 23,500. There has been a 23,500 increase in employment.

So those are the facts.

There is another aspect. If people vote for this industry to essentially go back on its commitment to participate, other providers are going to ask for the same treatment. So in that respect, what the Republicans are aiming to do is to unravel ACA.

Another fact is this is unpaid for. So when you add this unpaid-for provision, you get, all together, well over $610 billion that the Republicans have passed in permanent tax cuts without paying for one dime.

Another factor is that this applies to imports as well as to those that are produced in this country and not at all to exports. So look at the equities. Look at how this industry has benefited. Look at the irrationality and irresponsibility and coming forth to this body and saying let's repeal and not pay for at all from a party that talks about fiscal responsibility.

So let me just read from the Statement of Administration Policy. That is another fact. If this were ever to pass the House and the Senate, it would be vetoed. So here is the Statement of Administration Policy:

''The Affordable Care Act has improved the American health care system, on which Americans can rely throughout life. After more than five years under this law, 16.4 million Americans have gained health coverage. Up to 129 million people who could have otherwise been denied or faced discrimination now have access to coverage. And health care prices have risen at the slowest rate in nearly 50 years. As we work to make the system even better, we are open to ideas that improve the accessibility, affordability, and quality of health care, and help middle-class Americans.''

And it concludes:

''In sum, H.R. 160 would increase the deficit to finance a permanent and costly tax break for industry without improving the health system or helping middle-class Americans. If the President were presented with H.R. 160, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto the bill.''

So I close with this. You know, people can be provincial in the sense that they respond to one pressure point or another, and I understand that. What you have to do is to look at an entire system, an entire structure, and what it means for Americans throughout this country.

This industry, as I said, participated in helping to pay for healthcare reform. They have benefited from it, and now, essentially, they are coming forth and saying: Just take us out of it; separate us out.

That is unfair, unwise, irresponsible, and sets a pattern that will do what Republicans really want to do, and that is to pick apart and tear apart this reform that has been 75 years in coming. So I urge everybody to look at the broader interests of the people of this country and to vote ''no.''

I reserve the balance of my time.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 160, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Minnesota?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 15 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, just in response to the report that was just mentioned, the Ernst & Young report, it is true that companies have been hiring and growing in certain cases, but all of that growth from the report is outside of the United States. So if you want to continue to promote more jobs outside of the United States, don't vote for the repeal, and we will continue to see jobs move overseas.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MEEHAN), a member of the Ways and Means Committee.

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, let me begin by dispelling the premise that somehow this whole thing was devised so that we can allow the medical device companies to flourish. The thing we want to flourish is research and development that is producing the kinds of things that are helping the American people, and that is the essence of what the medical device R&D innovation is doing, and this is stifling.

At the precise moment where breakthrough opportunities, oftentimes, in small businesses—I see them, Mr. Speaker; I visit them in my district—and at the time that it is the most fragile for them, they are being hit with this 2.4 percent tax which touches them at the time when it is not on profits. These are the very dollars that are being used to be invested into R&D, whether they sell that product or not. We are killing our innovation right in the cradle.

I strongly encourage my colleagues to support the repeal of the medical device tax.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. MCDERMOTT), the ranking member on the Health Subcommittee.

(Mr. MCDERMOTT asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, Mr. LEVIN was correct. When we were designing the Affordable Care Act, everyone was expected to share in the cost as we work for the American people.

The medical device industry initially opposed 5 percent. They said: How about 2.3 percent? We will go for that.

They agreed to it. Here they are today asking for us to give them nothing, no taxes; they don't have to pay anything no matter how they benefit from it.

Now, repealing this tax, which the nonpartisan analysts have shown has no negative effect on jobs, will add $24.4 billion to the deficit. It would eliminate an important source of revenue simply to appease an industry that has benefited directly and greatly from the expansion of the coverage of ACA.

On top of that, the bill is a distraction from a more important issue that the Congress needs to address in the context of medical devices. They would not let us vote on an amendment in the committee to bring up the institution of unique device identifiers.

An essential tool of improving patient safety is the UDI. A UDI is a number associated with a medical device right on the device. They contain important information about where, when, and by whom the device was made. They provide for post-market surveillance to identify problems and notify patients when objects that they put in their bodies are faulty or dangerous. This has dramatic impacts for safety.

In 2010, a massive recall of breast implants in France impacted tens of thousands of women. Many cancer patients undergo reconstructive surgery following mastectomy, and their lives are threatened when faulty implants leak dangerous contaminants into their bodies. In situations like this, it is essential that we know who has given the faulty device so that recall efforts can save as many lives as possible.

Unfortunately, even when the FDA finishes its new UDI regulations in the coming years, we will lack important tools, including devices, in the agency's postmarket safety checking system, the Sentinel Initiative. The primary source of information for the Sentinel is insurance claims forms, yet, unlike pharmaceuticals, CMS does not currently require UDIs to be listed on Medicare claims. That makes it all but impossible to apply the Sentinel Initiative to the device context.

Furthermore, additional gaps exist in the FDA's rulemaking on UDIs. For example, there is no requirement that UDIs be affixed directly to the implantable devices.

As we look forward, I encourage my colleagues to look beyond efforts to undermine the ACA and to look for opportunities to enhance safety and improve the system for patients, not just the device industry.

I urge Members to vote ''no'' on this and come back with a bill—if you want to take the tax off, that is one thing, but at least make them identify the name and the place and the number of where it came from so, if somebody you know gets impacted by one of these devices going bad, we will have a way to trace it.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to gentleman from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG), a leader on the Ways and Means Committee, who is also concerned about the impact of this tax on his home State of Indiana.

Mr. YOUNG of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, ObamaCare's medical device tax has already been devastating to innovation, patient care, and job creation, especially in my home State of Indiana.

Up north, we have Warsaw, which is known around the world as the orthopedics capital of the world. In central Indiana, we have a burgeoning life sciences industry centered around the Indianapolis area. Further south, we have Bloomington, which is home to Cook Medical, the largest privately held medical device manufacturer in the world.

Medical device startups dot Indiana's landscape from Lake Michigan down to the Ohio River. Indiana's world-class medical device companies like Biomet, Boston Scientific, Hill-Rom, Zimmer, and dozens more don't just create and produce lifesaving technology. They also employ tens of thousands of Hoosiers, and these jobs pay well.

At a time when factories have closed and jobs in rust belt States have been sent overseas, medical device manufacturing jobs have been a lifeline for hard-working Hoosiers and their families.

□ 1645

Every day this tax remains in effect, we continue to slow advancements in lifesaving and life-improving technologies, and we hinder patient care. This day is long overdue. It is time to support H.R. 160 and finally repeal this harmful, ill-advised tax.

Mr. LEVIN. It is now my pleasure to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PASCRELL), a member of our committee.

Mr. PASCRELL. Mr. Speaker, I am sorry the gentleman from Indiana is leaving the floor right now because one of the companies he mentioned—one of the companies, there are others—was brought before the Justice Department because of their behavior not long ago. So my friend from Indiana talks about Zimmer Holdings. That is one of the reasons why I am asking you to review your support of this legislation. Because let me tell you what happened to Zimmer and Stryker in the State of New Jersey not that many years ago when the U.S. Attorney looked at these two companies and many others.

Here is what they were brought to heel about: bribing doctors to recommend their prosthetic to senior citizens under Medicare. Dante said, what place in hell will they be? These guys should be in the deepest place in hell—the deepest. You check the record. You can't make this stuff up.

Mr. Speaker, I oppose this legislation. When the Affordable Care Act was being negotiated, these companies were at the table. They agreed to this. You can't deny that. Because of the ACA, the health care market includes millions of newly insured Americans, more business for these companies, by the way, driving up the demand for medical devices and other health care services—increased demand, capitalism, you know about that.

However, the device industry wants it both ways. They want new businesses, and they want new business under the ACA, that the ACA has created, and since the law was passed, they have been lobbying for repeal of what they agreed to. I swear you can't make it up.

Mr. Speaker, I support the ACA and its goals. You don't. And it needs to be funded. It is the law of the land, as the Speaker once said. You can't support the goals of the ACA and then start stripping out the pieces of the law that fund the realization of the goals.

Oh, but you can. And you have tried 56 different times to repeal this legislation, and you failed every time, even though you are in the majority.

This legislation would add $24.4 billion to the deficit—through the Speaker to my good friend from Pennsylvania—and it is not paid for. Despite industry claims of job loss and economic hardship, medical device companies have seen a 7 percent growth in employment since the ACA. Furthermore, I remain concerned about some of the behavior we have seen in this industry.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair would like to remind the gentleman to address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. PASCRELL. Sure, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I became highly involved in the medical device issues since 2007 when a number of device manufacturers entered into controversial deferred prosecution agreements for providing doctors with kickbacks for using their knee and hip replacement devices. A number of these products ended up being recalled. That is the record.

As a result, on the justice side, I have worked to put an end to deferred prosecution agreements that don't hold the bad actors accountable. There are many good companies providing medical devices, but the facts are the facts, and the history is the history, and the culture of this industry needs to be known. I have also worked to improve the safety of medical devices for patients by encouraging the use of clinical data registries.

Repealing the device tax is not good policy, Mr. Speaker, and it is not good for our budget—another $24.5 billion added to the deficit. I think if you would ask our ranking member, Mr. LEVIN, he would give you a precise

number as to how much you have increased the deficit in legislation you have provided over the last 6 months.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to oppose this legislation.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. DENT).

Mr. DENT. Mr. Speaker, I just want to address something that was stated by one of the previous speakers from Washington State who made a comment to the effect that the medical device industry supported that tax. Well, that is a statement that is simply not based in fact. In fact, what happened, as I recall, Senator Baucus helped impose the tax on the industry because he felt that they were not providing enough at the table in terms of concessions for the ACA. In fact, since they weren't doing enough at the table, the medical device industry was placed on the menu. They fought this tax vigorously. There is no letter to indicate they had any support for this tax.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of this legislation to repeal the medical device tax. However you feel about the 2010 health care law on the whole, we can all agree that the legislation has its flaws. Again, one of the most glaring deficiencies in the law is the medical device tax, designed to extract $26 billion from the industry over 10 years. This new law is already stifling critical innovation and threatening high quality jobs in my district.

More importantly, it is increasing costs for consumers on products which are an absolute necessity of life for those who rely on them, such as prosthetics, pacemakers, and artificial hearts. Costs are also being passed on to consumers at all levels through increased insurance premiums and bills from medical providers.

The medical device industry currently supports over 75,000 jobs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Several of the companies affected by the new tax are located in my district, including OraSure Technologies, Olympus, Boas Surgical, and B. Braun. In fact, B. Braun CFO Bruce Heugel recently testified before the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Health Care that his company has been forced to drastically reduce investments in research and development and also has had job losses as a result of the medical device tax. In fact, they are not building a new headquarters because of this tax. These are good paying, 21st century jobs, and this Congress should not support policies that will kill them or send them overseas.

Mr. Speaker, the medical device tax is a punitive tax, and it is creating disincentives for companies looking to stay competitive, hire domestically, and create lifesaving new technologies. It is past time that Congress repeal this onerous new tax, and I urge my colleagues to support the Protect Medical Innovation Act. Let's get rid of this thing once and for all. Let's excise the excise tax.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. ROKITA). Since he was first elected in 2010, he has been a leader on this, organizing freshman Members, recognizing the importance of repealing this disastrous tax.

Mr. ROKITA. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Minnesota for yielding the time. He has been the leader on this from day one, and I am happy to join him. I also thank Chairman RYAN of the Ways and Means Committee for allowing this to come to the floor the way it has. I think it is very important. Most of America thinks this is very important, and to have it stand alone here where it can be debated, hopefully honestly, I think speaks well to the process, I think it speaks well to the leadership of Chairman RYAN and Member PAULSEN and others who are behind this.

Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to be back on the floor to support this. It is long overdue. It needs to happen. There is an old adage, Mr. Speaker, and that is, if you want less of something, tax it. The same is true here. If you want less jobs in this area, like the 56,000 jobs in Indiana alone, tax the devices that those jobs produce. If you want less innovation, tax these medical devices. If you want America to be less of a leader in the world when it comes to this industry, tax it. That is all their argument, Mr. Speaker, is saying, and our bill corrects that. Let the free market work, and let innovation work. Let's keep us a leader in the world in this area.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from Indiana (Mrs. BROOKS) who has also been a leader as part of the Indiana delegation on the issue.

Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend my colleague from Minnesota for leading this effort since I came to Congress in 2013.

I rise today joining my fellow Hoosiers seeking greater opportunity for all Americans, and I rise today to call for a swift end to a tax that is standing in the way of that opportunity.

Back home, I hear from countless Hoosiers about the restrictions the medical device tax is placing on our life sciences industry, not only in Indiana but across the country. This tax takes away the opportunities to innovate, to hire more people, and most importantly to improve the patient access to critical technology.

In Indiana the life sciences industry is vitally important. It has a $59 billion impact on our economy and employs more than 56,000 people. In fact, we are second—Indiana is second only to California in exports of life sciences products.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle know that the unfair medical device tax jeopardizes our competitive edge, it stunts our workforce opportunities, but most importantly, it is decreasing access to lifesaving technology for people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to stand for jobs, stand for improving people's health, and stand for more opportunity. I urge my colleagues to repeal the medical device tax.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentlewoman from New York (Ms. STEFANIK) who has also been doing an awesome job of organizing a lot of the freshman Members and recognizing the importance of this issue to the State of New York.

Ms. STEFANIK. Mr. Speaker, I strongly support H.R. 160, the Protect Medical Innovation Act introduced by Mr. PAULSEN, and in March I was proud to lead a bipartisan letter by 43 freshman lawmakers to Speaker BOEHNER calling for a vote to repeal the medical device tax.

According to a 2014 industry survey, the tax resulted in employment reductions of 14,000 industry workers in 2013 and years prior to implementation of this tax, with approximately an additional 4,500 jobs lost in 2014. Furthermore, if we don't repeal this tax, the industry will forgo hiring of nearly 20,500 employees over the next 5 years.

Mr. Speaker, this important bipartisan legislation will repeal the Affordable Care Act's medical device tax that is limiting access to health care devices that North Country families need and undermining the medical device industry that is so important to our local economy.

Repealing the medical device tax will help our small businesses create jobs for North Country families and protect employees who are currently at risk from this job-killing tax. This an extremely important issue for my district, especially in Warren County, home of what is called ''catheter valley'' because of the numerous catheter manufacturers.

I commend the House for bringing this important legislation to the floor, and I urge all Members to support this measure.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. STUTZMAN), someone I traveled with in the State of Indiana who showed me firsthand the impact this device tax had in Indiana.

Mr. STUTZMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 160, the Protect Medical Innovation Act, and I appreciate the work that Congressman PAULSEN has done on this very important issue that has affected my district dramatically.

As a sitting U.S. Congressman of Warsaw, Indiana, known as the Orthopedic Capital of the World, the burdensome medical device tax hits very close to home for my constituents. In fact, Mr. Speaker, the Hoosier State as a

whole is second in the Nation in exports of life science products, and across the State over 20,000 Hoosiers are directly employed by this industry. The impact on our communities and our neighbors is one of the reasons I have fought so long and hard alongside Mr. PAULSEN and my colleagues to repeal this very destructive tax.

Mr. Speaker, back home in Indiana, Hoosiers know that taxation does not create jobs; it kills them. In fact, a recent study has shown that the medical device tax, implemented to fund ObamaCare, has cost more than 33,000 jobs nationally so far. Mr. Speaker, repealing this medical device tax is a simple, commonsense reform, and I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1700

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. COSTELLO), who knows the importance of this issue.

Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the cost of health care continues to increase in this country.

As a philosophical matter, I do not believe inserting more government between a patient and their doctor will reduce costs. In fact, to the contrary. But there are things government can do.

That is why we in the House of Representatives are putting more money into NIH funding. It is why 21st Century Cures has been introduced—to streamline approval processes at the FDA and make sure that various stakeholders involved in finding cures are all working together.

Yet what remains as a contradiction at the heart of ObamaCare is the policy that taxes those who seek to innovate and improve public health outcomes through pioneering medical device equipment. We are taxing those who are trying to help improve, and who have improved, public health outcomes. It just doesn't make sense.

Simply put, it is a disincentive to invest capital in precisely the industry that has proven itself to be the single most important in the history of civilization to improve public health—our life sciences industry here in this country.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. MOONEY) to speak on this issue.

Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 160, the Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2015, also known as the medical device tax repeal.

This bill would repeal the tax on medical device manufacturers that was put into place under ObamaCare. The medical device tax rate is 2.3 percent, and this is in addition to the State sales tax on common medical devices such as pacemakers, hearing aids, and insulin pumps.

This tax hurts the very same Americans we should be helping. For example, 13 percent of West Virginians—the State I am blessed to represent—have diabetes. This 2.3 percent tax makes it more difficult for struggling taxpayers in West Virginia and around the country to access critical healthcare devices like insulin pumps.

If gone unchecked, this tax will continue to weaken the industry's ability to grow and help people in need. It will also continue to hinder the development of lifesaving treatments and devices.

I hope my colleagues will join me tomorrow in voting for the repeal of the ill-advised medical device tax.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. BENISHEK), a physician who works with patients each and every day and understands the importance of repealing this tax.

Mr. BENISHEK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to support H.R. 160, the Protect Medical Innovation Act.

H.R. 160 will permanently repeal the misguided excise tax on medical devices that was imposed by the President's healthcare law.

I am a cosponsor of this important legislation, along with over 280 Members of this House of Representatives. In the 113th Congress, the Senate endorsed getting rid of this burdensome tax by an overwhelming margin. It is clearly time for this tax to go.

The medical device tax discourages innovation, lowers the quality of medical care available to the American people, and cuts jobs while driving production overseas.

Companies like RTI Surgical, based in my district, are being harmed by this burdensome tax. Instead of hamstringing these manufacturers, we should be allowing them to produce new medical devices and create jobs.

I am a doctor who treated patients in northern Michigan for 30 years. I know how important medical devices are for providing quality health care, and I believe that getting rid of this tax will improve our Nation's healthcare system.

I hope all my colleagues will join me in supporting this commonsense and long overdue fix for the train wreck that is the President's healthcare law.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER), a State that has been a leader in developing new medical technologies.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this effort to prevent this very destructive tax from having the harmful impact that we know it will have. This medical device tax is perhaps the most odious of any tax that has ever been loaded upon the shoulders of the American people in the history of our Republic.

Our first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Marshall, once pointed out: ''The power to tax is the power to destroy.'' Well, who is being destroyed and who is being hurt by this medical device tax? It is the American people who are suffering maladies and health challenges, and we are putting them as the people who are going to be basically paying the bill or doing without their medical devices.

I would like to give a personal example of this. I know it is very painful for me to do so, but I think I need to share this with my colleagues.

Two and a half years ago, I was notified that my daughter, who was at that time 9 years old, had leukemia. It was a horror story for my family, a horror story, just like it is for families across America. We came out of that. We went through it. It was a tough, tough road for a year. Last week, she had her last cancer treatment and, last week, she was declared cancer free.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FITZPATRICK). The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. PAULSEN. I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Ninety percent of the kids who get leukemia today are cured from leukemia after a period of time. They actually will live through this. Only 40 years ago, 90 percent of the kids who got leukemia died.

We have had different advances in medicine that have actually achieved this goal. But in my daughter's case, I could see very easily a medical device was put under her skin, a portal, so that she did not have to take the chemotherapy into her arms, which resulted in younger kids decades ago with their veins collapsing because of the chemotherapy being shot into their arm.

The people who devised that medical device saved my daughter's life, and now we want to make them the most heavily taxed people in our country. That is ridiculous. We want to encourage people to build these types of devices that will save our children and help those people who are suffering.

This medical device tax is odious, it is wrong, and it was wrongheaded from the very beginning. In the name of saving future children from things that we might be able to cure with a proper medical device, we need to make sure we eliminate this tax and keep faith with future generations, as well as those people who are suffering today.

I ask my colleagues to join me in getting rid of this tax on medical devices.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, may I inquire the amount of time remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Minnesota has 11 minutes remaining. The gentleman from Michigan has 16½ minutes remaining.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON).

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Minnesota.

I rise today as a 30-year health care professional and a proud cosponsor of H.R. 160, the Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2015.

This bill would repeal the Affordable Care Act's 2.3 percent tax on medical devices. These are medical devices that save and improve lives for millions of Americans. These devices include pacemakers, artificial joints, CAT scan machines, and many, many more.

Mr. Speaker, the medical device tax is a terrible policy that is stifling innovation and United States competitiveness and is hurting small businesses all across the Nation, and certainly in the Pennsylvania Fifth Congressional District.

This legislation, which has strong bipartisan support, will help to protect American jobs, keep America at the cutting edge of technological medical advances, and preserve a patient's access to affordable, lifesaving devices.

Having served in a nonprofit healthcare setting for three decades, I rise today and ask my colleagues to join me in voting to repeal this unnecessary and very harmful tax.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

There is no one that questions the importance of this industry—no one. This country has been in the forefront in terms of creating medical devices. There has been innovation and there has been enterprise, and it has impacted the lives of millions of people. That is not the issue here.

The issue is this. A number of industries and a number of providers participated in creating the Health Care Reform Act. Essentially, I am not sure it is the industry as much as some Members are essentially coming here and saying: Give this industry a free ride in terms of their participation, while others are doing their part.

That isn't fair; it isn't workable; and it is also fiscally irresponsible. I would like to talk to the CEOs of any of these companies and ask them if they think it is fiscally responsible to repeal this provision costing well over $20 billion, unpaid for, made permanent.

Indeed, this is industry joined with others in the healthcare world in this country in a letter of May 11, 2009, to the President:

Dear Mr. President,

We believe that all Americans should have access to affordable, high-quality healthcare services. Thus, we applaud your strong commitment to reforming our Nation's healthcare system. The times demand and the Nation expects that we, as healthcare leaders, work with you to reform the healthcare system.

And it concludes with this paragraph:

We, as stakeholder representatives, are committed to doing our part to make reform a reality in order to make the system more affordable and effective for patients and purchasers. We stand ready to work with you to accomplish this goal.

And it was signed by a number of representatives—the AMA; America's Health Insurance Plans, their leadership; the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers; et cetera, and also signed by the president and CEO of the Advanced Medical Technology Association.

So now people are coming here and saying what was essentially committed to in 2009 should essentially be ripped out of ACA in 2015.

I just want to read from a report by the National Center for Health Research. And I refer, for example, to the chart on the number of employees at the 12 largest U.S.-based device companies. All of them show an increase in employment of the 12 largest, except two, and in one case, the reduction was from 10,800 to 10,500. One company did have a larger loss, but it wasn't anything close to catastrophic.

Then the number of employees at the small, publicly traded device companies—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine—of those, only seven show a reduction in the number of employees from 2012 to 2014. In one of them, there was a reduction of one, and the other, a reduction of four employees. And then there is another with a reduction of four, and another, a reduction of six. The others had increases in their employment, and two of them, one went from 230 to 320, and another from 244 to 303. These are the smallest.

□ 1715

Let me also refer in this document to stock prices for the 12 largest U.S.-based device companies.

When you look down at the profit margin, all of their profits went up except one, which had a reduction of 1.6 percent from the close of January 2, 2013, to the close of January 2, 2015. That reduction was tiny. The others had a very substantial reduction, some in the twenties, one in the thirties, and the average was a 13.8 percent increase in the profit margin.

Also, this report reads:

Similarly, the report on 2013 employment, released by a financial analysis news service, EP Vantage, showed that 11 of the top 15 device makers expanded their workforce after the device tax went into effect.

I think what is happening here is that a few of my colleagues are coming here and are using a few examples—and I don't deny, in a capitalist system, there are some losers as well as winners.

Everybody isn't necessarily a winner, and there was a recession in this country during some of these years, but to come here and to use those examples that really are refuted by the overall data, I think, is essentially saying that we ought to begin, on this point, to rip apart the ACA because, in every case, there hasn't been an improvement for every company. In terms of research and development, the Ernst & Young report makes it very clear that spending by the industry increased by 6 percent in the same year.

I am just asking everybody who cares about healthcare reform and who cares about the overall picture here in the United States to resist the temptation to take several examples, perhaps, from their own districts, to draw conclusions about what really has happened in the medical device industry and to, essentially, come forth because of those relatively few examples and say that we should now, essentially, repeal this provision, costing well over $20 billion—unpaid for—permanently.

That is not only contrary to the letter I read, but it is contrary to fairness within the healthcare industry, and it is really unfair to the millions of people who have benefited from the ACA when the motive, really, of so many of the Republicans who come here is not to simply repeal this tax, but it is part of an effort to, essentially, repeal the ACA altogether. We should resist that.

The people of this country do not want that repeal, so let's vote ''no''—and a resounding ''no''—on this proposal.

MAY 11, 2009.

THE PRESIDENT,
The White House,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: We believe that all Americans should have access to affordable, high quality health care services. Thus, we applaud your strong commitment to reforming our nation's health care system. The times demand and the nation expects that we, as health care leaders, work with you to reform the health care system.

The annual growth in national health expenditures—including public and private spending—is projected by government actuaries to average 6.2% through the next decade. At that rate, the percent of gross domestic product spent on health care would increase from 17.6% this year to 20.3% in 2018—higher than any other country in the world.

We are determined to work together to provide quality, affordable coverage and access for every American. It is critical, however, that health reform also enhance quality, improve the overall health of the population, and reduce cost growth. We believe that the proper approach to achieve and sustain reduced cost growth is one that will: improve the population's health; continuously improve quality; encourage the advancement of medical treatments, approaches, and science; streamline administration; and encourage efficient care delivery based on evidence and best practice.

To achieve all of these goals, we have joined together in an unprecedented effort, as private sector stakeholders—physicians, hospitals, other health care workers, payors, suppliers, manufacturers, and organized labor—to offer concrete initiatives that will transform the health care system. As restructuring takes hold and the population's health improves over the coming decade, we will do our part to achieve your Administration's goal of decreasing by 1.5 percentage points the annual health care spending growth rate—saving $2 trillion or more. This represents more than a 20% reduction in the projected rate of growth. We believe this approach can be highly successful and can help the nation to achieve the reform goals we all share.

To respond to this challenge, we are developing consensus proposals to reduce the rate of increase in future health and insurance costs through changes made in all sectors of the health care system. We are committed to taking action in public-private partnership

to create a more stable and sustainable health care system that will achieve billions in savings through:

Implementing proposals in all sectors of the health care system, focusing on administrative simplification, standardization, and transparency that supports effective markets;

Reducing over-use and under-use of health care by aligning quality and efficiency incentives among providers across the continuum of care so that physicians, hospitals, and other health care providers are encouraged and enabled to work together towards the highest standards of quality and efficiency;

Encouraging coordinated care, both in the public and private sectors, and adherence to evidence-based best practices and therapies that reduce hospitalization, manage chronic disease more efficiently and effectively, and implement proven clinical prevention strategies; and,

Reducing the cost of doing business by addressing cost drivers in each sector and through common sense improvements in care delivery models, health information technology, workforce deployment and development, and regulatory reforms.

These and other reforms will make our health care system stronger and more sustainable. However, there are many important factors driving health care costs that are beyond the control of the delivery system alone. Billions in savings can be achieved through a large-scale national effort of health promotion and disease prevention to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease and poor health status, which leads to unnecessary sickness and higher health costs. Reform should include a specific focus on obesity prevention commensurate with the scale of the problem. These initiatives are crucial to transform health care in America and to achieve our goal of reducing the rate of growth in health costs.

We, as stakeholder representatives, are committed to doing our part to make reform a reality in order to make the system more affordable and effective for patients and purchasers. We stand ready to work with you to accomplish this goal.

Sincerely,

STEPHEN J. UBL,
President and CEO, Advanced Medical Technology Association.

KAREN IGNAGNI,
President and CEO, America's Health Insurance Plans.

RICH UMBDENSTOCK,
President and CEO, American Hospital Association.

J. JAMES ROHACK, MD,
President-elect American Medical Association.

BILLY TAUZIN,
President and CEO, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America.

DENNIS RIVERA,
Chair, SEIU Healthcare, Service Employees International Union.

Mr. LEVIN. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PAULSEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I have a couple of points right off the bat. My friend from Michigan claims that the tax hasn't necessarily impacted jobs, that there are only certain stories. I would just point out that, in his home State, there is a company named Stryker—now, it is a larger company—that laid off 1,000 employees back in November of 2011 to provide efficiencies and realign resources in advance of the new medical device excise tax.

As to a lot of data that was mentioned earlier, those figures that are talking about how well the industry is doing and as to the growth and the sales numbers are global data. These are companies that have global awareness and a global presence. Those are not U.S. jobs. We want those jobs in the United States. If we can repeal this tax, we can make sure that job growth is here in the U.S. instead of outside of the United States.

Mr. Speaker, this is not smart tax policy. It is hurting our innovators, and it is costing us jobs. This industry is an American success story. We all know the names of the larger companies because some of those were mentioned here in debate on the floor today, but there are thousands of these companies—the vast majority—because, again, 98 percent have fewer than 500 employees, and over 80 percent have fewer than 50 employees.

These are companies you have never heard of, but there is a doctor or an engineer or an entrepreneur who has started or who has come up with an idea to create a company in the backyard or in the garage to help improve lives or to save lives. That is what we are trying to protect here, Mr. Speaker.

These are not technicians in some white lab coats who are trying to improve widgets or to build a widget faster. These are, literally, small businesses that are on missions to save lives. If you think about it, what could be more entrepreneurially worthwhile than that?

We in Congress have a responsibility to give America's innovators the best shot, the best opportunity possible, by removing any obstructions to those inventions that are going to bring us all a better quality of life. We have the ability to help create a new age of American innovation, and we can help kick-start that process this week—today, tomorrow, with a vote—by repealing the destructive medical device tax.

It was mentioned as a part of the debate also that the industry came forward and that there was vast support for the Affordable Care Act, and they agreed to the tax. Mr. Speaker, there are no letters from the industry whatsoever that support their buy-in for a 2.3 percent excise tax—a tax on revenue, not on profit.

It is true that there were letters that were put out that said they were committed to healthcare reform and that they wanted to see that process move forward, but then they were very vocal when this excise tax idea was floated as a part of the new healthcare law and even after the law passed. It has been continuous, this awareness about their opposition in their knowing of the detrimental effects that it would have.

Mr. Speaker, this is also not about the Affordable Care Act because we have had many votes on that—to repeal it, to change it, to move in a different direction. This is about a tax that is going into the general fund, that is not going into some special account to fund ObamaCare. That is not what this tax is doing. This is going into the general fund.

That Affordable Care Act discussion will come up at another time with the Court case coming up in the near future. This is more of an opportunity to stand up with a bipartisan voice to declare our support for American manufacturing, for American jobs, and for protecting our patients, including our seniors.

I just want to remind my friends that the President has said that he has been open to any ideas that will improve accessibility, that will improve affordability, and the quality of health care. That is exactly what this bill does. It is about protecting access to those devices.

It is also important to point out the 281 cosponsors. The bipartisan support is deep, and it is broad. If you think back to the sustainable growth rate debate we had just a little over a month ago, that is important to bring up. Why? It is because there was broad, bipartisan support and a belief that the policy was harming patient care and innovation.

This is good policy now if we can repeal this tax. It is about doing the right thing for our constituents, which outweighs the concerns of the offsets.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support for this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All time for debate has expired.

Pursuant to House Resolution 319, the previous question is ordered on the bill, as amended.

The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote incurs objection under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

STRENGTHENING MEDICARE ADVANTAGE THROUGH INNOVATION AND TRANSPARENCY FOR SENIORS ACT OF 2015

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2570) to establish a demonstration program requiring the utilization of Value-Based Insurance Design to demonstrate that reducing the copayments or coinsurance charged to Medicare beneficiaries for selected high-value prescription medications and clinical services can increase their utilization and ultimately improve clinical outcomes and lower health care expenditures, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2570

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 ''Strengthening Medicare Advantage through Innovation and Transparency for Seniors Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. TREATMENT OF PATIENT ENCOUNTERS IN AMBULATORY SURGICAL CENTERS IN DETERMINING MEANINGFUL EHR USE.

Section 1848(o)(2) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–4(o)(2)) is amended by adding at the end of the following new subparagraph:

''(D) TREATMENT OF PATIENT ENCOUNTERS AT AMBULATORY SURGICAL CENTERS.—

''(i) IN GENERAL.—Subject to clause (ii), for a payment year after 2015 any patient encounter of an eligible professional occurring at an ambulatory surgical center (described in section 1833(i)(1)(A)) shall not be treated as a patient encounter in determining whether an eligible professional qualifies as a meaningful EHR user. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary may implement this clause by program instruction or otherwise.

''(ii) SUNSET.—Clause (i) shall no longer apply as of the first payment year that begins more than 3 years after the date the Secretary determines, through notice and comment rulemaking, that certified EHR technology is applicable to the ambulatory surgical center setting.''.

SEC. 3. VALUE-BASED INSURANCE DESIGN DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services (in this section referred to as the ''Secretary'') shall establish a 3-year demonstration program to test the use of value-based insurance design methodologies (as defined in subsection (c)(1)) under eligible Medicare Advantage plans offered by Medicare Advantage organizations under part C of title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–21 et seq.). The Secretary may extend the program to a duration of 4 or 5 years, as determined necessary by the Secretary in coordination with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Innovation.

(b) DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM DESIGN.—

(1) SELECTION OF MEDICARE ADVANTAGE SITES AND ELIGIBLE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS.—Not later than two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

(A) select at least two Medicare Advantage sites with respect to which to conduct the demonstration program under this section; and

(B) approve eligible Medicare Advantage plans to participate in such demonstration program.

In selecting Medicare Advantage sites under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall take into account area differences as well as the availability of health maintenance organization plans and preferred provider organization plans offered in such sites.

(2) START OF DEMONSTRATION.—The demonstration program shall begin not later than the third plan year beginning after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(3) ELIGIBLE MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS.—For purposes of this section, the term ''eligible Medicare Advantage plan'' means a Medicare Advantage plan under part C of title XVIII of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–21 et seq.) that meets the following requirements:

(A) The plan is an Medicare Advantage regional plan (as defined in paragraph (4) of section 1859(b) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–28(b))) or Medicare Advantage local plan (as defined in paragraph (5) of such section) offered in the Medicare Advantage region selected under paragraph (1)(A).

(B) The plan has—

(i)(I) a quality rating under section 1853(o) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–23(o)) of 4 stars or higher based on the most recent data available for such year, or (II) in the case of a specialized Medicare Advantage plan for special needs individuals, as defined in section 1859(b)(6)(A) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–28(b)(6)(A)), a quality rating under section 1853(o) of such Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–23(o)) equal to or higher than the national average for special needs plans (excluding Institutional-Special needs plans) based on the most recent data available for such year; and

(ii) at least 20 percent of the population to whom the plan is offered in a service area consists of subsidy eligible individuals (as defined in section 1860D–14(a)(3)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–114(a)(3)(A))).

(4) DISCLOSURE TO BENEFICIARIES.—The Secretary shall provide to each individual eligible to enroll under a Medicare Advantage plan approved to participate under the demonstration program during a plan year for which the plan is so selected—

(A) notification that the plan is participating in such demonstration program;

(B) background information on the demonstration program;

(C) clinical data derived from the studies resulting from the demonstration program; and

(D) notification of the potential benefits that the individual will receive, and of the other potential impacts that the individual will experience, on account of the participation of the plan in the demonstration program.

(c) VALUE-BASED INSURANCE DESIGN METHODOLOGIES.—

(1) DEFINITION.—For purposes of this section, the term ''value-based insurance design methodology'' means a methodology for identifying specific prescription medications, and clinical services that are payable under title XVIII of the Social Security Act, for which the reduction of copayments, coinsurance, or both, would improve the management of specific chronic clinical conditions because of the high value and effectiveness of such medications and services for such specific chronic clinical conditions, as approved by the Secretary.

(2) USE OF METHODOLOGIES TO REDUCE COPAYMENTS AND COINSURANCE.—A Medicare Advantage organization offering an eligible Medicare Advantage plan approved to participate under the demonstration program, for each plan year for which the plan is so selected and using value-based insurance design methodologies—

(A) shall identify each prescription medication and clinical service covered under such plan for which the plan proposes to reduce or eliminate the copayment or coinsurance, with respect to the management of specific chronic clinical conditions (as specified by the Secretary) of Medicare Advantage eligible individuals (as defined in section 1851(a)(3) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–21(a)(3))) enrolled under such plans, for such plan year;

(B) may, for such plan year, reduce or eliminate copayments, coinsurance, or both for such prescription medication and clinical services so identified with respect to the management of such conditions of such individuals—

(i) if such reduction or elimination is evidence-based and for the purpose of encouraging such individuals in such plan to use such prescription medications and clinical services (such as preventive care, primary care, specialty visits, diagnostic tests, procedures, and durable medical equipment) with respect to such conditions; and

(ii) for the purpose of encouraging such individuals in such plan to use health care providers that such organization has identified with respect to such plan year as being high value providers; and

(C) if a reduction or elimination is applied pursuant to subparagraph (B), with respect to such medication and clinical services, shall, for such plan year, count toward the deductible applicable to such individual under such plan amounts that would have been payable by the individual as copayment or coinsurance for such medication and services if the reduction or elimination had not been applied.

(3) PROHIBITION OF INCREASES OF COPAYMENTS AND COINSURANCE.—In no case may any Medicare Advantage plan participating in the demonstration program increase, for any plan year for which the plan is so participating, the amount of copayments or coinsurance for any item or service covered under such plan for purposes of discouraging the use of such item or service.

(d) REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date on which the demonstration program under this section begins under subsection (b)(2), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the status of the implementation of the demonstration program.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by paragraph (1) shall, with respect to eligible Medicare Advantage plans participating in the demonstration program for the first plan year of such program, include the following:

(A) A list of each medication and service identified pursuant to subsection (c)(2)(A) for such plan with respect to such plan year.

(B) For each such medication or service so identified, the amount of the copayment or coinsurance required under such plan with respect to such plan year for such medication or service and the amount of the reduction of such copayment or coinsurance from a previous plan year.

(C) For each provider identified pursuant to subsection (c)(2)(B)(ii) for such plan with respect to such plan year, a statement of the amount of the copayment or coinsurance required under such plan with respect to such plan year and the amount of the reduction of such copayment or coinsurance from the previous plan year.

(e) REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF UTILIZATION OF VALUE-BASED INSURANCE DESIGN METHODOLOGIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall enter into a contract or agreement with an independent entity to review and assess the implementation of the demonstration program under this section. The review and assessment shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the utilization of value-based insurance design methodologies

by Medicare Advantage plans participating under such program.

(B) An analysis of whether reducing or eliminating the copayment or coinsurance for each medication and clinical service identified pursuant to subsection (c)(2)(A) resulted in increased adherence to medication regimens, increased service utilization, improvement in quality metrics, better health outcomes, and enhanced beneficiary experience.

(C) An analysis of the extent to which costs to Medicare Advantage plans under part C of title XVIII of the Social Security Act participating in the demonstration program is less than costs to Medicare Advantage plans under such part that are not participating in the demonstration program.

(D) An analysis of whether reducing or eliminating the copayment or coinsurance for providers identified pursuant to subsection (c)(2)(B)(ii) resulted in improvement in quality metrics, better health outcomes, and enhanced beneficiary experience.

(E) An analysis, for each provider so identified, the extent to which costs to Medicare Advantage plans under part C of title XVIII of the Social Security Act participating in the demonstration program is less than costs to Medicare Advantage plans under such part that are not participating in the demonstration program.

(F) Such other matters as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(2) REPORT.—The contract or agreement entered into under paragraph (1) shall require such entity to submit to the Secretary a report on the review and assessment conducted by the entity under such paragraph in time for the inclusion of the results of such report in the report required by paragraph (3). Such report shall include a description, in clear language, of the manner in which the entity conducted the review and assessment.

(3) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 4 years after the date on which the demonstration program begins under subsection (b)(2), the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the review and assessment of the demonstration program conducted under this subsection. The report shall include the following:

(A) A description of the results of the review and assessment included in the report submitted pursuant to paragraph (2).

(B) Such recommendations as the Secretary considers appropriate for enhancing the utilization of the methodologies applied under the demonstration program to all Medicare Advantage plans under part C of title XVIII of the Social Security Act so as to reduce copayments and coinsurance under such plans paid by Medicare beneficiaries for high-value prescription medications and clinical services for which coverage is provided under such plans and to otherwise improve the quality of health care provided under such plans.

(4) OVERSIGHT REPORT.—Not later than three years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to Congress a report on the demonstration program that includes an assessment, with respect to individuals enrolled under Medicare Advantage plans approved to participate under the demonstration program, of the impact that the age, co-morbidities, and geographic regions of such individuals had upon the implementation of the demonstration program by the plans with respect to such individuals.

(f) SAVINGS.—In no case may any reduction in beneficiary copayments or coinsurance resulting from the implementation of the demonstration program under this section result in expenditures under parts A, B, and D of the title XVIII of the Social Security Act that are greater than such expenditures without application of this section.

(g) EXPANSION OF DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.—Taking into account the review and assessment conducted under subsection (e), the Secretary may, through notice and comment rulemaking, expand (including implementation on a nationwide basis) the duration and scope of the demonstration program under title XVIII of the Social Security Act, other than under the original medicare fee-for-service program under parts A and B of such title, to the extent determined appropriate by the Secretary, if the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) of subsection (c) of section 1115A of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1315a), as applied to the testing of a model under subsection (b) of such section, applied to the demonstration under this section.

(h) WAIVER AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may waive such provisions of titles XI and XVIII of the Social Security Act as may be necessary to carry out the demonstration program under this section.

(i) IMPLEMENTATION FUNDING.—For purposes of carrying out the demonstration program under this section, the Secretary shall provide for the transfer from the Federal Hospital Insurance Trust Fund under section 1817 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395i) and the Federal Supplementary Insurance Trust Fund under section 1841 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395t), including the Medicare Prescription Drug Account in such Trust Fund, in such proportion as determined appropriate by the Secretary, of such sums as may be necessary.

SEC. 4. TREATMENT OF INFUSION DRUGS FURNISHED THROUGH DURABLE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT.

Section 1842(o)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395u(o)(1)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (C), by inserting ''(and including a drug or biological described in subparagraph (D)(i) furnished on or after January 1, 2017)'' after ''2005''; and

(2) in subparagraph (D)—

(A) by striking ''infusion drugs'' and inserting ''infusion drugs or biologicals'' each place it appears; and

(B) in clause (i)—

(i) by striking ''2004'' and inserting ''2004, and before January 1, 2017''; and

(ii) by striking ''for such drug''.

SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF QUALITY INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TO MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Secretary of Health and Human Services has incorrectly interpreted subsection (n) of section 1853 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–23) as prohibiting the provision of any Medicare quality incentive payments under subsection (o) of such section with respect to Medicare Advantage plans that exceed the payment benchmark cap under such subsection (n) for the area served by such plans; and

(2) the Secretary should immediately apply quality incentive payments under such subsection (o) with respect to such Medicare Advantage plans without regard to the limits set forth in such subsection (n).

SEC. 6. MEDICARE IMPROVEMENT FUND.

Section 1898(b)(1) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395iii(b)(1)) is amended by striking ''during and after fiscal year 2020, $0'' and inserting ''after fiscal year 2020, $220,000,000''.

SEC. 7. NON-INCLUSION OF DME INFUSION DRUGS UNDER DME COMPETITIVE ACQUISITION PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1847(a)(2)(A) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–3(a)(2)(A)) is amended—

(1) by striking ''and excluding'' and inserting '', excluding''; and

(2) by inserting before the period at the end the following: '', and excluding drugs and biologicals described in section 1842(o)(1)(D)''.

(b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1842(o)(1)(D)(ii) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395u(o)(1)(D)(ii)) is amended by striking ''2007'' and inserting ''2007, and before the date of the enactment of the Strengthening Medicare Advantage through Innovation and Transparency for Seniors Act of 2015''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARDY). Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2570, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I stand in strong support of H.R. 2570, the Strengthening Medicare Advantage through Innovation and Transparency for Seniors Act.

This package is comprised of two policies, and I will let the sponsors, who have worked so hard, speak to them in more depth.

The Electronic Health Fairness Act of 2015, as marked up by the committee back in February, brings fairness to physicians who are practicing in the ASC setting by reducing meaningful use burdens for sites of service that were left out of the EHR technology requirements. This exemption only lasts until the ASCs are able to catch up, and then everybody will be on an equal footing regarding meaningful use requirements.

The bill then establishes a new demonstration program based on value-based insurance design. This proposal would give plans the ability to adjust benefits based on their enrollees' needs. The one-size-fits-all policies in Medicare Advantage create the need for different types of plans that wouldn't be necessary if regular Medicare Advantage plans could adjust their benefit structures to better serve our seniors.

Reducing copays or cost sharing for beneficiaries for the sake of better healthcare outcomes is right in line with the principles that I support as all seniors are different and should be served as such, so that all have an opportunity for positive health outcomes.

The bill also includes a policy that changes the way Medicare pays for drugs that doctors prescribe that are infused through durable medical equipment items. This change means that Medicare payments will be more market based.

The policy does take away the potential that these rates could change significantly in the future by exempting the drugs from DME competitive bidding. I am committed to ensuring that beneficiaries who need these drugs are able to continue to get them in their homes, and I will certainly monitor the impact.

I want to thank Ways and Means members Mrs. BLACK of Tennessee and Mr. BLUMENAUER of Oregon for their continued leadership in improving Medicare Advantage. Their very hard work will ensure that seniors, for years to come, will enjoy better healthcare choices and more options at that.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I join with the gentleman from Texas in supporting H.R. 2570. Representative DIANE BLACK and Representative EARL BLUMENAUER have worked hard on this issue.

This legislation will allow the Secretary of HHS to conduct a demonstration, giving managed care organizations the ability to offer plans with a variety of benefit structures that would lower the cost sharing for high-value service. We think it makes a lot of sense, and I concur.

I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1730

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK), a key member of the Committee on Ways and Means and a healthcare professional herself.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, as a nurse for over 40 years, I understand the challenge of helping Americans find affordable healthcare coverage, but the sad truth is, even for those who do have health coverage, high deductibles and out-of-pocket costs can leave too many Americans functionally uninsured.

When families are forced to choose between buying groceries and filling a prescription, their health is sidelined, and they risk facing even higher medical costs down the road. That is why I authored H.R. 2570, the Strengthening Medicare Advantage Through Innovation and Transparency for Seniors Act. Our bill directs CMS to set up a pilot project for what is known as Value-Based Insurance Design, or otherwise known as VBID.

Instead of the current one-size-fits-all approach to cost sharing, VBID embraces the idea that by lowering a patient's out-of-pocket costs for essential prescription drugs and services, customers will then be motivated to stick with their regimen and stay healthier. This will, in turn, decrease the overall long-term costs to our healthcare system and provide a higher quality of care for our patients.

My bill also helps our providers by offering ambulatory surgical centers relief from the electronic health records' meaningful use mandate. While this recordkeeping system may make sense in a hospital setting, it doesn't always work for a small, outpatient surgical facility. Providers who practice medicine in these settings should not be penalized as a result.

I thank Congressman BLUMENAUER and Congresswoman CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS for their strong commitment to VBID policy.

I urge a ''yes'' vote on H.R. 2570.

Mr. RANGEL. I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I concur with the gentleman from Texas. Members have worked hard in perfecting these bills, and I support H.R. 2570.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

This is a very good bill. It is a good improvement to Medicare Advantage, and it is really a case of Republicans and Democrats finding common ground and doing it in a way that helps seniors with their choices and really tailoring health care to them.

I strongly urge support for this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2570, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to the treatment of patient encounters in ambulatory surgical centers in determining meaningful EHR use, establish a demonstration program requiring the utilization of Value-Based Insurance Design to demonstrate that reducing the copayments or coinsurance charged to Medicare beneficiaries for selected high-value prescription medications and clinical services can increase their utilization and ultimately improve clinical outcomes and lower health care expenditures, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

INCREASING REGULATORY FAIRNESS ACT OF 2015

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2507) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish an annual rulemaking schedule for payment rates under Medicare Advantage, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2507

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 ''Increasing Regulatory Fairness Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHING AN ANNUAL RULEMAKING SCHEDULE FOR PAYMENT RATES UNDER MEDICARE ADVANTAGE.

Section 1853(b) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–23(b)) is amended—

(1) in the subsection heading, by inserting '', ANNUAL RULEMAKING SCHEDULE FOR PAYMENT RATES FOR 2017 AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS'' after ''RATES'';

(2) in paragraph (1)—

(A) in subparagraph (B)—

(i) in the subparagraph heading, by inserting ''BEFORE 2017'' after ''YEARS''; and

(ii) in the matter preceding clause (i), by inserting ''and before 2017'' after ''2005''; and

(B) by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

''(C) ANNUAL RULEMAKING SCHEDULE FOR PAYMENT RATES FOR 2017 AND SUBSEQUENT YEARS.—For 2017 and each subsequent year, before April 1 of the preceding year, the Secretary shall, by regulation and in accordance with the notice and public comment periods required under paragraph (2) for such a year, annually determine and announce the following:

''(i) The annual MA capitation rate for each MA payment area for such year.

''(ii) The risk and other factors to be used in adjusting such rates under subsection (a)(1)(A) for payments for months in such year.

''(iii) With respect to each MA region and each MA regional plan for which a bid was submitted under section 1854, the MA region-specific non-drug monthly benchmark amount for that region for the year involved.

''(iv) The major policy changes to the risk adjustment model, and the 5-star rating system established under subsection (o), that are determined to have an economic impact.''; and

(3) in paragraph (2)—

(A) by inserting ''(or, for 2017 and each subsequent year, at least 60 days)'' after ''45 days''; and

(B) by inserting ''(for 2017 and each subsequent year, of no less than 30 days)'' after ''opportunity''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from California (Mr. THOMPSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2507 currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in support of H.R. 2507, the Increasing Regulatory Fairness Act. This is an important piece of legislation. Today, the Medicare Advantage program serves more than 16 million seniors throughout the country. Enrollment has increased more than threefold over the past decade, and it is expected to nearly double in the next.

To ensure that seniors are able to continue receiving the kind of high-

quality care they receive under the program, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, known as CMS, is expected to pay about $156 billion to more than 3,600 Medicare Advantage plans just this year. That is nearly 30 percent of all Medicare spending, by the way.

Typically, every year CMS sends out what is called the rate notice to plans and Medicare Advantage companies that details the various payment rates and benefit changes the agency plans to make for the following year. This notice follows the standard rulemaking process of other payment systems. That is, a draft notice is published, the public has a certain amount of time to submit comments and questions, and then the agency publishes a final notice based on that feedback.

Right now, this current process takes about 45 days. Do you know how many days are currently allotted for public comment? The answer: A mere 15 days—15 days for thousands of plans and millions of stakeholders to submit comments on proposed changes to a program that amounts to one-third of all Medicare spending.

I could almost understand this if the rate notice were a short and concise document, easy to understand, and simple to implement, but of course it is not. The rate notice has grown from around 16 pages in 2006 to nearly 150 pages this year. That is over a ninefold increase. All the while, the time for the public comment period has remained the same. This means less and less time for plans and Congress to conduct the necessary review so we can provide CMS with the kind of feedback that would better help the agency assess the impact of their proposed changes. This is important because without accurate feedback, CMS could inadvertently move forward with a proposed change to the Medicare Advantage program that might negatively impact these seniors who depend on these plans for access to essential medical care.

The legislation before us is simple and straightforward. All it proposes to do is extend the public notice period from 45 days to 60 days, which would mean an extension of the comment period from 15 to 30 days. This is a commonsense, good government fix we can make that will give plans more time to understand the changes that Medicare proposes, offer constructive feedback, and make the Medicare Advantage program overall more responsive to senior needs.

I want to thank Mr. THOMPSON of California, who is a key member of our Committee on Ways and Means, and Mr. PITTS, the chairman of the Health Subcommittee on Energy and Commerce, for their thoughtful and very helpful work on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Mr. BRADY. It was a pleasure working with him on this piece of legislation.

I rise in support of H.R. 2507. Every year, as was pointed out, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services publishes its Medicare Advantage call letter and rate notice that outlines all the payment rates and the changes for nearly 2,000 plans that serve our most vulnerable population.

About 10 years ago the call letter and rate notice were less than 20 pages long. Since then, enrollment in Medicare Advantage has nearly tripled. Medicare Advantage policies have become more complex, and the call letter and the rate notice has grown nearly tenfold. They run about 150 to 200 pages.

The same time, the time between the publishing of the draft notice and the final notice, which is currently 45 days, has remained unchanged. During this 45-day period, in which there are only 15 days to comment on the proposed changes in the program, the plans, Members of this body and our staff are expected to review 150 pages of regulatory changes and understand the impacts of the proposed policy changes on those programs that provide essential medical care to over one-third of Medicare beneficiaries.

As we all know, and as we have all experienced every February and March, this does not lend itself to an efficient, effective, nor transparent process. Moreover, it deprives CMS of thoughtful, constructive feedback that is necessary to improve a program that our seniors love and rely on. This bill is a simple, straightforward measure that will improve the current process by expanding the current cycle from 45 to 60 days, which will give plans, stakeholders, Members, and our staff 30 full days—double the current time allowed—to analyze and provide feedback on the draft call letter and rate notices.

This is a no-cost, good government, bipartisan bill that will make the process more transparent, more fair, and more advantageous for the beneficiaries whom we serve. Therefore, I strongly urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this important piece of legislation.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER), a key new member of the House of Representatives who understands the importance of Medicare Advantage.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, one of the things I always strive for in my personal and professional life is always trying to do things better. As I tell my staff, there is no such thing as standing still. If you are not moving forward, then you are moving backward. We can all continue to get better at what we do.

That is the goal of H.R. 2507, the Increasing Regulatory Fairness Act of 2015. As part of an annual rulemaking process, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services update payments to the Medicare Advantage program. With the current structure of this annual process, health insurers are given little time to submit comments to the new payment rates or even determine whether the payment adjustment is beneficial to Medicare Advantage enrollees.

With H.R. 2507, health insurers will have additional time to analyze whether the payment adjustments for Medicare Advantage plans are justified and overall beneficial. I believe we must always try to get better every day. This includes our work as civil servants. H.R. 2507 will provide a better environment for CMS and health insurers to create the best payment rate agreement regarding Medicare Advantage plans. By providing more time for comments and the finalizing of rates, Medicare Advantage enrollees will receive a better calculated benefit for their plans.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I concur with the statements previously made by my colleagues and thank both Mr. BRADY and Mr. PITTS for working with me on this legislation. As I have stated before, this is a simple, no-cost bill that will improve the current process and the Medicare Advantage program for our seniors. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2507.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I join with Congressman THOMPSON. I appreciate so much his work in this area in a bipartisan way on a bill that not only bridges both parties but a number of committees in this Congress and really just provides a commonsense way to make sure the public, Congress, and others can comment, and to make sure these rules really benefit the seniors who are receiving Medicare Advantage. I urge strong support for this bill.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today expands an annual regulatory schedule for Medicare Advantage (MA) payment rates so that stakeholders have the necessary time to review and provide feedback to ensure seniors continue to have access to quality, low-cost plans of their choosing.

H.R. 2507, the Increasing Regulatory Fairness Act of 2015, was introduced by my colleague, Representative KEVIN BRADY (TX), Chairman of the Health Subcommittee of Ways and Means, and I cosponsored along with MIKE THOMPSON (CA), PETE SESSIONS (TX), and KYRSTEN SINEMA (AZ). This bipartisan, commonsense legislation will facilitate greater understanding and collaboration between industry stakeholders and regulators, and will offer a greater opportunity for public input in the establishment of policies affecting the MA and Part D plans.

Since 2006, when the Medicare Modernization Act's official implementation, and the Medicare Advantage/Part D call letter and rate

notice were around 16 pages long, a two-week comment period may have been adequate. Today, however, that document has grown to nearly 150 pages—and the comment period—still just 15 days—is simply not enough time for plans that now serve one-third of the Medicare population to analyze and gather substantive comments on increasingly complex policy changes. This bill would increase that comment period to 30 days, a strong step towards regulatory fairness for the successful Medicare Advantage/Part D programs.

Expanding this comment period allows for a fair amount of time in which both stakeholders, as well as Members of Congress and Committees, have sufficient time to understand the policy implications and formulate comments, if they so choose. More time equals better, more thoughtful policies.

Mr. Speaker, by approving this legislation, we will be giving seniors, insurance plan providers and other interested stakeholders adequate time to comprehend and provide comments on proposed changes to Medicare Advantage plans.

This is an important and necessary legislative change and I urge all of my colleagues to support H.R. 2507.

Mr. ENGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to, specifically, the provision of H.R. 2570 that pays for the Value Based Insurance Design for Better Care Act. If this bill passes with its current pay-for in place, it will do so at the detriment of Americans who rely on home infusion therapies.

''Infusion therapy'' refers to the administration of medication directly into the bloodstream through a needle or catheter. A patient will undergo infusion therapy when his or her disease or infection cannot be adequately treated by oral medications. Infusion therapy is used to treat cancers, congestive heart failure, immune deficiencies, multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, gastrointestinal diseases, and other conditions.

The administration of infusion therapies is significantly more involved than that of oral medications. Infusion therapy entails specialized equipment, supplies, and professional services, including sterile drug compounding, care coordination, and patient education and monitoring.

Currently, Medicare fully covers infusion therapy when it is administered in a hospital, doctor's office or nursing home. However, Medicare's coverage of infusion therapy in the home is fractured and does not adequately cover the services needed to provide infusions in the home.

Not only does this coverage gap force patients into expensive institutional settings, but it also puts patients at risk of developing additional infections in these environments. What's more, this coverage gap prevents patients from receiving the treatment they need in the most comfortable setting possible: their homes.

Although Medicare does not presently pay for the services that are essential for a patient to receive infusion therapies at home, providers have been able to offer a limited set of home infusion drugs to Medicare beneficiaries via Medicare Part B DME coverage, as the reimbursement they receive for home infusion drugs is substantial enough to cover the services necessary to administer those drugs.

If H.R. 2570 passes in its current form, this will no longer be the case.

The demonstration program that this legislation creates is financed by modifying the reimbursement structure for infusion drugs under the Medicare Part B durable medical equipment benefit. This change will perpetuate the coverage gap that prevents Medicare from covering the indispensable service component of home infusion therapy.

In addition, the drug reimbursement that providers receive will no longer be significant enough to capture home infusion services as it does currently. As a result, it will become exceedingly difficult for providers to offer Medicare beneficiaries infusion therapy in their homes.

I want to emphasize that I do not oppose changing the manner in which home infusion drugs are paid for. On the contrary, I have introduced H.R. 605, the Medicare Home Infusion Site of Care Act, with Congressman PAT TIBERI. Our bill, which has garnered cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, would explicitly cover the services that must be provided to administer infusion drugs at home.

I ask that my colleagues think about the patients who depend on home infusion therapies. If we allow H.R. 2570 to pass in its current form, we simultaneously deny patients the ability to receive life-saving therapies in their homes, forcing them into institutional settings that will come at a cost to the Medicare program and, most importantly, to patients' quality of life.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2507, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1745

MEDICARE ADVANTAGE COVERAGE TRANSPARENCY ACT OF 2015

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2505) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require the annual reporting of data on enrollment in Medicare Advantage plans, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2505

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 ''Medicare Advantage Coverage Transparency Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. REQUIREMENT FOR ENROLLMENT DATA REPORTING FOR MEDICARE.

Section 1874 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395kk) is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

''(g) REQUIREMENT FOR ENROLLMENT DATA REPORTING.—

''(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than May 1 of each year (beginning with 2016), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on Ways and Means and Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the Senate a report on enrollment data (and, in the case of part A, on data on individuals receiving benefits under such part) for the plan year or, in the case of part A and part B, for the fiscal year or year (as applicable) ending before January 1 of such plan year, fiscal year, or year. Such enrollment data shall be presented—

''(A) by zip code, congressional district, and State;

''(B) in a manner that provides for such data based on enrollment (including receipt of benefits other than through enrollment) under part A, enrollment under part B, enrollment under an MA plan under part C, and enrollment under part D; and

''(C) in the case of enrollment data described in subparagraph (B) relating to MA plans, presented in a manner that provides for such data for each MA–PD plan and for each MA plan that is not an MA–PD plan.

''(2) DELAY OF DEADLINE.—If the Secretary is unable to submit a report under paragraph (1) by May 1 of a year for data of the plan year, fiscal year, or year (as applicable) ending before January 1 of such year, the Secretary shall, not later than April 30 of such year, notify the committees described in such paragraph of—

''(A) such inability, including an explanation for such inability; and

''(B) the date by which the Secretary will provide such report, which shall be not later than June 1 of such year.''.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2505 currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, after my remarks, I will include in the RECORD an exchange of letters between the committees of jurisdiction.

I stand in strong support of H.R. 2505, the Medicare Advantage Coverage Transparency Act of 2015. This is commonsense legislation. It is truly about transparency in healthcare data.

Medicare Advantage currently makes up close to one-third of the Medicare program's enrollees. The Congressional Budget Office projects that Medicare enrollment numbers will swell over the next decade and that Medicare Advantage will grow to over 40 percent of Medicare.

It will be beneficial for Members of Congress to fully understand what the makeup of health enrollment is in their district, whether it is Medicare Advantage; part D, the prescription drug plan; or fee-for-service. Members and their staff will be able to serve their constituents better and more

fully with access to this data. As we continue to work on, process, and pass legislation to improve the Medicare program, getting this enrollment snapshot will provide very necessary transparency and openness.

I want to thank the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), Mr. KIND, and Mr. BILIRAKIS for their hard work in getting this legislation through the committee and to the House floor.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC, June 12, 2015.

Hon. PAUL RYAN,
Chairman, Committee on Ways and Means, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN RYAN: I write in regard to H.R. 2505, Medicare Advantage Coverage Transparency Act of 2015, which was ordered reported by the Committee on Ways and Means on June 2, 2015. As you are aware, the bill also was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce. I wanted to notify you that the Committee on Energy and Commerce will forgo action on H.R. 2505 so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration.

This is done with the understanding that the Committee on Energy and Commerce's jurisdictional interests over this and similar legislation are in no way diminished or altered. In addition, the Committee reserves the right to seek conferees on H.R. 2505 and requests your support when such a request is made.

I would appreciate your response confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 2505 and ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD during consideration of the bill on the House floor.

Sincerely,

FRED UPTON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS,
Washington, DC, June 9, 2015.

Hon. FRED UPTON,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you for your letter regarding the Committee's jurisdictional interest in H.R. 2505, the Medicare Advantage Coverage Transparency Act of 2015, and your willingness to forego consideration by your committee.

I agree that the Committee on Energy and Commerce has a valid jurisdictional interest in certain provisions of the bill and that the Committee's jurisdiction will not be adversely affected by your decision to forego consideration. As you have requested, I will support your request for an appropriate appointment of outside conferees from your committee in the event of a House-Senate conference on this or similar legislation should such a conference be convened.

Finally, I will include a copy of your letter and this response in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of H.R. 2505. Thank you again for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

PAUL RYAN,
Chairman.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I concur with the gentleman from Texas. My dear friend MIKE KELLY and Congressman RON KIND have worked together in trying to get more information for the Congress from our congressional districts to see exactly what the enrollments are in Medicare. It makes us better legislators so we can improve the bill.

I think these bills are worthy of the support of the House of Representatives, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am proud to yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. KELLY), a new member of the Ways and Means Committee and a businessperson who understands the openness and transparency required to improve Medicare.

Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, Thomas Jefferson once opined:

> The cornerstone of democracy rests on the foundation of an educated electorate. Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.

Jefferson's vision for our democracy was premised on the notion that individuals are intelligent enough to determine the best choices for their lives, their families, and their communities, and not some monolithic, paternalistic government.

A prerequisite to being well-informed, however, is to ensure that the American people have adequate information about how Federal policies and decisions made in Washington will or are impacting their lives. That is why transparency is so vital to our system of government: it provides the necessary information to educate or our on which our democracy depends.

Laws and their impacts should not be shrouded in secrecy. Congress and the administration need to be fostering a culture of openness and transparency when legislating and making decisions here in Washington. That is what this legislation is all about: providing more transparency to the American people about their health care, specifically Medicare Advantage coverage.

H.R. 2505, the Medicare Advantage Coverage Transparency Act, is a bill to do just that. With passage of H.R. 2505, CMS will be required to provide additional information on Medicare Advantage enrollment based on ZIP Code, congressional district, and State.

This data will be available for both Medicare Advantage Prescription Drug Plans as well as regular Medicare Advantage. Enrollment data under part A, part B, enrollment under an MA plan under part C, and enrollment under part D would also be covered.

The purpose of this additional data is to provide greater information to the public, policymakers, and the healthcare community so that they have the benefit of more and better information when making decisions.

CMS should provide a more transparent accounting of Medicare enrollment data to Congress, other government offices, and the American people so committees of jurisdiction can better understand how Medicare is serving the healthcare needs of the Nation as well as individual congressional districts.

H.R. 2505 would require an annual report on Medicare enrollment data so that Members of Congress have more accurate information regarding the constituents' use of Medicare programs. Such transparency will allow Americans and Members of Congress to better know and understand the scope of Medicare enrollment on a local level as well as the specific population affected.

In 2014, the majority of the 54 million people on Medicare are in the traditional Medicare program, with 30 percent enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan. Since 2004, the number of beneficiaries enrolled in private plans has almost tripled—from 5.3 million to 15.7 million in 2014.

In Pennsylvania, 18 percent of the total population in the Commonwealth is enrolled in some form of Medicare. Of the 18 percent, 39 percent of those Medicare beneficiaries are enrolled in Medicare Advantage plans. That means that 7 percent of Pennsylvanians are enrolled in the Medicare Advantage plan.

This legislation will give me and my constituents more information about how changes to Medicare Advantage plans in Washington will impact my constituents at home in the Third Congressional District of Pennsylvania and every Member and their constituents around this great country.

I want to thank Chairman RYAN for bringing up this bill. I also want to thank Leader MCCARTHY for bringing this bill to the floor.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), one of the key authors of the legislation and one of the leaders of health care on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of a bill I am proud to sponsor with my friends—Representative KELLY, who is the lead sponsor, and Representative KIND—H.R. 2505, the Medicare Advantage Coverage Transparency Act.

Fifteen million Americans choose Medicare Advantage. By all accounts, Medicare Advantage has been successful for its enrollees, including those I represent. Similarly, approximately 37 million seniors chose part D as of 2014. Over 1,000 Medicare part D plans are offered nationwide, and the program has continued to grow in popularity and be well under its initial budget projections. I think Medicare part D is one of the greatest programs in the history of the Congress.

The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services' Office of Legislation used to issue reports on the Medicare Advantage and part D enrollment data for each congressional district; however, in 2012, they stopped issuing these

reports. Why? It is now 2015, and they have still not provided this data.

Information is valuable to legislators and health researchers. The more information we have about how a program is working, the better decisions we can make. Currently, enrollment data for Medicare Advantage and part D come from third-party sources; however, it is time for CMS to continue to do its job and provide this information.

As I said earlier, by all accounts from third parties, both Medicare Advantage and part D are successful programs and, of course, as is traditional Medicare. These programs are used by so many seniors, Mr. Speaker. They are keeping our seniors healthier and saving them money.

This is a good government bill, and I am hopeful for a strong, bipartisan vote.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I concur with the objectives of this bill. I advocate a ''yes'' vote, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I appreciate the leadership of Mr. KELLY, Mr. BILIRAKIS, and Mr. KIND from Wisconsin, who together, Republicans and Democrats, crossed committees and recognized the need for openness.

Knowledge is power. Knowledge of Medicare Advantage and who is receiving it in whose district we think is very important to strengthening Medicare as an entire program going forward.

I urge support for this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2505, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2146, DEFENDING PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ACT

Mr. SESSIONS (during consideration of H.R. 2505) from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 114–167) on the resolution (H. Res. 321) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2146) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, and air traffic controllers to make penalty-free withdrawals from governmental plans after age 50, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

SENIORS' HEALTH CARE PLAN PROTECTION ACT OF 2015

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2582) to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the risk adjustment under the Medicare Advantage program, to delay the authority to terminate Medicare Advantage contracts for MA plans failing to achieve minimum quality ratings, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2582

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 ''Seniors' Health Care Plan Protection Act of 2015''.

SEC. 2. DELAY IN AUTHORITY TO TERMINATE CONTRACTS FOR MEDICARE ADVANTAGE PLANS FAILING TO ACHIEVE MINIMUM QUALITY RATINGS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Consistent with the studies provided under the IMPACT Act of 2014 (Public Law 113–185), it is the intent of Congress—

(1) to continue to study and request input on the effects of socioeconomic status and dual-eligible populations on the Medicare Advantage STARS rating system before reforming such system with the input of stakeholders; and

(2) pending the results of such studies and input, to provide for a temporary delay in authority of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to terminate Medicare Advantage plan contracts solely on the basis of performance of plans under the STARS rating system.

(b) DELAY IN MA CONTRACT TERMINATION AUTHORITY FOR PLANS FAILING TO ACHIEVE MINIMUM QUALITY RATINGS.—Section 1857(h) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–27(h)) is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

''(3) DELAY IN CONTRACT TERMINATION AUTHORITY FOR PLANS FAILING TO ACHIEVE MINIMUM QUALITY RATING.—The Secretary may not terminate a contract under this section with respect to the offering of an MA plan by a Medicare Advantage organization solely because the MA plan has failed to achieve a minimum quality rating under the 5-star rating system established under section 1853(o) during the period beginning on the date of the enactment of this paragraph and through the end of plan year 2018.''.

SEC. 3. IMPROVEMENTS TO MA RISK ADJUSTMENT SYSTEM.

Section 1853(a)(1)(C) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–23(a)(1)(C)) is amended by adding at the end the following new clauses:

''(iv) EVALUATION AND SUBSEQUENT REVISION OF THE RISK ADJUSTMENT SYSTEM TO ACCOUNT FOR CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND OTHER FACTORS FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING THE RISK ADJUSTMENT SYSTEM MORE ACCURATE, TRANSPARENT, AND REGULARLY UPDATED.—

''(I) REVISION BASED ON NUMBER OF CHRONIC CONDITIONS.—The Secretary shall revise for 2017 and periodically thereafter, the risk adjustment system under this subparagraph so that a risk score under such system, with respect to an individual, takes into account the number of chronic conditions with which the individual has been diagnosed.

''(II) EVALUATION OF DIFFERENT RISK ADJUSTMENT MODELS.—The Secretary shall evaluate the impact of including two years of data to compare the models used to determine risk scores for 2013 and 2014 under such system.

''(III) EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS ON CHRONIC KIDNEY DISEASE (CKD) CODES.—The Secretary shall evaluate the impact of removing the diagnosis codes related to chronic kidney disease in the 2014 risk adjustment model and conduct an analysis of best practices of MA plans to slow disease progression related to chronic kidney disease.

''(IV) EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON USE OF ENCOUNTER DATA.—The Secretary shall evaluate the impact of including 10 percent of encounter data in computing payment for 2016 and the readiness of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to incorporate encounter data in risk scores. In conducting such evaluation, the Secretary shall use data collected as encounter data on or after January 1, 2012, shall analyze such data for accuracy and completeness and issue recommendations for improving such accuracy and completeness, and shall not increase the percentage of such encounter data used unless the Secretary releases the data publicly, indicates how such data will be weighted in computing the risk scores, and ensures that the data reflects the degree and cost of care coordination under MA plans.

''(V) CONDUCT OF EVALUATIONS.—Evaluations and analyses under subclause (II) through (IV) shall include an actuarial opinion from the Chief Actuary of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services about the reasonableness of the methods, assumptions, and conclusions of such evaluations and analyses. The Secretary shall consult with the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission and accept and consider comments of stakeholders, such as managed care organizations and beneficiary groups, on such evaluation and analyses. The Secretary shall complete such evaluations and analyses in a manner that permits the results to be applied for plan years beginning with the second plan year that begins after the date of the enactment of this clause.

''(VI) IMPLEMENTATION OF REVISIONS BASED ON EVALUATIONS.—If the Secretary determines, based on such an evaluation or analysis, that revisions to the risk adjustment system to address the matters described in any of subclauses (II) through (IV) would make the risk adjustment system under this subparagraph better reflect and appropriately weight for the population that is served by the plan, the Secretary shall, beginning with 2017, and periodically thereafter, make such revisions.

''(VII) PERIODIC REPORTING TO CONGRESS.—With respect to plan years beginning with 2017 and every third year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the most recent revisions (if any) made under this clause, including the evaluations conducted under subclauses (II) through (IV).

''(v) NO CHANGES TO ADJUSTMENT FACTORS THAT PREVENT ACTIVITIES CONSISTENT WITH NATIONAL HEALTH POLICY GOALS.—In making any changes to the adjustment factors, including adjustment for health status under paragraph (3), the Secretary shall ensure that the changes do not prevent Medicare Advantage organizations from performing or undertaking activities that are consistent with national health policy goals, including activities to promote early detection and better care coordination, the use of health risk assessments, care plans, and programs to slow the progression of chronic diseases.

''(vi) OPPORTUNITY FOR REVIEW AND PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING CHANGES TO ADJUSTMENT FACTORS.—For changes to adjustment factors effective for 2017 and subsequent years, in addition to providing notice of such changes in the announcement under subsection (b)(2), the Secretary shall provide an opportunity for review of proposed changes of not less than 60 days and a public comment period of

not less than 30 days before implementing such changes.''.

SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS RELATING TO MEDICARE ADVANTAGE STAR RATING SYSTEM.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services has inadvertently created a star rating system under section 1853(o)(4) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395w–23(o)(4)) for Medicare Advantage plans that lacks proper accounting for the socioeconomic status of enrollees in such plans and the extent to which such plans serve individuals who are also eligible for medical assistance under title XIX of such Act; and

(2) Congress will work with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and stakeholders, including beneficiary groups and managed care organizations, to ensure that such rating system properly accounts for the socioeconomic status of enrollees in such plans and the extent to which such plans serve such individuals described in paragraph (1).

SEC. 5. SENSE OF CONGRESS RELATING TO MEDICARE ADVANTAGE RISK ADJUSTMENT.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Secretary of Health and Human Services should periodically monitor and improve the Medicare Advantage risk adjustment model to ensure that it accurately accounts for beneficiary risk, including for those individuals with complex chronic comorbid conditions;

(2) the Secretary should closely examine the current Medicare Advantage risk adjustment methodology to ensure that plans enrolling beneficiaries with the greatest health care needs receive adequate reimbursement to deliver high-quality care and other services to help beneficiaries avoid costly complications and further progression of chronic conditions and to the extent data indicate this to be the case, the Secretary should make necessary adjustment to the risk adjustment methodology; and

(3) the Secretary should reconsider the implementation of changes in the Medicare Advantage risk adjustment methodology finalized for 2016 and to use to the extent appropriate the methodology finalized in 2015 for one additional year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) and the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2582, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I stand in strong support of H.R. 2582, the Securing Seniors' Health Care Act of 2015.

When Medicare began implementing the STARS ratings measurement system, they did so using the typical Washington approach of one size fits all. The STARS program uses the same measures to evaluate plans with different benefit designs and different coverage mixes. Congress needs to work with stakeholders and Medicare to reform this system to make it work for all.

CMS should continue to study issues like the effect that socioeconomic conditions have on health care and the effect that coverage of duals has on various rating systems and thus properly serve their populations.

This legislation is common sense. Let's not restrict seniors from plans they have chosen and like just because they aren't performing well under CMS's poorly managed STARS standards.

Until we truly understand the effects of duals and low-income beneficiaries on the plan's STARS ratings, we shouldn't be terminating them. A 3-year delay will do just that: give CMS and Congress the time to address the STARS rating system and allow all seniors access to the plans they choose and that they like.

CMS has made some poor policy decisions in recent years through the regulatory process in Medicare Advantage and part D of the prescription drug plan, and this years's call letter and rate notice is no exception.

The changes to the risk adjustment system include masking coding intensity adjustments, while in press releases CMS touts not exceeding statutory levels of coding intensity adjustments.

In plain English, Medicare Advantage plans are managed care plans, and the changes in the recent regulations handcuff plans from properly managing some of our frailest seniors suffering from, for example, blood and kidney diseases.

This bill requires that CMS review the changes made in their most recent regulatory cycle and reverse those that negatively affect risk adjustments.

□ 1800

This bill has CMS reviewing the use of encounter date as well. CMS has told Congress, the Government Accountability Office, and MedPAC that the data is not ready yet to show us; yet it is being used for risk adjustment in Medicare Advantage? That doesn't make sense. We need to see a stronger commitment by CMS to be transparent about their policies and their data in Medicare Advantage.

The changes made this year to MA just don't make sense, and I look forward to working with all my colleagues to reverse some of these changes and make continued improvements to the system as a whole.

I want to thank Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. RANGEL, Mrs. BLACKBURN of Tennessee, Mr. GUTHRIE, and Mr. LOEBSACK for their hard work in getting this policy moving forward.

I want to, again, reiterate my thanks to Mrs. BLACK and Mr. BLUMENAUER on our committee for their leadership regarding these issues.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I want to thank the gentleman from Texas for bringing up this bill and also my colleague, Mr. BUCHANAN of Florida.

There was some comment that CMS was making some mistakes that have not been transparent. It has been my understanding that they have had problems wrestling with this so-called star system themselves and have not enforced the law, that we are now saying that they will not enforce the law until after they study the complexities and report back to the Congress in an additional 3 years.

In short, they have this star system and, as most people should recognize, that when you are dealing with old, fragile, sick, poor people, there are more complexities to performance than in ordinary programs that compete with Medicare Advantage.

We have this population, and they have penalized some of the providers because they have had just more problems to deal with than just medical problems, and they haven't been able to resolve them. They haven't enforced this provision.

Under this bill, which Mr. BUCHANAN and the other sponsors have agreed, it tells the CMS to go back and to find out a way that you can treat these recipients of health care in a fairer way. It also tells CMS to take into consideration that the problems that Medicare Advantage has still to come are far more severe and far more complex than in other areas.

This is particularly true with our citizens in Puerto Rico that don't really have an option to anything except Medicare Advantage. Of course, as we all know, the economic conditions and the poverty that prevails there is extreme.

I don't have any other requests for time, but I do want to thank my colleagues on the other side of the aisle for assisting to make certain that the Affordable Care program and other programs like it become more effective.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACKBURN), one of the thought leaders on health care on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I do thank the gentleman from Texas for his leadership and for, really, his commitment to working these issues through. As you have heard him say, dealing with Medicare Advantage issues are important, and it is important that we get them right.

That is why I appreciate the fact that we come to the floor with these suspension bills to revisit these issues and say: Look, there are some things that just are not working as they were intended.

As you have heard, there has been bipartisan agreement, that the stars rating program needs a revisit, and CMS even agrees that the rules are not working.

As the gentleman from New York said, this has a specific effect on the frail, the low-income, those beneficiaries that are the most frail. It also affects the dual eligibles, those that are both Medicare and Medicaid eligible.

It is appropriate that we look at this rating program, that we back up and pause and consider the negative impact that some of these arbitrary ratings have on these programs when it may be the only program that is available that will meet these needs.

This is common sense. It is the right thing to do. I thank my colleagues that they are willing to say: CMS, it is not working; you have to come to the table with us.

This delay, this pause, and a review of the system is appropriate.

I thank everyone involved for their leadership, and I do express thanks to Mr. BUCHANAN and his team for the way they have worked with us and the Energy and Commerce Committee on the issue.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from Tennessee (Mrs. BLACK), again, one of our key healthcare leaders on the Ways and Means Committee who is critical in the advancement of this legislation.

Mrs. BLACK. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2582, the Seniors' Health Care Plan Protection Act.

I am pleased that this legislation includes the language of my bill, the Securing Care for Seniors Act; and I thank Congressman BUCHANAN for his efforts to bring this important policy solution to the floor of the House today.

Across the country, 16 million seniors enjoy the flexibility of the Medicare Advantage plan. When we make changes to this program, seniors are the ones impacted. It just makes sense that they would have a place at the table when these changes are discussed.

Recently, CMS revised the Medicare Advantage risk adjustment model under the shroud of secrecy with little input from Congress and, most importantly, from Medicare beneficiaries.

Members of both parties have concerns that these modifications could discourage plans to detect and care for the chronic conditions in their early stages. That is why, today, we are calling for a timeout on CMS' changes.

We are instructing the agency to reevaluate their risk adjustment model and to move forward with metrics that are accurate, evidence-based, and are transparent. This will ensure that seniors pay a fair cost for their healthcare plans, and that the MA program remains sustainable in the long term.

I urge a ''yes'' vote on H.R. 2582.

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just like to say that this has been one of the most exciting recent legislative experiences I have had, where we are dealing with Americans who are not Republican and Democrat, but they are sick people; and, in this particular case, they are sick, and they are old, and they are fragile, and the government is not serving them.

Both sides of the aisle have agreed that the administration has to do something to make certain that they study how we can be fair to the providers and, at the same time, provide the service to those people that need it. They, themselves, agree that, for 3 years, they have not been able to find an answer.

What we have said jointly is you find that answer in 3 years. Until such time, don't you think about terminating these programs. It is with this cooperation that we both have a common sense of our obligation as legislators, and it has been really a legislative pleasure working with my colleagues on these suspensions this evening.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I agree with the gentleman from New York that this is a bill that brings, really, a team of Republicans and Democrats together with their best ideas on how we can help improve Medicare for our seniors.

This bill is titled ''Securing Seniors' Health Care Act.'' It is aptly titled.

I am hopeful that today is just one example of more common ground between Republicans and Democrats, not just on the Ways and Means Committee, but through the House as well. I urge strong support for passage of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BRADY) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2582, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: ''A bill To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to delay the authority to terminate Medicare Advantage contracts for MA plans failing to achieve minimum quality ratings, to make improvements to the Medicare Adjustment risk adjustment system, and for other purposes.''.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

HOUR OF MEETING ON TOMORROW

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

PASS THE PROTECT MEDICAL INNOVATION ACT

(Mr. EMMER of Minnesota asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EMMER of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge this body to pass the Protect Medical Innovation Act, which will repeal the 2.3 percent medical device excise tax.

This harmful tax, mandated by ObamaCare, stifles innovation, sends jobs abroad, hurts consumers, and places a heavy burden on small businesses in my State and across the country.

More than 35,000 Minnesotans are employed in the medical device industry, and thousands of Minnesotans depend on these state-of-the-art devices to enhance or even save their lives.

This bill has been stalled for long enough. It is imperative that Congress pass this legislation now to encourage the development of these innovative technologies, rather than enact laws that discourage their creation and accessibility.

I am grateful for the tremendous work by my Minnesota colleague, ERIK PAULSEN. Representative PAULSEN has done much to ensure the medical device industry in Minnesota continues to thrive for many years to come with this legislation.

Again, I ask my colleagues to support the Protect Medical Innovation Act and pass it immediately.

REPEAL THE MEDICAL DEVICE TAX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the medical device tax that is found within the President's Affordable Care Act sends American jobs overseas, hurts American jobs here in the United States, raises healthcare costs for all Americans, and stifles innovation.

While I have supported the House's action to repeal this onerous tax and support innovation, it is important that I highlight an important issue to my constituents back home in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, because it is tied into this whole debate. That issue is medical device safety, and it is patient safety.

Many who serve in this Chamber may have seen the headlines over the past several months regarding a medical device known as a power morcellator and, specifically, the devastating damage it has caused to women's health by spreading unsuspected cancer throughout their body.

These devices are gynecological tools used to remove uterine fibroids and have been on the market for over two decades, but only recently, we have learned that the use of these devices increases the risk of spreading unsuspected cancers in women to as high as 1 in 350 cases.

That finding prompted the FDA to issue a black box warning on the devices last fall. Several major insurance companies have stopped covering the procedure, and some medical device manufacturers have pulled them from the shelves—all appropriate steps to be taken when it becomes clear that a previously approved device has potential to harm instead of help.

As a lawmaker, I must ask: How is it that we have gotten to this point? What are the FDA and the medical device industry's protocols?

That is why, on February 19 of this year, I sent a letter to the FDA asking pointed questions about the current streamlined regulatory process that the power morcellator went through, known as 510(k).

I asked about FDA's reporting process for dangerous devices and their postmarket surveillance techniques. I asked for detailed explanations on why the power morcellator remains on the market, despite the high risks that have now been revealed.

To date, nearly 4 months from the date that this letter was hand-delivered to the FDA, I have not received a written reply. I will insert my letter to the FDA into the RECORD.

These are important questions, the answers to which will inform any next steps that we need to take.

□ 1815

My constituents want answers. I want answers. And I think this Chamber needs answers so that we can properly begin to address these gaps in our device safety regulations that allowed the morcellator to slip through the cracks for so long.

Ensuring the safety of our constituents is paramount to each Member of this body, and that is what I seek when it comes to this issue. I am hoping the FDA will partner with me. I am hoping that every Member of this body will partner with me.

Industry and government need to work together to develop a robust, modernized postmarket device surveillance program that allows us to catch issues like the power morcellator faster and encourages responsive reporting protocols so if a doctor finds an issue with a device, the manufacturer and the FDA are promptly notified and provided accurate data to take the next appropriate steps.

But, unfortunately, it is becoming clear that the reporting system for faulty and deadly devices is broken. A recent Wall Street Journal story highlighted how, in 2006, a doctor from central Pennsylvania started to raise the alarm and asked questions about power morcellators. He was seeing an alarming number of cancerous tissues arriving at his lab that were coming in from morcellation surgeries. He estimated the occurrence at somewhere in the range of 1 in 300.

It took the FDA and industry nearly a decade to come to that same conclusion. Within that decade, an unknown number of women were harmed and deceased because their cancers went from localized and treatable to stage four and metastasized within days of being spread by the blades of this device.

What happened with the power morcellator should never be allowed to happen again. We need to ensure that risks are adequately assessed before devices hit the market. We need to monitor the devices once they are on the market. And we need to have efficient and effective reporting procedures in place. And those within industry and the FDA need to be held accountable if it is found that they are turning a blind eye to these issues.

I hope that my colleagues will join me in ensuring that patients and safety always come first.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, February 19, 2015.

Commissioner MARGARET A. HAMBURG,
U.S. Food and Drug Administration,
Silver Spring, MD.

DEAR COMMISSIONER HAMBURG, I write to seek clarification of your agency's regulation of medical devices. I am specifically looking to obtain answers about the 510(k) process, and hoping to gather information about whether the FDA has plans to alter this process in light of recommendations from the Institute of Medicine (IOM)

It is my understanding that the 510(k) clearance process for medical devices was established through the Medical Devices Amendments (MDA) passed by Congress in 1976. The process was created as a by-product of the three-tiered medical device regulatory framework created by the MDA to balance competing considerations of ensuring product safety and fostering further innovation.

After 1976, medical devices were organized into three classes.

Class I—devices for which general controls such as misbranding and adulteration prohibitions and Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) suffice to reasonably assure safety and effectiveness.

Class II—devices that require both general controls and product performance to reasonably assure the same.

Class III—devices for which only a premarket approval (PMA) process similar to new drug approval can ensure safety and effectiveness.

Section 510(k) was created as part of the MDA's attempt to address medical devices that were on the market prior to its enactment and new medical devices introduced later consistently within this framework. Since its creation, the 510(k) process has come to dominate the path to market for virtually all Class I, Class II, and some Class III medical devices despite the fact that consumer protection is severely lacking. To reinforce this statement, it has been reported that between 1976 and 1990, more than 98 percent of FDA-regulated medical devices were cleared through the 510(k) premarket notification, and in the year 2005, almost 99 percent of devices were cleared through the 510(k) process.

In 2011, the FDA sought to address this process, and turned to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to review the 510(k) process and answer two questions:

1. Does the current 510(k) process protect patients optimally and promote innovation in support of public health?

2. If not, what legislative, regulatory, or administrative changes are recommended to achieve the goals of the 510(k) process optimally?

IOM found that the current 510(k) process is flawed based on its legislative foundation. Rather than continuing to modify the thirty-five year old 510(k) process, the IOM concluded that the FDA's finite resources would be better invested in developing an integrated pre-market and post-market regulatory framework that provides a reasonable assurance of safety and effectiveness throughout the device life cycle. The IOM outlined its criteria for the framework in a comprehensive report they provided to your agency that same year.

Following the release of IOM's recommendation, the US Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) held a full committee hearing entitled ''Medical Devices: Protecting Patients and Promoting Innovation'' on November 15, 2011. During this hearing, Jeffrey Shuren, the Director of the Center for Device and Radiological Health (CDRH) within the FDA, provided testimony to Committee Members about CDRH's premarket review process and the center's plan to improve the predictability, consistency, and transparency of their regulatory processes. When asked about 510(k) Mr. Shuren stated that getting rid of this clearance process as IOM suggested would be highly disruptive to both the FDA and medical device manufacturers, but assured the Committee that the FDA would focus on trying to improve the process along with the safety of medical devices.

Nearly four years has passed since this hearing and to my knowledge, the 510(k) process remains the same. I respectfully request that you answer the following questions regarding this process:

1. Does the 510(k) mechanism ensure patient safety in the medical device arena by requiring premarket safety testing?

2. Does the 510(k) mechanism have a specific mechanism for surveillance of adverse outcomes? What are the legislative barriers to FDA surveillance of adverse outcomes in the medical device space?

3. The majority of medical devices in the United States are cleared via the 510(k) process. This process operates based on a ''predicate'' system. What is the process through which FDA makes the determination that a device is an appropriate predicate?

4. Type 2 devices are reviewed via the 510(k) mechanism. Who assigns a device as being a type 2 device? Is this determination reviewed by any expert committees, and how? If not, why not? Are there specific examples where the Type 2 status was assigned, but was then later changed or should have been changed?

5. As previously mentioned, A committee of The Institute of Medicine concluded and subsequently testified to the senate HELP committee, in 2011, that the 510(k) legislation cannot ensure patient safety and must be overhauled. What specific steps did the FDA take to mitigate the patient safety deficit in response to this analysis?

6. The Institute of Medicine report of 2011 also expressed significant concern to FDA and congress regarding the lack of pre-market safety testing requirements and absence of any post-market adverse outcomes surveillance mechanisms in 510(k). What are the barriers at FDA for implementation of such safety standards in the medical device space?

7. What specific guidelines does the FDA currently use to determine if a device is eligible for a 510(k) application?

8. Does the FDA currently permit persistence of devices approved via 510(k), whose predicate device has been found to be faulty?

The FDA's primary focus should be to ensure patient safety. Please consider the following questions regarding the reporting process and post-market surveillance techniques for harmful medical devices:

9. Does FDA have a legal and prosecutable ''positive mandate to self-report adverse outcomes in the medical device space'' for individual practitioners? If so have there been any prosecutions for failure to report?

10. Does FDA have a legal and prosecutable ''positive mandate to self-report adverse outcomes in the medical device space'' for hospitals? If so have there been any prosecutions for failure to report?

11. Does FDA have a legal and prosecutable ''positive mandate to self-report adverse outcomes in the medical device space'' for device manufacturers? If so have there been any prosecutions for failure to report?

12. The FDA has a database that could be used to report adverse outcomes in the medical device space, known as MAUDE. Public concerns have been raised that this database is a ''dead mail-box'' with inefficient to ineffective monitoring. How is the MAUDE database monitored? And how are safety concerns registered in MAUDE addressed by FDA?

13. Is there a role for implementation of new legislation to require a window of post-market surveillance of adverse outcomes related to the use of new devices? And can the FDA under its current authority mandate post-market surveillance of adverse outcomes related to the use of new devices?

14. Can the FDA, under its current legal authority, mandate a positive duty for practitioners, organizations that provide health care services, and manufacturers to report adverse outcomes to the FDA? And is there a role for new legislation focused on more strongly and clearly mandating a ''positive requirement to self-report adverse outcomes'' to FDA by practitioners, hospitals and manufacturers?

15. Please explain the asymmetry between the safety and reporting requirements imposed on the medical device, versus drug industries, by FDA?

The Center for Devices and Radiological Health (CDRH) is the branch of the FDA responsible for the premarket approval of all medical devices, as well as overseeing the manufacturing, performance and safety of these devices. Please respond to the following questions regarding the CDRH:

16. How many people are employed at the CDRH and in what capacities? How effective is this staff at protecting patient safety and is the first and foremost priority of this group's agenda to protect and promote patient safety? What consumer/patient protection mechanisms have been established by the CDRH to promote patient safety and how is the efficacy of these mechanisms evaluated?

17. Does the CDRH consider the medical device industry as equal stake-holder to patients and consumers in the United States?

Lastly, as you are likely aware, many safety concerns have been raised in conjunction with the use of power morcellators in routine surgeries. Please consider the following questions regarding that specific device.

18. Recently, FDA placed a black box warning on a device known as a power morcellator. FDA recognized and reported to the public that as many as one in 350 unsuspecting American women undergoing morcellation will be at risk of having their occult uterine cancers upstaged with devastating consequences. Johnson & Johnson, the largest manufacturer of the power morcellator subsequently voluntarily recalled its product from the worldwide market. Other manufacturers, such as the german company KARL STORZ, have elected not to recall the product and many gynecologists continue to believe the risk to be minimal.

a. Given the avoidable nature of this potentially deadly hazard and unwillingness of industry advocates and many gynecologists to abandon this practice, why did FDA elect not to ban this device from market?

b. Was there any role for the FDA commissioner's office to exercise its authority under Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulation, Section 895? And why was this option not exercised?

19. The FDA's analysis demonstrated that up to one in 350 unsuspecting American women undergoing morcellation were put in deadly harm's way using FDA authorized power morcellators. The American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology subsequently demonstrated that the incidence may be as high as one in 156. It, therefore, appears that morcellation and Power morcellators may have caused the unnecessary or premature deaths of many hundreds (if not thousands) of American women for over 2 decades. It now appears that the manufacturers of power morcellators and many gynecological specialty organizations had full knowledge of this hazard. However, no one appears to have reported this potentially deadly hazard back to FDA, a complication associated with the use of this device until December 2013–20 years after the device was introduced to market using 510(k) clearance.

a. Can you confirm that this is, in fact, the case? The reporting of adverse outcomes associated with the use of medical devices is a requirement set forth in the Code of Federal Regulation, Title 21, Section 803. This requirement was not followed by the manufacturers, practitioners, hospitals, or specialty organizations.

b. Is there any role for the FDA, the HHS Office of Inspector General or the United States Congress to inquire and hold FDA, the device manufacturers or the gynecological specialty organizations accountable for the loss of life in the United States?

Thank you in advance for you diligent and timely reply.

Sincerely,

MIKE FITZPATRICK,
Member of Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

PUBLICATION OF BUDGETARY MATERIAL

REVISIONS TO THE ALLOCATIONS OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2016 BUDGET RESOLUTION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET,
Washington, DC, June 17, 2015.

Hon. JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker, Office of the Speaker, U.S. Capitol, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

Mr. TOM PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I hereby submit for printing in the Congressional Record revisions to the budget allocations of the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2016, S. Con. Res. 11, pursuant to section 4503 of such concurrent resolution—a Deficit Neutral Reserve Fund Related to the Medicare Provisions of the President's Health Care Law. These revisions are designated for H.R. 1190, the Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2015, as amended pursuant to H. Res. 319. A corresponding table is attached.

This revision represents an adjustment for purposes of budgetary enforcement. These revised allocations are to be considered as the allocations included in the budget resolution, pursuant to S. Con. Res. 11, as adjusted. Pursuant to section 3403 of such resolution, the revision to the allocations shall apply only while H.R. 1190, as amended pursuant to H. Res. 319, is under consideration or upon its enactment.

Sincerely,

TOM PRICE, M.D.,
Chairman, Committee on the Budget.

TABLE 1—REVISION TO COMMITTEE ALLOCATIONS—AUTHORIZING COMMITTEE 302(a) ALLOCATIONS

[On-budget amounts, in millions of dollars]

House Committee	2016		2016–2025 Total	
	Budget Authority	Outlays	Budget Authority	Outlays
Ways and Means				
Current Allocation	962,805	962,080	13,224,077	13,222,960
Adjustment for H.R. 1190, Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2015	0	0	7,100	7,100
Revised Allocation	962,805	962,080	13,231,177	13,230,060
Energy & Commerce				
Current Allocation	389,635	392,001	4,341,991	4,346,043
Adjustment for H.R. 1190, Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2015	0	0	−8,845	−7,145
Revised Allocation	389,635	392,001	4,333,146	4,338,898

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do now adjourn.

The motion was agreed to; accordingly (at 6 o'clock and 17 minutes p.m.), under its previous order, the House adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, June 18, 2015, at 9 a.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS, ETC.

Under clause 2 of rule XIV, executive communications were taken from the Speaker's table and referred as follows:

1852. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's affirmation of interim rule as final rule — Marketing Order Regulating the Handling of Spearmint Oil Produced in the Far West; Revision of the Salable Quantity and Allotment Percentage for Class 3 (Native) Spearmint Oil for the 2014-2015 Marketing Year [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-13-0087; FV14-985-1B FIR] received June 15, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1853. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Tart Cherries Grown in the States of Michigan, et al.; Free and Restricted Percentages for the 2014-15 Crop Year for Tart Cherries [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-14-0077; FV14-930-2 FR] received June 15, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1854. A letter from the Finance and Loan Analyst, Rural Development, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's final rule — Reserve Account (RIN: 0575-AC99) received June 15, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1855. A letter from the Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service, Fruit and Vegetable Programs, Department of Agriculture, transmitting the Department's affirmation of interim rule as final rule — Irish Potatoes Grown in Colorado; Relaxation of the Handling Regulation for Area No. 3 [Doc. No.: AMS-FV-14-0092; FV15-948-1 FIR] received June 15, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Agriculture.

1856. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Fiscal Year 2013 Annual Progress Report to Congress on the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program and the National Cord Blood Inventory Program, pursuant to the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005 (Pub. L. 109-129), as amended; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1857. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Legislation, Department of Health and Human Services, transmitting the Fiscal Year 2012 Annual Progress Report on the C.W. Bill Young Cell Transplantation Program and National Cord Blood Inventory Program, pursuant to the Stem Cell Therapeutic and Research Act of 2005 (Pub. L. 109-129), as amended; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

1858. A letter from the Assistant Secretary for Export Administration, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of Commerce, transmitting the Department's final rule — Addition of Certain Person to the Entity List [Docket No.: 150304211-5211-01] (RIN: 0694-AG55) received June 15, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1859. A letter from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting a certification of proposed issuance of an export license, pursuant to Secs. 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act, Transmittal No.: DDTC 15-047; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

1860. A letter from the Secretary, Department of Education, transmitting the Department's FY 2014 annual report, pursuant to Sec. 203 of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Pub. L. 107-174; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1861. A letter from the Director, Office of Personnel Management, transmitting the Office's final rule — Federal Employees Health Benefits Program; Rate Setting for Community-Rated Plans (RIN: 3206-AN00) received June 15, 2015, pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 801(a)(1)(A); to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

1862. A letter from the Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, Department of Defense, transmitting the Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense Joint Executive Committee FY 2014 Annual Report, pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 8111; jointly to the Committees on Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XIII, reports of committees were delivered to the Clerk for printing and reference to the proper calendar, as follows:

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 1626. A bill to reduce duplication of information technology at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–162). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 1633. A bill to provide for certain improvements relating to the tracking and reporting of employees of the Department of Homeland Security placed on administrative leave, or any other type of paid non-duty status without charge to leave, for personnel matters, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–163). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 2200. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear intelligence and information sharing functions of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security and to require dissemination of information analyzed by the Department to entities with responsibilities relating to homeland security, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–164). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 2206. A bill to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require recipients of State Homeland Security Grant Program funding to preserve and strengthen interoperable emergency communications capabilities, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–165). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. MCCAUL: Committee on Homeland Security. H.R. 1640. A bill to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit to Congress a report on the Department of Homeland Security headquarters consolidation project in the National Capital Region, and for other purposes; with an amendment (Rept. 114–166). Referred to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

Mr. SESSIONS: Committee on Rules. House Resolution 321. Resolution providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2146) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, and air traffic controllers to make penalty-free withdrawals from governmental plans after age 50, and for other purposes (Rept. 114–167). Referred to the House Calendar.

PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 2 of rule XII, public bills and resolutions of the following titles were introduced and severally referred, as follows:

By Mr. ELLISON (for himself, Ms. MOORE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. HONDA, Mr. WELCH, Ms. LEE, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. CONYERS, Mrs. DAVIS of California, and Ms. JUDY CHU of California):

H.R. 2798. A bill to modify provisions of law relating to refugee resettlement, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committees on Foreign Affairs, and Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GRIFFITH (for himself, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. HARPER, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia):

H.R. 2799. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to expand access to stroke telehealth services under the Medicare program; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. WALBERG (for himself, Mrs. NOEM, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, and Ms. JENKINS of Kansas):

H.R. 2800. A bill to amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide protections against pregnancy discrimination in the workplace, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. BABIN (for himself, Mr. BARLETTA, and Mr. RATCLIFFE):

H.R. 2801. A bill to prohibit the Administrator of General Services from leasing space for certain purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. LABRADOR (for himself, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, Mr. JONES, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. NEUGEBAUER, Mr. PEARCE, Mr. LAMBORN, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. SANFORD, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. ROTHFUS, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. POMPEO, Mr. SMITH of Texas, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. WALBERG, Mr. JODY B. HICE of Georgia, Mr. MARCHANT, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. PALMER, Mr. MEADOWS, Mr. ALLEN, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. PITTS, Mr. GRAVES of Georgia, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. GARRETT, Mr. FINCHER, Mr. SALMON, Mr. WESTMORELAND, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. GROTHMAN, Mr. HARRIS, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. BABIN, Mr. YOHO, Mr. CHAFFETZ, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. PALAZZO, Mr. CARTER of Texas, Mr. ROUZER, Mrs. BLACK, Mr. BRAT, Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia, Mr. GOSAR, Mr. BISHOP of Utah, Mrs. LOVE, Mr. GOWDY, Mr. ADERHOLT, and Mr. STEWART):

H.R. 2802. A bill to prevent discriminatory treatment of any person on the basis of views held with respect to marriage; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Ways and Means, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ZELDIN:

H.R. 2803. A bill to amend the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 to ensure State control over academic standards, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT (for himself, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. CONNOLLY, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. NORTON, Mr. POCAN, Mr. POLIS,

Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. WALZ, Mr. HONDA, and Mr. HUFFMAN):

H.R. 2804. A bill to establish an integrated national approach to respond to ongoing and expected effects of extreme weather and climate change by protecting, managing, and conserving the fish, wildlife, and plants of the United States, and to maximize Government efficiency and reduce costs, in cooperation with State, local, and tribal governments and other entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana (for herself, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. WHITFIELD, and Mr. MESSER):

H.R. 2805. A bill to address prescription opioid abuse and heroin use; to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KAPTUR, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. MEEKS, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. RANGEL, and Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California):

H.R. 2806. A bill to ensure prompt access to Supplemental Security Income, Social Security disability, and Medicaid benefits for persons released from certain public institutions; to the Committee on Ways and Means, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. CRAWFORD:

H.R. 2807. A bill to create a centralized website on reports issued by the Inspectors General, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

By Mr. DEUTCH (for himself, Mr. FOSTER, and Mr. SMITH of Washington):

H.R. 2808. A bill to prohibit U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement from negotiating contracts with private detention companies that require a minimum number of immigration detention beds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. DOLD (for himself, Mr. LIPINSKI, and Mr. QUIGLEY):

H.R. 2809. A bill to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to prohibit sewage dumping into the Great Lakes, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK (for himself, Mr. COOPER, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. SCHRADER, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. SINEMA, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. BERA, and Mr. COOK):

H.R. 2810. A bill to provide for a review of efforts to reduce Federal agency travel expenses through the use of video conferencing and a plan to achieve additional reductions in such expenses through the use of video conferencing, to implement such plan through rescissions of appropriations, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on Appropriations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. GRIJALVA (for himself, Mr. COLE, Mr. MULLIN, Mr. JONES, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mrs. TORRES, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. RUIZ, Mr. POLIS, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. BECERRA, Mr. GALLEGO, and Ms. MOORE):

H.R. 2811. A bill to repeal section 3003 of the the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. KING of Iowa (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN of South Carolina, Mr. FLEMING, Mr. GOHMERT, Mr. YOHO, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. BABIN, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Mr. PITTENGER, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. CARTER of Georgia, Mr. HUELSKAMP, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. ISSA, Mr. COLE, Mr. BURGESS, Mr. DESJARLAIS, Mr. BROOKS of Alabama, Mr. RIBBLE, Mr. GIBBS, Mr. ROUZER, and Mrs. BLACKBURN):

H.R. 2812. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a deduction for premiums for insurance which constitutes medical care; to the Committee on Ways and Means.

By Mr. PETERS (for himself, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. HONDA, and Ms. BORDALLO):

H.R. 2813. A bill to direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development to establish a grant pilot program to provide housing to elderly homeless veterans; to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 2814. A bill to name the Department of Veterans Affairs community-based outpatient clinic in Sevierville, Tennessee, the Dannie A. Carr Veterans Outpatient Clinic; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

By Mr. SALMON (for himself, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. FRANKS of Arizona, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. KELLY of Pennsylvania, Mr. ROKITA, and Ms. SINEMA):

H.R. 2815. A bill to require the Secretary of Education to complete a data analysis study on the impacts of all income- or employment-based outcome measures of quality in higher education before issuing or implementing regulations utilizing such metrics, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. SIMPSON:

H.R. 2816. A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land in Blaine County, Idaho, to the city of Ketchum, Idaho to be used to support recreation, educational, and public purposes, including river restoration, floodplain management, and municipal water storage, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. TURNER (for himself, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. KATKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. CLYBURN):

H.R. 2817. A bill to amend title 54, United States Code, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Historic Preservation Fund; to the Committee on Natural Resources.

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana (for himself, Mr. BISHOP of Georgia, Mr. CLAY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. FATTAH, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. JEFFRIES, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Ms. KELLY of Illinois, Ms. LEE, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. PAYNE, Ms. PLASKETT, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. RUSH, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. MAXINE WATERS of California, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Ms. WILSON of Florida):

H. Res. 322. A resolution recognizing the importance of providing services to children of incarcerated parents; to the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

By Mr. DESJARLAIS:

H. Res. 323. A resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Mexico should forthwith repatriate the remains of those American Soldiers who fought in the battle of Monterrey in 1846; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas (for herself, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. ELLISON, Mr. CLAY, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mrs. BEATTY, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Ms. EDWARDS, Ms. BASS, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. PLASKETT, and Mr. RUSH):

H. Res. 324. A resolution recognizing the commencement of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting and spiritual renewal, and commending Muslims in the United States and throughout the world for their faith; to the Committee on Foreign Affairs.

By Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California (for herself, Mr. HANNA, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Mr. CASTRO of Texas, Ms. JUDY CHU of California, Mr. CICILLINE, Ms. CLARKE of New York, Mr. COFFMAN, Mr. CONYERS, Mr. COSTA, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mr. DELANEY, Mr. DENHAM, Mr. DOGGETT, Mr. ELLISON, Mrs. ELLMERS of North Carolina, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. ESTY, Mr. GALLEGO, Mr. GARAMENDI, Mr. GRIJALVA, Mr. GUTIÉRREZ, Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. NORTON, Mr. HONDA, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. JACKSON LEE, Ms. LEE, Mr. TED LIEU of California, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico, Mr. SEAN PATRICK MALONEY of New York, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. MURPHY of Florida, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. TAKANO, Mr. THOMPSON of California, Mr. TONKO, Ms. TSONGAS, Mr. VALADAO, Ms. SPEIER, Mrs. DAVIS of California, Ms. HAHN, Mr. VARGAS, Mr. VEASEY, Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, and Mr. YARMUTH):

H. Res. 325. A resolution recognizing the month of June as ''Immigrant Heritage Month,'' a celebration of the accomplishments and contributions immigrants and their children have made in shaping the history, strengthening the economy, and enriching the culture of the United States; to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Pursuant to clause 7 of rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statements are submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution.

By Mr. ELLISON:

H.R. 2798.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Pursuant to clause 7 of Rule XII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following statement is submitted regarding the specific powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the accompanying bill or joint resolution. Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 18 of the Constitution of the United States, which states:

The Congress shall have the power to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.''

By Mr. GRIFFITH:

H.R. 2799.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This bill is enacted pursuant to the power granted to Congress under Article I, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. WALBERG:

H.R. 2800.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3 of the Constitution of the United States; the power to regulate commerce among the several states.

The purpose of the bill is to amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide protections against pregnancy discrimination in the workplace, and for other purposes.

By Mr. BABIN:

H.R. 2801.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18—To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.

By Mr. LABRADOR:

H.R. 2802.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

This legislation has been written pursuant to protections guaranteed by the First Amendment, which states, ''Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech.''

The constitutional authority on which this bill rests is the power of Congress ''to lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States; but all duties, imposts and excises shall be uniform throughout the United States'' as outlined in Article 1, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution. Additionally, Article 1, Section 8, Clause 18 of the United States Constitution states, Congress shall have power ''to make all laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into execution the foregoing powers, and all other powers vested by this Constitution in the government of the United States, or in any department or officer thereof''.

By Mr. ZELDIN:

H.R. 2803.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the United States Constitution.

By Mr. CARTWRIGHT:

H.R. 2804.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1: The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defence and general Welfare of the United States; and

Article I, Section 8, Clause 3: The Congress shall have Power To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes

By Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana:

H.R. 2805.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

According to Article I, Section 8 of the Constittuion of the United States

By Mr. CARSON of Indiana:

H.R. 2806.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to Clause 1 of section 8 of , Article I of the Constitution.

By Mr. CRAWFORD:

H.R. 2807.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clauses 1 and 3 of Section 8 of Article I of the Constitution of the United States.

By Mr. DEUTCH:

H.R. 2808.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Clause 1 of Section 8 of Article I of the U.S. Constitution and Clause 18 of Section 8 of Article I of the U.S. Constitution.

By Mr. DOLD:

H.R. 2809.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8, clause 3.

By Mr. FITZPATRICK:

H.R. 2810.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 18

By Mr. GRIJALVA:

H.R. 2811.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

U.S. Const. art. I, §§1 and 8.

By Mr. KING of Iowa:

H.R. 2812.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8, Clause 1

By Mr. PETERS:

H.R. 2813.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8

By Mr. ROE of Tennessee:

H.R. 2814.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

The United States Constitution Article I, Section 8.

By Mr. SALMON:

H.R. 2815.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution of the United States of America

By Mr. SIMPSON:

H.R. 2816.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, section 8 of the United States Constitution, specifically clause 1 (relating to the power of Congress to provide for the general welfare of the United States) and clause 18 (relating to the power to make all laws necessary and proper for carrying out the powers vested in Congress), and Article IV, section 3, clause 2 (relating to the power of Congress to dispose of and make all needful rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States).

By Mr. TURNER:

H.R. 2817.

Congress has the power to enact this legislation pursuant to the following:

Article I, Section 8; and Article IV, Section 3, Clause 2 of the Constitution of the United States of America

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were added to public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 6: Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mr. KATKO, Mr. MOULTON, Mr. FORTENBERRY, Mr. MCHENRY, Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. CARTWRIGHT, Mr. JOYCE, Mr. VALADAO, and Mr. ASHFORD.

H.R. 167: Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. PIERLUISI, Mr. COHEN, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. DEGETTE.

H.R. 169: Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 170: Mr. HINOJOSA.

H.R. 213: Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. GIBSON, Mr. ZINKE, and Mr. DELANEY.

H.R. 333: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ and Mr. COHEN.

H.R. 358: Mr. HASTINGS, Ms. PLASKETT, and Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 540: Mr. CLAWSON of Florida.

H.R. 546: Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. AL GREEN of Texas, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. WILLIAMS, Mr. HULTGREN, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, and Mr. SMITH of Texas.

H.R. 600: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania.

H.R. 605: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 624: Ms. ESHOO.

H.R. 662: Mr. LOUDERMILK, Mr. YOHO, and Mr. MOONEY of West Virginia.

H.R. 663: Mr. HINOJOSA, Mr. LONG, and Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 680: Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts.

H.R. 684: Mr. KILDEE.

H.R. 692: Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. MILLER of Florida, Mr. GOWDY, and Mr. CHAFFETZ.

H.R. 699: Mr. WOODALL.

H.R. 707: Mr. BRIDENSTINE.

H.R. 712: Mr. ROUZER.

H.R. 746: Mr. POLIS, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, and Mr. KILMER.

H.R. 766: Mr. BARR.

H.R. 767: Mr. HANNA, Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia, and Mr. SIRES.

H.R. 774: Mr. POE of Texas and Mr. BILIRAKIS.

H.R. 828: Mr. TIBERI.

H.R. 829: Mrs. NAPOLITANO and Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York.

H.R. 920: Mr. RIBBLE.

H.R. 963: Ms. NORTON.

H.R. 970: Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.

H.R. 985: Mr. STIVERS, Mr. COSTA, and Mr. GIBSON.

H.R. 986: Ms. GRANGER.

H.R. 999: Mr. PALAZZO.

H.R. 1002: Mr. CRENSHAW and Mrs. NAPOLITANO.

H.R. 1087: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.

H.R. 1094: Mr. SHIMKUS.

H.R. 1151: Ms. JUDY CHU of California.

H.R. 1211: Mr. KILMER.

H.R. 1247: Mrs. BEATTY and Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.

H.R. 1299: Mr. LONG.

H.R. 1321: Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. DOLD, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. BEYER, and Mr. O'ROURKE.

H.R. 1356: Mr. MCDERMOTT, Ms. BORDALLO, and Mr. MACARTHUR.

H.R. 1369: Mr. LOEBSACK.

H.R. 1375: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 1388: Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia, Mr. CULBERSON, and Mr. PITTENGER.
H.R. 1401: Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. FARENTHOLD, Ms. KAPTUR, and Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 1427: Mr. EMMER of Minnesota and Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 1457: Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 1462: Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 1464: Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia.
H.R. 1475: Mr. MULVANEY, Mr. MARINO, Mr. ROSS, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. WENSTRUP, Mr. GIBBS, and Mr. NEWHOUSE.
H.R. 1479: Mr. FORTENBERRY.
H.R. 1516: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.
H.R. 1531: Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 1533: Mr. COHEN and Mr. TED LIEU of California.
H.R. 1559: Mr. GUTIÉRREZ.
H.R. 1599: Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania, Mr. DENT, Mr. BRIDENSTINE, and Mr. MULVANEY.
H.R. 1608: Ms. MOORE, Mr. KING of New York, Mr. BRENDAN F. BOYLE of Pennsylvania, Mr. COHEN, and Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 1610: Mr. LONG.
H.R. 1624: Mr. POLIS, Mr. VALADAO, Mr. SCHWEIKERT, Ms. GRANGER, Mr. HUDSON, Mrs. LUMMIS, Mr. COLLINS of Georgia, and Mr. HECK of Nevada.
H.R. 1655: Ms. GRAHAM, Mr. UPTON, and Mr. TAKAI.
H.R. 1684: Mr. COSTELLO of Pennsylvania and Ms. CASTOR of Florida.
H.R. 1728: Mr. TAKAI.
H.R. 1742: Mr. AMODEI.
H.R. 1752: Mr. EMMER of Minnesota and Mr. BOUSTANY.
H.R. 1769: Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania and Ms. GABBARD.
H.R. 1781: Mrs. TORRES and Mrs. LAWRENCE.
H.R. 1814: Mr. ENGEL, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Mr. CARNEY, and Ms. BONAMICI.
H.R. 1834: Mr. HUNTER.
H.R. 1848: Mr. POCAN.
H.R. 1854: Mr. TIBERI.
H.R. 1900: Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 1901: Mr. JORDAN.
H.R. 1910: Ms. MOORE and Ms. JUDY CHU of California.
H.R. 1920: Mr. MARINO.
H.R. 1953: Mr. WESTERMAN and Mr. MCCAUL.
H.R. 1964: Mr. WEBSTER of Florida.
H.R. 1977: Ms. MENG.
H.R. 1982: Mr. DIAZ-BALART.
H.R. 1994: Mr. CURBELO of Florida and Mr. ZINKE.
H.R. 2017: Mr. STIVERS and Mr. COOK.
H.R. 2019: Mr. LUCAS.
H.R. 2043: Mr. TONKO and Ms. PINGREE.
H.R. 2072: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 2083: Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 2096: Mrs. NOEM.
H.R. 2102: Mr. JOLLY.
H.R. 2123: Mr. GOODLATTE.
H.R. 2124: Mr. POCAN, Ms. ESTY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. ZELDIN, and Mrs. BEATTY.
H.R. 2128: Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN and Mrs. BLACK.
H.R. 2141: Mr. RIBBLE.
H.R. 2147: Ms. FUDGE, Mrs. WATSON COLEMAN, Ms. KUSTER, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. CLEAVER, and Ms. KELLY of Illinois.
H.R. 2148: Mr. RICE of South Carolina and Mr. ROUZER.
H.R. 2156: Mr. HINOJOSA and Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 2216: Mr. TAKAI.
H.R. 2217: Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 2230: Mr. BABIN.
H.R. 2259: Mr. ISSA.
H.R. 2260: Mr. GALLEGO.
H.R. 2280: Mr. BEYER.
H.R. 2303: Mrs. DINGELL and Mr. MCDERMOTT.
H.R. 2309: Mr. MURPHY of Florida and Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 2358: Mr. WESTERMAN.
H.R. 2362: Mr. PITTENGER and Mr. CLAY.
H.R. 2404: Mr. KILDEE and Mr. LYNCH.
H.R. 2407: Mr. VALADAO and Mr. BARLETTA.
H.R. 2410: Mr. LEWIS.
H.R. 2429: Mr. KILMER.
H.R. 2431: Mr. SWALWELL of California.
H.R. 2450: Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 2457: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 2477: Mr. FARENTHOLD and Mr. PITTS.
H.R. 2500: Mr. AMODEI, Mr. KILMER, and Mr. FARENTHOLD.
H.R. 2516: Mr. COHEN and Ms. ESHOO.
H.R. 2523: Mr. LOEBSACK.
H.R. 2560: Mr. PALMER.
H.R. 2567: Mr. KLINE, Mr. OLSON, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. RICE of South Carolina, and Mr. YOUNG of Iowa.
H.R. 2576: Mr. SCHWEIKERT.
H.R. 2582: Mr. WOMACK.
H.R. 2609: Mr. FRANKS of Arizona and Mrs. BLACKBURN.
H.R. 2616: Mr. COHEN.
H.R. 2646: Mr. WHITFIELD.
H.R. 2652: Mr. FORTENBERRY and Mr. FLORES.
H.R. 2653: Mr. SESSIONS and Mr. PEARCE.
H.R. 2654: Mr. KILMER, Mr. YARMUTH, Ms. EDWARDS, and Mr. HINOJOSA.
H.R. 2658: Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. FITZPATRICK, and Mr. WHITFIELD.
H.R. 2660: Mr. CÁRDENAS.
H.R. 2662: Ms. BORDALLO, Mr. RIGELL, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, and Mr. GARAMENDI.
H.R. 2669: Mr. VAN HOLLEN and Mr. BILIRAKIS.
H.R. 2675: Mrs. MIMI WALTERS of California and Mr. SMITH of Texas.
H.R. 2689: Mr. DESAULNIER.
H.R. 2692: Mr. KILDEE.
H.R. 2694: Mr. BUTTERFIELD and Mrs. DAVIS of California.
H.R. 2697: Mr. COHEN, Ms. LOFGREN, and Mr. MCNERNEY.
H.R. 2698: Mr. GUINTA.
H.R. 2710: Mrs. MCMORRIS RODGERS, Mrs. NOEM, and Mr. LUCAS.
H.R. 2716: Mr. LABRADOR.
H.R. 2726: Mr. BABIN.
H.R. 2739: Mr. LANGEVIN and Mr. MACARTHUR.
H.R. 2742: Ms. GRAHAM.
H.R. 2747: Ms. BORDALLO.
H.R. 2750: Ms. MCSALLY.
H.R. 2770: Mr. KING of New York.
H.R. 2775: Mr. ROSS, Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California, and Mrs. LOVE.
H.R. 2788: Mr. MARCHANT.
H. J. Res. 22: Mr. TAKAI.
H. J. Res. 32: Mr. WESTMORELAND.
H. Con. Res. 19: Mr. PASCRELL.
H. Con. Res. 49: Mr. PETERS.
H. Con. Res. 53: Mr. GRIJALVA.
H. Con. Res. 55: Mr. SERRANO and Ms. HAHN.
H. Res. 34: Mr. COSTA, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mrs. BUSTOS.
H. Res. 139: Ms. ESHOO and Mr. SHERMAN.
H. Res. 207: Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana and Mr. NORCROSS.
H. Res. 220: Ms. BROWNLEY of California, Mrs. BUSTOS, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois, Mr. KLINE, Mr. HENSARLING, Ms. PINGREE, and Mr. STIVERS.
H. Res. 291: Mrs. DINGELL, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. Radewagen, Mr. CLAY, Mr. RANGEL, Ms. EDWARDS, Mr. CLAWSON of Florida, Ms. FUDGE, Mr. RICHMOND, Mr. CLYBURN, Mr. MEEKS, Mr. VEASEY, Mr. CLEAVER, Mr. HASTINGS, Mr. LEWIS, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas, Mrs. LAWRENCE, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, and Mr. RUSH.
H. Res. 310: Mr. CONYERS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. MEADOWS, and Mr. SIRES.

DELETION OF SPONSORS FROM PUBLIC BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS

Under clause 7 of rule XII, sponsors were deleted from public bills and resolutions, as follows:

H.R. 2588: Mr. BISHOP of Georgia.

United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

Vol. 161 WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2015 No. 97

Senate

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

PRAYER

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

Let us pray.

Lord of our lives, whose commands we cherish and in whose service we find joy, thank You for the gift of this day. Inspire our lawmakers to fill the waiting hours with labor that will open doors of new possibilities for our Nation and world. Lord, stir their hearts to seize today's opportunities to do Your will on Earth, repairing yesterday's wrongs and grasping tomorrow's promises. Enlighten their hearts with the knowledge of Your love, as they strive to make this world a better place. Use them to provide cheer to sad hearts, faith to doubting hearts, and courage to fearful hearts.

We pray in Your loving Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION AND APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it was heartening to see so many Democrats joining us yesterday in advancing a good Defense authorization bill by a very large bipartisan margin. It now puts the Senate on the path to bring the bill to final passage tomorrow. Once that happens, the Senate will have taken a significant step by doing right for the men and women who risk everything to protect us. It is certainly good news, but it is not the end of the story either, because while the Defense authorization bill makes promises to our troops, it is the Defense appropriations bill that actually fulfills those promises.

That is the bill we will consider next. I would expect everyone who votes for the Defense authorization bill would also want to support moving to Defense appropriations because I am sure every Democratic colleague who just voted to make promises to our troops will want to help us actually fulfill those promises by voting for the Defense appropriations bill as well.

They might look to the example Democrats just set in the House of Representatives last week. House Democrats appear to understand just how cynical it would have been to make promises and then not fund them, which is why we saw dozens join Republicans to pass Defense appropriations. House Democrats must have known their constituents wouldn't fall for an ''I was for the troops before I was against them'' argument. House Democrats also must have seen how heartless it would have been to deny funding for America's heroes as part of some ridiculous filibuster summer plan to extract more cash for giant bureaucracies such as the IRS.

I have to think Senate Democrats would see things the same way. Judging by what we just saw last week in the Senate Appropriations Committee, there is no reason to think otherwise. Democrats and Republicans came together in the Appropriations Committee to pass the Defense appropriations bill we are about to consider by a huge margin of 27 to 3. Not only did every single Democrat support this bill in committee, but Democrats had some pretty supportive things to say about it too.

One Democratic friend called the appropriations bill ''a key investment in our national security'' that funds ''a number of Hawaii's defense needs.'' Another Democrat noted it would fund a program that is one of her ''top priorities.'' Here is what another Democrat said of the bill: ''It will directly protect and grow Connecticut's defense manufacturing industry and the hundreds of thousands of jobs it supports across our State.'' He went on to say it will ''implement a well-deserved pay raise for our troops who put their lives on the line each and every day.'' He concluded by saying it is a ''victory for Connecticut.''

A victory for Connecticut—now there is a rousing endorsement of the bill we will vote on tomorrow. It is no wonder each of these Democratic colleagues voted to endorse the appropriations bill. It is good news for our troops and their families. It is good news for our country. These Democratic friends must not want to see a ''victory for Connecticut'' squashed or one of their ''top priorities'' sacrificed for the sake of some ploy to funnel a few more dollars to Washington's big bureaucracies.

They must think this filibuster summer idea their party leaders hatched isn't good for America's national security or for job security in their own States. They must know you can't take credit for promises made in a defense authorization bill if you then vote against the appropriations bill that would fund them.

I hope Senators in both parties would join together once more to bring the Defense authorization bill over the goal line tomorrow and then begin debate on the inseparable appropriations bill too.

If Senators want to amend that appropriations bill or strike a rider, then they should vote with us to get on the legislation so we can consider these amendments or those motions to strike. If Senators want to try to increase or reduce the level of funding in

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

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that bill, the only way they will have a chance to try doing that is if they vote with us to get on the bill in the first place.

So bring us your ideas. Bring them on out. Let's debate them. Whether you have a proposal to boost the helicopter industry in Connecticut or a plan to repair naval vessels, amphibious and surface ships in places such as California, Washington, Hawaii, and Virginia, the only way to ensure ideas like these are considered is by voting to open debate on the appropriations bill, and the only way to ensure they will not be heard at all—at all—is by voting to filibuster. That wouldn't be good for anyone.

So let's not kill the opportunity to even have those debates because here is what we know: The young men and women of our volunteer force don't need a summer packed full of Democratic filibusters, and they certainly don't need a Democratic shutdown surprise in the fall. All they ask for are the weapons, the training, and the skills they need to prevail on the battlefield. We can give it to them. We are almost there.

Democrats already joined Republicans to make a promise to the troops, and with just a little more good bipartisan work we will see Democrats join with Republicans to fulfill those promises. I have to think they will because failing to do so would mean making empty promises to both constituents and our troops.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION AND SEQUESTRATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, my friend the Republican leader throws the word ''filibuster'' around. He has a right to do that because he is an expert. He has led in this Senate more filibusters than all previous leaders put together. As the Republican leader, he has engineered about 300 filibusters, stopping basically everything—certainly slowing down everything on the President's agenda. It was a plan he was a part of and he certainly lived up to that.

The 46 Democrats over here are just as patriotic as the 54 Republicans over there. We care about the troops just as much as the Republicans over there, but we also believe that when my friend the Republican leader throws around terms such as ''vast bureaucracy,'' that we want to fund a vast bureaucracy, I don't think we should start talking about bureaucracies. The Pentagon is a pretty good bureaucracy in itself. I admire very much the Secretary of Defense. He does the best job he can. Our Secretary of Defense does not agree with the Republicans as to how the troops should be funded.

My friend the Republican leader knows the legislation before this body is going to be vetoed by the President. He said so. He put it in writing. The President said that on appropriations bills, if they are at the level of sequestration, he will veto those also. So this little magic game I mentioned yesterday that the Republican leader has engineered, saying we are going to take care of defense, and with the vast bureaucracy, we don't care what happens to them—well, in this ''vast bureaucracy'' are things such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Homeland Security Secretariat, which is important for protecting our homeland, making sure airports are safe, making sure our borders are protected. That is the vast bureaucracy he is talking about.

So we Democrats want to make sure there is equality. We believe in funding defense, and we are going to do everything we can. There has been no better example of that than the ranking member of the subcommittee dealing with defense, the senior Senator from Illinois. Senator DURBIN has worked so hard to be fair—fair to Democrats and fair to Republicans—and I am confident he will continue to do that.

I am also confident he cares about the other agencies we are so concerned about, not only the few I have mentioned. To have a secure nation takes more than bombs and bullets. Having a secure nation is also making sure we have a good education system, a good transportation system, a good program to maintain research for health.

The most famous organization in the history of the world for investigating disease is the National Institutes of Health. We know what sequestration did to them once, and they are about to do it again, if this little magic game the Republican leader is engineering goes on. It will be cut like everybody else. It is not defense.

The one fact Senator MCCONNELL fails to mention is the fact that it is all borrowed money—$100 billion, approximately—to get what he wants done in the Defense bill. It is borrowed money in the so-called overseas contingency fund.

We are going to do what we think is appropriate for the country.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERSTATE HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this month we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the Eisenhower Interstate Highway System. The Interstate Highway System was one of the signature accomplishments of the entire 20th century. If there was ever a list of the seven wonders of the United States, our Nation's highway system would be on that list.

Consider the sheer size and complexity of our transportation system. The Interstate Highway System encompasses 50,000 miles of highways, bridges, and tunnels, and that doesn't count the railways. It connects East and West, North and South. A person can drive from Boston directly to Seattle, 3,020 miles, or from Laredo, TX, to Duluth, MN, 1,831 miles, all on the Interstate Highway System. The Federal Interstate Highway System serves all 50 States and the District of Columbia.

The Interstate Highway System is a central nervous system of our Nation's economy, creating vital corridors for goods and services for American commerce. In every community in our Nation, from our largest cities and our large metropolitan areas to the small rural communities that have just a few people—and I mean a few people—our interstate highways bear the name of Republican President Dwight D. Eisenhower, whose vision of a connected America resulted in the Federal Highway Act of 1956.

How did this good man, Dwight Eisenhower, come up with this idea? Well, he was ordered, as a young officer in the Army, to bring a military contingent across the United States during World War I. It was awful. He never forgot that. There was no Federal highway system. There were barely highways. There were barely roads.

With his experience as Allied commander of troops in World War II, he came back from that recognizing how important moving goods and services for the military around Europe was, and how he had tried that in the United States and it did not work. But he was going to change that. That is what he did. President Eisenhower, a Republican, understood that the interstate highway complex was an investment worth making. He realized the money spent on roads and bridges creates jobs—lots of jobs. President Eisenhower, with all of his military experience and background, understood that an interstate system was important to our national security.

My friend talks about the security of our troops. Of course they are important. We so admire these men and women who protect us. But to have a safe and secure Nation, we also have to have things such as a good highway system.

My friend the Republican leader fails to mention that. It is part of our national security needs, as evidenced by Dwight Eisenhower. I wonder what President Eisenhower would think of today's Republican Party and its lack of concern for the Interstate Highway System. I believe he would be greatly disappointed. Just a few weeks from now, as the month of July comes to a close, funding for the Federal highway program will be gone. It will expire. But you would not know that congressional Republicans are watching the same movie the American people are watching. Republicans in Congress have refused to work with us in making an adequate, long-term investment in our country's surface transportation system.

Instead, the Republicans see the Federal highway program and trust fund as some sort of a hot potato. Stay away from it. It should never be dealt with

and only be kicked down the road, leaving millions of jobs behind. Even with the looming deadline, Republicans are showing no haste in forming a plan to address our Nation's crumbling roads, railroads, bridges, and transit systems.

We have one of the most unique makeups in one of our committees that this body has ever seen. We have one of the most liberal Members of the Senate, BARBARA BOXER, and her counterpart is one of the most conservative Members of this body, JIM INHOFE from Oklahoma. They know the importance. These two divergent political spectrums know that we have to do something about the highway system. They are going to put out a bill. They are going to authorize it. Then we need to figure out a way to fund that.

Republicans don't seem interested in that. Even with its looming deadline, Republicans are showing no haste in forming a plan or to develop one for this system that we have to do something about. Congressional Republicans see no urgency to schedule hearings, to mark up a bill, to take testimony in other ways or to make the highway trust fund solvent. With every day that passes, our Federal highway trust fund inches closer and closer to insolvency.

It is clear we will need to get to that reauthorization of the highway program either this week or next week. But we won't. Look at the schedule. It means we are left with July. Looking at the Senate calendar for July, assuming that the Republican leader will continue to keep the Senate out of session on Fridays, we will have, in reality, 15 days to reauthorize the Federal highway system—15 days. Fifteen session days is precious little time, especially when Republicans don't feel any urgency to solve this problem. Of course, we all know how this is going to play out. This is straight out of the Republican's playbook—the manufactured crisis playbook.

They have written the book, and they are adding chapters to it every week of this Congress. Republicans will drag their feet until the very last minute, refusing to work with us on a long-term solution to our Nation's infrastructure woes. Then, when the deadline is imminent, the Republican leader will offer yet another short-term extension to stave off another disaster of his own making.

This is and should be unacceptable to everyone here. We already have had 33 Republican short-term fixes. We do not need a 34th. But that is where we are headed. That is too bad. What we do need is a Republican Party that sees the value of a robust, long-term investment in our Nation's highways. We need a Republican Party that sees what President Eisenhower saw 50 years ago—half a century—that investing in our infrastructure is a shot in the arm to our economy.

There are hundreds of thousands of shovel-ready jobs just waiting for Congress to act. On the other hand, failing to meet our country's infrastructure needs will be catastrophic. The American Society of Civil Engineers predicts that our economy would lose $1 trillion unless we invest in surface transportation—$1 trillion. Let's not forget the safety implications of sitting on our hands. Half of our roads are in poor condition. Tens of thousands of bridges across the country are structurally deficient. Railroads are without important, lifesaving braking systems. They need to be refurbished and some parts of them reinvented. Doing nothing is not and should not be an option.

The Republican leader should change course and abandon his policy of governing by crisis. We can get started on a long-term, bipartisan reauthorization of the Federal highway program today. All we need is for Republican Members of Congress and their leaders to focus on American jobs and the traveling American public's safety. They have not done that. This is too bad.

Mr. President, there are a number of Senators on the floor.

Will the Chair announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

MORNING BUSINESS

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

The Senator from Michigan.

MICHIGAN PRODUCTIVITY AND INNOVATION

Mr. PETERS. Mr. President, I am truly blessed to represent the people of Michigan in the Senate. My State was carved out in one era by the ice age and again 200 years ago by the Congress. It is comprised of more than just two beautiful peninsulas bordered by four Great Lakes.

Since our Nation's founding, Michigan has been at the frontier of America, helping to build a stronger and more secure country. The Northwest Ordinance, affirmed by the very first Congress, created the midwestern region from which the Michigan Territory would be born. In the 19th century, pioneers moved to what was then the western frontier to settle in Michigan and its neighboring States.

The Peters family was among them. My family made the long journey from New York and settled in Rochester, MI, in the early 1840s. They were among the earliest pioneers to settle in my State. From that time on, generations of Michiganders pioneered a State devoted to great public education. While the Northwest Ordinance made primary education a priority and stated that ''schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged'' in the new territory, higher education also had a place that made our State great very early. Twenty years before the founding of the State of Michigan, the University of Michigan was founded, one of the first public universities in the country. Later, Michigan State University would become one of the pioneer land grant universities. While the two schools may be rivals on the gridiron, they have long complimented each other to the benefit of our State.

Today, Michigan is home to 93 universities, colleges, and community colleges. Michigan grew rapidly as migrants from across the country and immigrants from around the world were drawn to our supplies of timber, ore, arable land, and abundant fresh water. As a new century dawned across America, Michigan continued to grow with the advent of industrialization and mass manufacturing, from mining and forestry at the western tip of the Upper Peninsula to the booming auto factories of Detroit. Michigan embodied the growing optimism, opportunity, and prosperity that would be America's crowning achievement in the 20th century.

Michigan factories would turn into the great arsenal of democracy, building the armadas that would defeat tyranny, win the Second World War, and, in the process, create America's middle class. During World War II, my father, Herb Peters, was a proud solder in Eisenhower's Army, helping free France from Nazi occupation. It was there that he would meet my mother, Madeleine Vignier, a beautiful young French woman. They were married and raised me and my two sisters, Gigi and Jackie, in a typical middle-class home. A few years ago, with my late father, I joined the Sons of the American Revolution. My forefather, William Garrett, was a member of the Virginia militia and served alongside General George Washington at Valley Forge.

My great-grandfather, Julian Peters, served with the Michigan infantry during the Civil War. I am proud to follow earlier generations of patriots who served their country and were prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice in defense of freedom and liberty. But like millions of Americans, I am also the son of an immigrant. America's shores were new to my mother, but they provided an incredible expanse of opportunity that people across the globe continue to dream of. My mother worked long hours as a nurse's aide and fought for a better workplace for herself and her coworkers, helping to organize her workplace and later serving as a union steward.

Michigan's strong labor movement and our manufacturing sector helped build economic opportunities for millions of Americans. Standing together to call for fair wages, safer workplaces,

and better hours, Michigan workers and their families helped build the middle class and make the American dream a reality for many. I am honored to embody such a uniquely American experience—the descendant of an American Revolutionary War soldier and the son of a foreign-born naturalized citizen—and to carry on these rich traditions that continue to make our Nation proud, diverse, and strong.

But while my story is uniquely American, it is not so different from nearly 10 million Michiganders of varied backgrounds who have come together to make our State an extraordinary, special place. Michigan is unique in that we are the only State made up of two peninsulas. Separated for thousands of years by waterways carved by retreating glaciers, our peninsulas permanently united with Michigan statehood and finally connected with the opening of the Mackinac Bridge almost 60 years ago.

The Mackinac Bridge is one of the longest suspension bridges in the world. It remains an engineering marvel to this day and a symbol of how Michiganders can come together to accomplish great things. Financed with an innovative public-private bond structure, over 10,000 workers contributed to this 5-mile span, implementing the vision and planning of 350 engineers. In our State, it is simply known as ''The Bridge.'' Its construction unleashed economic growth for our State, increasing tourism in the Upper Peninsula and providing a new avenue for goods to be hauled south while agricultural products and manufactured goods flowed north.

As Michigan and our Nation transition to a 21st-century economy, we would do well to draw on the engineering know-how, skilled workforce, and boldness to invest in transformative infrastructure that made the Mackinac Bridge possible. Michigan's products move and feed the Nation. We invented the modern automobile, advanced manufacturing, and America's middle class.

We are the second most agriculturally diverse State in the Nation. Our blueberries, apples, cherries, and sugar beets are just a few of the 300 crops we grow and ship across the country and the world. Our incredible farmers, growers, and producers use Michigan's unique climate and resources to feed people across our country and around the world.

Whether we are talking about our State, our Nation or our successful industries, we cannot rest on our laurels. We are in constant competition. The coming decades will see rapid growth abroad, but I know our Nation will continue to lead the world with our ability to innovate and efficiently align capital and talent to maximize the strengths of our workforce.

Today's small business in Grand Rapids or a start-up in Detroit can access consumers across the world. I know that Michigan will be at the cutting edge of this new global economy. Michigan is at the forefront of developing the transformative technologies that will remake America and help our country sustain its stature and prominence.

Southeast Michigan has more engineers per capita than any State in the country, which is one of the reasons Detroit is home to the first field patent office outside of Washington, DC. Our automakers, parts suppliers, and advanced manufacturers are constantly innovating—and not just generations of new goods but also intellectual property. If you can make it, we can find a way to make it faster, lighter, more efficient, safer, and more affordable.

Incremental innovation meaningfully improves lives, but as a nation we must keep working toward the next big thing. Investments in education and basic scientific research are the downpayment on our future. It is particularly critical that we continue these investments at a time when our country faces so many unique challenges.

Growing income inequality is a threat to our middle class, our economy, and our democracy. While globalization is opening new markets for American goods, it is also hollowing out the mid-level jobs that are the foundation of the American middle class. Without a strong middle class we cannot have a strong economy, and without a strong middle class we simply cannot have a strong democracy.

There are many ideas about how to deal with these challenges, but history has taught us that increased productivity is the No. 1 driver of economic progress and, in my view, the key to American greatness. Economic historians tell us that after hundreds of years of zero economic growth, groundbreaking innovations changed the face of commerce.

In the mid-1700s came the cotton gin, steam engine, and railroads, followed by more breakthroughs in the 1800s, electricity, the internal combustion engine, and even indoor plumbing. Before indoor plumbing, a recent study estimated the average housewife spent nearly 150 hours per year walking back and forth to gather 3.5 tons of water for her family to cook, clean, and drink. The technology of indoor plumbing alone unleashed enormous gains in productivity.

Today, we have tablets and smartphones and social media, but if we are going to solve the tough challenges facing the middle-class families and all those who aspire to be in the middle class, we will need to unleash even more productivity and more innovation. We will need to discover the next big thing, and I don't know what that next big thing will be, but I do know the Federal Government must continue investing in the seed corn of basic research and development.

From the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams at Michigan State to Wayne State's bioresearch facility, to the University of Michigan's extensive joint projects with NASA, our State's universities are leading the way in research.

The research being conducted at our universities is also creating jobs in Michigan as these transformative technologies are commercialized. Students are not just inventing new technologies, they are also inventing their own jobs and companies.

For example, using technology developed at the University of Michigan for NASA to measure electric fields resulting from dust storms blowing across Mars, a startup spun off of these efforts is now creating jobs on Earth to help an electric company monitor their utility lines.

Innovation is creating new industries in Michigan and is also revolutionizing many of our existing industries. Advanced sensors, robotics, and big data will allow precision agriculture that boosts productivity and conserves natural resources.

One industry that has always meant jobs for Michigan is, of course, the automobile industry. We are on the verge of an automotive technological revolution that will allow vehicles to communicate their location, speed, and other data electronically with each other and our transportation infrastructure as well.

Research by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates this technology can reduce accidents by 80 percent, save fuel, and cut congestion at a time when Americans spend an estimated 5 vacation days a year stuck in traffic jams.

When more than 30,000 Americans are killed in accidents on our roads and highways every year, the advancements of this kind of technology will literally save thousands of lives.

This means active crash-avoidance technology that stops accidents before they happen, and before long, autonomous vehicles that drive themselves. This is truly revolutionary technology packaged with horsepower and torque, my favorite part of the car.

But the Federal Government has to do its part to develop and protect this technology. One of my top priorities, as a new member of the Senate commerce committee, is to ensure that vehicles have the wireless spectrum they need to communicate with each other and to make our roads safer.

As manufacturing and technology merge, Michigan is prepared to lead the way. What were once separate industries are now merging into complements in a battle for the future that America must win.

Federal investment in research and development is just that, an investment that has paid off many times over. Investment in research supports the new technologies and industries of the future, drives job creation, and provides technologies critical to our national security.

Necessary Federal investment in infrastructure and innovation is only possible if those of us in Congress take

our job seriously as stewards of taxpayer dollars and look for places to avoid unnecessary wasteful spending.

We also will not be able to accomplish anything without embracing pragmatism and bipartisanship. We cannot focus on whether ideas come from a Republican or from a Democrat. We need to focus only on whether the idea has merit and is good for the country. This is why I have spent my first 5 months in office the way I intend to spend the rest of my career in public service, reaching across the aisle to find common ground and the practical solutions that will make our government work better, drive innovation and competitiveness, and keep Michigan and America safe and strong.

I have introduced legislation with Senator GARDNER from Colorado to increase oversight of duplicative spending and force Congress to act on deficit reduction.

I worked with Senator ERNST from Iowa to introduce legislation to extend a tax credit for small businesses that support their activated military reservist employees.

Senator LANKFORD of Oklahoma and I worked on a bill that would ensure Federal agencies use remanufactured auto parts when maintaining their fleets, an idea that will save natural resources and taxpayer dollars while supporting our country's remanufactured parts industry. Just 2 days ago, this bill unanimously passed the Senate.

I worked with Senator RISCH from Idaho to move legislation through the small business committee to extend and preserve the Small Business Administration's 7(a) Loan Program, so our Nation's small businesses can access the capital they need to grow and create jobs.

Senator CORNYN, Senator GRAHAM, and I introduced legislation to create a bipartisan commission to examine our Nation's judicial system from the top to the bottom and to make sure it is working for all Americans.

Senator SULLIVAN and I worked together to introduce a bill to cut excise taxes for small craft distillers, a growth industry in Michigan, Alaska, and America.

I am also proud to say the legislation I introduced with Senator CASSIDY of Louisiana to provide training for medical professionals to identify victims of human trafficking was also signed into law after it passed the Senate as part of a larger effort to combat human trafficking.

I was sent to the Senate to represent the people of Michigan, and they want Congress to work together in a bipartisan way to solve the challenges facing our country. We must focus more on what we have in common and less on our differences. We should work on ideas that are good for our country and good for our States. I have worked to be a practical problem solver in my first few months, and it is what I intend to do in the years ahead.

There is much to be done, and I will work tirelessly for the people of Michigan. My weeks in Washington, unfortunately, keep me apart from my wife Colleen and my children, Madeleine, Alana, and Gary, Jr., but their love and steadfast support is with me each and every day. Colleen was raised by her parents Raul and Kathy Ochoa in Oakland County—like me—and together we share a passion for public service. I am so pleased Colleen and Madeleine are here with me today in the Senate Gallery.

On the Senate floor, we are standing on the shoulders of giants. This includes our Nation's Founding Fathers and more recent predecessors. My staff and I recently moved into the Hart Senate Office Building, named after Senator Phil Hart from Michigan, a man rightfully known as the ''Conscience of the Senate'' and a role model for all of us.

I could not be happier that my office will be right around the corner from my close friend, mentor, colleague, and respected leader in the Senate Senator DEBBIE STABENOW, and I am honored that DEBBIE has joined me on the Senate floor for this speech.

Of course, I am deeply honored to succeed Senator Carl Levin, another one of my mentors and a man who defined what it means to be a public servant. The careers of Senators Levin, Hart, Riegle, Griffin, and other Michiganders who preceded me provided the foundation on which I hope to build our shared future and create the best Michigan possible—not only the kind of Michigan we want to live in but the kind of Michigan our children and grandchildren will want to spend their lives in, a Michigan that is a magnet for migration and unbridled opportunity for families and small businesses, and a State that will lead the world in innovation.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate and Michiganders across the State to make a better future for all of us a reality. Together, we will continue to build a State and a country that embody the opportunity, the possibility, and the promise that has made our country a shining beacon for so many around the globe.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COTTON). The Democratic leader.

CONGRATULATING SENATOR PETERS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I wish to take a minute to express my appreciation to the junior Senator from Michigan in his maiden speech. It was terrific. It was delivered so well, and that is what Michigan is all about. We appreciate it very, very much.

He has big shoes to fill, those of Carl Levin. We all know what a giant he was in the Senate. From Senator Levin to Senator STABENOW, they have both said: GARY PETERS can do it. I am impressed with him very much. He is a team player. He is willing to do the hard lifting. I appreciate that very much. He mentioned Senator Levin, of course, whom we all admired so very much. Also, I wish to take a minute to talk about his partner in the Senate today, DEBBIE STABENOW. As he mentioned, she is a part of Senate leadership. She is there because she deserves it. There is no one who works harder than DEBBIE STABENOW. And if there were a work ethic role model for my friend GARY PETERS to follow, DEBBIE STABENOW is the perfect person.

So I thank the junior Senator from Michigan for being who he is. We have come to know who he is in 6 months, and we like him very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, first, I am very deeply appreciative of our leader's comments. Thank you very much.

I just wish to add my words of pride in the fact that we have such a wonderful Senator now coming to the Senate and the fact that he is fighting so hard for Michigan and already doing a wonderful job.

I am so pleased he is my partner, and it was a wonderful speech.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The assistant Democratic leader.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I congratulate the junior Senator from Michigan for his opening speech in the Senate. My State of Illinois is separated from his State of Michigan by another State and a Great Lake, but we have many things in common.

People of Chicago and Illinois, many of them, spend a lot of money in the State of Michigan and particularly in western Michigan. We love the Senator's State. It is a beautiful State. Many of us vacation there and get to know the people.

We have so much in common as midwesterners, looking at the world from our vantage point, smack dab in the middle of this country, and bringing to the conversation in the Senate many of the values that have guided our lives and inspired our families. I listened carefully and thought it is amazing that we have such parallel backgrounds—a father who can trace his family roots back to the Revolutionary War and, in both cases, mothers who were immigrants to this country. So being a first-generation American, I am sure the Senator feels as I do, a special honor, standing on the floor of the Senate, representing a State as great as Michigan—or Illinois.

I wish to say my colleague's background in the House of Representatives prepared him well for this challenge. Although he follows one of the greats in the history of the Senate, Carl Levin, he brings to this job an extraordinary talent and a great partnership with Senator STABENOW. Already, the two of them have been in contact with me about Michigan's needs as they relate to our Department of Defense—and

it is a significant investment which Michigan has made over the years in keeping America strong, one we want to continue for many generations to come.

I am pleased Senator PETER's family was here to be part of this official opening of his service in the Senate, and I certainly look forward to working with him for many years to come.

SEQUESTRATION

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, this morning the majority leader and the Republican leader Senator MCCONNELL came to the floor to speak to us about the challenge we are going to face, as soon as this week, when it comes to the Department of Defense. This is a department I have paid special attention to over the last several years during the time I chaired the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee and now serve as ranking member or vice chairman of that same subcommittee.

First, I salute the chairman of the Appropriations Committee and Defense Subcommittee, THAD COCHRAN of Mississippi. It has been a joy to work with him. He is a professional. He is a kind and gentle man and fair in every respect. I told him on the floor yesterday what I have said publicly in my caucus luncheon, the Democratic caucus luncheon. I am fortunate to have a partner in this effort from the Republican side who is so good to work with.

But we face a real serious challenge this week, and we have to decide as a nation what we are going to do about it. Most people, if you ask them on a final exam what does sequestration mean, they would basically throw up their hands and say: It sounds like something out of Washington. It doesn't mean much to me.

Sequestration is the penalty we face if we don't hit certain budget spending numbers, and that penalty is virtually mindless. Here is what it says: We will make across-the-board cuts in spending. Think about that in your own family life. If you were looking at the budget for your family and had some misfortune—a paycheck didn't come in—you would have to gauge priorities. While sitting at the kitchen table, you might say: What do we have to pay this month? Well, we have to pay the mortgage or we will be foreclosed upon. We better pay the light bill or they will turn off the electricity. So what can we cut back on? We are going to spend less at the grocery store.

Families make those decisions—many of them—on a weekly or monthly basis. But sequestration says we will cut across the board. We will take a 5-percent cut off the mortgage, off the utility bill, and off the groceries. It doesn't make sense, does it? But we did it. We did it for 2 years, and it was devastating.

We cut across the board when it came to medical research, for goodness' sakes. Here we were trying to find cures for cancer and heart disease and diabetes and Alzheimer's, and we said we are going to make a 5-percent cut across the board. It made no sense whatsoever, nor did it make sense for the Department of Defense. They said: How in the world can we prepare for America's defense with across-the-board cuts? We are supposed to be recruiting and training the very best men and women to serve our Nation. They need to be ready for combat. We have to make them battle-ready so they will win any battle they are sent to and come home safe. We have to decide what equipment to purchase. We have to decide how to invest in long-term investments in technology and equipment so that we never come in second in any battle. Yet you are going to give us an across-the-board cut, Congress? Stop it. Stop sequestration.

That is what this debate is about.

What we have now is a proposal from the Republican side of the aisle to stop sequestration—across-the-board cuts—in only one Agency: the Department of Defense. I think that is a good thing, to stop it, but it certainly isn't a balanced approach.

We have a lot of other things we do as a government that are important to the people of this country. We finance the education of young people who want to go to college. We do it with Pell grants and we do it with government loans. If we make across-the-board cuts there, we will create hardships and lack of opportunity for a lot of young people in America. When it comes to education, sequestration makes no sense.

When it comes to health care, it certainly makes no sense. We have obligations that we have entered into when it comes to our veterans and their health care. Are we going to make across-the-board cuts when it comes to veterans' health care? God forbid. We promised those men and women that if they would serve our country, we would stand by them when they came home.

Sequestration is a mindless cut when it comes to education and health care and medical research, as I mentioned earlier. So Democrats are saying to Republicans: Here we are on June 17, and our fiscal year ends on October 1. Let's not wait until the last minute to sit down and work out this problem. But what we hear from the other side of the aisle is this: We are not going to do it. We are just going to ignore it.

That is the problem in Washington when you don't face challenges squarely, honestly, on a bipartisan basis.

So here is what is likely to occur this week. We are going to vote for an authorization bill on the Department of Defense. Some of us will oppose the way it is being funded, but others will vote for it. Then we will come to the Defense appropriations bill, and I think what you will find is a unified effort on the Democratic side to say to the Republicans: Now is the time to sit down, not just on this appropriations bill but all the appropriations bills. Let's come up with an answer and solution to sequestration.

I heard the Republican leader say: Well, this is an indication that the Democrats are not committed to the defense of America. I couldn't disagree more because, you see, when we look at those who agree with us on the need for a different approach to budgeting, they include our Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dempsey. These are the men who have been assigned the responsibility of leading this great military and keeping America safe, and they say this budget process which the Republican leader endorses is not a good one for the safety of America.

So let's do the right thing for the men and women in uniform, for our country, and for all the agencies of government. Let's sit down and solve this budget challenge now before it reaches the last minute in a crisis. Let's do it in June rather than in September, October, November, or December. Let's do it calmly, on a bipartisan basis, and engage the President as well as our colleagues from both sides of the aisle in Congress. That is the responsible, bipartisan, honest way to face the problem. I hope the Republican leader will join us in that effort.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Michigan.

THE BUDGET

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, I just want to commend our leader from Illinois for bringing up what is so critically important, which is the entire budget of the country. It is important that we get it right in supporting the authorization in front of us.

I understand the defense of our country is much more than just the Department of Defense. As a border State in Michigan, border security, which is not in the Defense appropriations bill, is incredibly important, as is cyber security, which we are hearing more and more about; the frontline of our men and women, the first responders, police officers, firefighters—who do we think actually answers the call in a community when there is some kind of local challenge or a terrorist attack; airport security—I could go on and on. These are all things that are not in the appropriations bill for the Department of Defense.

Unfortunately, without a bipartisan agreement to continue what was a very positive 2-year agreement put together that has been called the Ryan-Murray agreement to be able to balance out all the security needs as well as the economic security needs of our country—without that, it is a mistake to begin the appropriations process one bill at a time.

So from my perspective, on behalf of the people of Michigan, whatever appropriations bill comes up next, no matter what it is, we should not begin that process until we have a bipartisan agreement, as we had for the last 2

years, so that no part of our national security is hurt or the economic security for the future of our country. Until we do that—and we can do that; we have done it before—we should not begin the appropriations process on a piecemeal basis.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

OBAMACARE

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, last week, President Obama spoke at a meeting of the Catholic Health Association, and he told the association that his health care law, as he said, ''worked out better than some of us anticipated.''

Well, I can tell you that the President's health care law has worked out much worse—much worse—than the American people expected. It has worked out much worse than the President promised it was going to work. Hard-working families all across the country are suffering under the President's complicated, confusing, and costly health care law.

The new Senator from Michigan just gave his maiden speech this morning, and I welcome him to the Senate. The senior Senator from Michigan just spoke on the floor. Last week, she also spoke on the floor and talked about the millions of Americans who need subsidies to help cover the cost of these outrageously expensive ObamaCare mandates. Well, ObamaCare hurts many of the people in her home State of Michigan.

This insurance is going to get a lot more expensive for the people of Michigan next year. The Obama administration released new numbers recently showing how much more people are going to have to pay for their ObamaCare plans next year. There is one company in Michigan that has requested a rate increase of 38 percent. There are more than 20,000 people in Michigan who get their ObamaCare insurance from this company today. These people are looking at the prospect of their insurance costing 38 percent more next year. Other families in Michigan are facing rate hikes of 11 percent or 17 percent or 37 percent, depending on the specific plan they are in.

And it is not just happening in Michigan. In Washington State, one company says its premiums next year will be 19 percent higher. There are more than 7,000 people in Washington State who get their insurance from that company. Another company says it is raising its rates 9.6 percent. People in Washington are facing much higher insurance premiums, and they will still have the narrow networks that so many Americans have to deal with because of ObamaCare. When I say ''narrow network,'' I mean fewer choices of hospitals, fewer choices of doctors to take care of them—limited choices, plus paying more.

So how big of a problem is it? Well, the Wall Street Journal had an article about these people the other day. On Friday, June 12, the headline was ''Surprises in Health-Law Bills.'' The article says: ''Out-of-network charges often aren't flagged before treatment.'' They call it medical bill shock.

This is under the President's health care law—medical bill shock; surprises in health-law bills. The article tells the story of Angela Giboney from Mill Creek, WA—Washington State. She has insurance through the State ObamaCare exchange. She has ObamaCare, make no mistake about it. When she went to have a mammogram, it turned out the place that did the screening was outside her network, so she got a bill for $932. President Obama promised that people would pay less under the health care law. Instead, people all across the country are getting stuck with surprise bills because of these narrow networks. And in spite of that, their premiums are going to jump again next year.

Some Democrats say that people shouldn't worry about these dramatic premium increases because the average increase—this is what the Democrats say—in some places won't be that high. Well, there is a new study that looked at the rate requests in eight different States for next year. It says that in those eight States, premiums for the silver plan in the ObamaCare exchange will only go up by, on average, 6 percent. The study says that in Connecticut, the average silver plan is only going to raise premiums 4 percent. It says if you shop around—if you shop around—you might be able to find a new plan next year that will go up by less than your current plan is going up.

So they are saying that across the board they are going up. The question is, How much are they going up? And if you shop around, you might be able to find a place they are not going up quite as much as they are with your current plan.

Is that what President Obama promised the American people? Did he promise the American people the rates would only go up 6 percent? No, that is not what he promised. He said rates would go down by $2,500 per family, per year.

Did President Obama say your rates will go up a little less if you are willing to change plans every year? No. He said if you like your insurance, you can keep your insurance. That is what the President said.

Did the President promise that maybe your rates won't go up by quite as much if you are willing to accept a narrow network of providers? Did he say you should change your doctor every year by switching from plan to plan? No, of course not. He said if you like your doctor, you can keep your doctor.

I want to make another point about this new study. It is only talking about the average increases across all the plans offered in eight States. Even if the average premium is only going up 6 percent in those eight States, a lot of people are going to end up paying much more.

There are families in Connecticut who may have to pay 16 percent more next year. That is how much more one company in Connecticut wants to charge almost 26,000 people who buy the ObamaCare plans today. Does the President think these families are happy that the average increase is only 4 percent when they get an increase of 16 percent? Is that what the President means when he says his health care law is working better than he anticipated—and he said it just last week—because there are a lot of people in Connecticut who say it is not working and it is working much worse than they anticipated.

People have been writing to the State insurance department in Connecticut, and they are angry. They are angry with the President and alarmed at the ObamaCare price hikes. One person wrote that their insurance company is requesting a rate increase of 14.3 percent in Connecticut. For Democrats who say the average may be only 4 percent, some people will be paying over 14 percent more next year. The person asks: Does the average worker get a 14-percent salary increase? That is not what the people of Michigan, Washington, Connecticut or anywhere else thought they were going to get when Democrats called the law the Affordable Care Act.

Sometime in the next couple of weeks the Supreme Court is going to decide whether it is legal for President Obama to spend some of the billions of taxpayer dollars that he has been spending on the health care law. Now, the decision could affect more than 6 million Americans. Republicans have been watching this case very closely. We have been working on ideas to protect these people and to protect all Americans from the damages caused by the President's health care law.

If the Court rules against the President, then Republicans will be ready to sit down with Democrats to improve health care in America. We will take the opportunity to protect the people from ObamaCare's broken promises and to provide freedom to the people who are trapped in Washington-mandated health care. It will be up to the President and Democrats in Congress whether they want to join us or if they want to continue to insist that this law is working better than they anticipated. I hope they will work with us—work with us—on reforms that the American people need, want, and deserve.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Georgia.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, before he leaves the floor, I thank the distinguished Senator from Wyoming, a physician himself, not just for his good remarks today but for his litany of good

remarks throughout the debate on the Affordable Care Act.

For 6 years he has been an outspoken voice for what is right for the American people and what the American people want, which is affordable, quality health care. I appreciate his contribution, not just to the debate today but to the debate we have had in the past and the one we are about to have in the future. He is right that we must come together—Republicans and Democrats alike—and make sure that the broken promises of the Affordable Care Act are fixed; that affordable, accessible, quality health care is available to the American people; that it is deliverable by private industry and by private and competitive free enterprise system; and that government mandates that force prices up and quality down go away. So I thank the Senator for his contribution and all the great work he does.

He is not quite as old as I am, but he might like the movie I like, ''Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.'' There is a great line in ''Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid'' where they are sitting in a cave after having robbed a bank. Butch looks over at Sundance and says: ''Boy, I just love it when a plan comes together.''

Well, 6 years later, as we look back on the Affordable Care Act, the plan is unravelling. It is costing the American people more. Health care is less accessible. Deductibles are higher. It is time that we fix it and that we fix it right.

If the King v. Burwell case is decided—as it will be in the next few weeks—we have an obligation to keep the first promise the President did not keep. Do you remember? President Obama said: If you like your insurance, you can keep it? If Burwell loses and if King wins and the Court rules that the subsidies are illegal, approximately 9.5 million Americans who have gotten insurance and have it through subsidies through the Affordable Care Act would be threatened to lose their insurance immediately upon its decision. We can't let that happen. We have to see that we build a bridge from where we are today to a future of better health care, more accessible health care, and more affordable health care.

So we must remember as Republicans, who have so often criticized the President for that remark that if you like your health care you can keep it, to make sure that we don't become an unwitting accomplice in this decision if King wins, by, first and foremost, assuring the 9.5 million who have coverage that we will work to see that you can keep your coverage and that you have a bridge to a better, more competitive, more affordable health care system. It is important for us to remember that.

No. 2, it is important for us to remember that we can't recreate a system that the President created in terms of paying for the health care. Have you ever thought about how the Affordable Care Act is paid for? It is paid for in the following ways: higher copayments, less benefits, and higher premiums. But even worse, there is a revenue system that actually punishes free enterprise, an 85-percent medical loss-ratio mandate which cut out every private sector insurance salesperson who sold medical plans to the American people, because when you take 85 percent as the maximum loss ratio, then you only have 15 percent for administration. There is nothing left to compensate someone for selling the policy.

No. 3, when we were short $19 billion, the President decided to create the HIT tax. What is the HIT tax? It is an arbitrary tax against small and medium-sized group medical companies, charging them not only on their premiums, not only on their revenues but on their percentage of market share. Where in the world has the government ever decided to take market share as an indicator of how much you pay? It makes no sense unless you were trying to find dollars to make sense. And the President did it. I can go over litany after litany after litany.

The medical device tax on orthopedists deals with devices in everything that they do. The medical device tax is not a tax on net profit on medical devices. It is a 2.3 percent surcharge on the gross revenues of the device manufacturer.

I tell the story about my visit to South Africa 2 years ago. I got a call from our Governor. He said: You are in Johannesburg, South Africa. Would you go to the chamber of commerce there and visit with a Georgia company from Kennesaw, GA, a small medical device manufacturer that is selling their products. Just tell them thank you for their business.

I said sure. I went by that evening for a reception, found the gentleman from Kennesaw, and said: Thank you so much for doing your business in Georgia.

He said: Oh, I have moved.

I said: Oh, I am sorry. The Governor's office called me.

He said: Well, I just announced that I am moving this week. They don't know it yet.

I said: Where are you moving?

He said: Madrid.

I said: Madrid, Spain?

He said: Yes.

I said: Why?

He said: Because the medical device tax is making it impossible for me to do what I need to do in terms of innovation, in terms of marketing, and in terms of distribution.

So it was an ill-conceived act with the best of intentions but the worst of results. How bad? It is just like what Senator BARRASSO said a minute ago.

In Georgia, one plan is going up 38 percent—one plan. That is the highest we know of—not 4, not 10, not 17 but 38 percent. There are 10,796 Georgians who have that plan who now have the alternative of going to find something else or paying 38 percent more. I don't know about everybody else, but wages aren't growing by 38 percent, and opportunity is not growing by 38 percent. But the cost of your health care, which you want to have, goes up 38 percent and you have to find a way to pay it. What does that do? It hurts the economy, it hurts family, and it hurts the American people.

So as we look at the results of what is going to happen with King v. Burwell, if King is ruled in favor of and the courts throw out the subsidies on the Affordable Care Act, we need, first of all, to do no harm. We need to make sure that nobody arbitrarily, immediately loses the insurance that they planned on. We need to keep the promise President Obama made and never kept. That is No. 1.

No. 2, we need to get everybody in the same room—Republicans and Democrats alike, providers and beneficiaries alike. Let's build a health care system for the 21st century for America that rewards the best health care system in the world by allowing it to innovate, by encouraging it to compete, and not making arbitrary decisions on cost and taxation that drive people out of the marketplace and out of business.

I am at that age where I care about my health care. I enjoy my health care. I like the policy I have. It costs me a lot more than it did before the Affordable Care Act. Health insurance is important. But there is a limit to what I can absorb. There is a limit to what the American people can absorb, and there is a limit to what government can do to try to fit a square peg in a round hole. I learned in Boy Scouts that doesn't work.

The Affordable Care Act is a square peg that for 6 years we have tried to fit in a round hole, and it doesn't fit. It is time that we rounded that peg, took into consideration the American people, the taxpayers, the patients, and the physicians and did what is right for the American people.

Don't break our promises. Let's keep our promises. Let's allow them to have the choice of insurance policies that, once they buy them, they can keep and a system that doesn't mandate increases but instead encourages competition, quality, and makes sure it is health care the American people want, is accessible, affordable, available, and delivered in a competitive, free enterprise market by the private sector.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. COATS. Mr. President, I wish to speak about several amendments I have submitted to the Defense authorization bill currently before the Senate.

First, I wish to commend Chairman MCCAIN in his first mission as chairman of the Armed Services Committee.

The bill before us bears his imprint and that of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and it addresses the growing challenges facing our military.

This legislation came out of committee in a bipartisan way and came to the floor with the opportunity for every Member of the Senate to offer amendments to this bill. It was an open amendment process, something we have been doing this year that hasn't been done previously under the leadership of the now minority. Unfortunately, that effort was blocked by the minority, and we now are where we are.

I have introduced amendments that will hopefully be carried now in a manager's package with the support of Senator MCCAIN and others here. I just want to describe what those were.

First of all, let me say that despite the efforts of the minority to block our progress on this bill, perhaps one of the most essential things the Senate and the Congress does in any year is to provide for the common defense by passing authorization and appropriations for our military so that they have the policy and the authority and the resources to be able to conduct their efforts, both defending us here at home and dealing with issues overseas.

The bill is a lifesaver and a nation defender, and it is not—to quote the minority leader—''a waste of time.'' How could anyone come to this floor and simply say that discussing, debating, and passing legislation that protects our country and provides support for our military is a waste of time? It just defies credulity and has us all scratching our heads.

Nevertheless, we proceeded, and we go forward because, thankfully, under the majority leadership of Senator MCCONNELL and the leadership of Senator MCCAIN as chairman of the Armed Services Committee, we are moving forward with this bill.

The personnel, platforms, and programs in this bill could very well save the lives of our military personnel deployed on the frontlines of freedom around the globe, and it is necessary that we go forward. That brings me to the rationale behind the first amendment that I have introduced.

Last week, President Obama admitted to the Nation and to the world that he still does not have ''a complete strategy'' to deal with ISIS. A year ago this month, the terrorist organization Islamic State proclaimed itself as a worldwide caliphate, claiming control of territory in Syria and Iraq. ISIS quickly has become the largest, best organized, best financed, and most ambitious terrorist organization in history—not to mention the most brutal terrorist organization that we have ever seen.

The previous Secretary of Defense and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff described the threat arising from ISIS in apocalyptic terms—as well they should. The unspeakable depravities committed by ISIS are enough to evoke images of death's pale horse.

ISIS has used sophisticated and successful Internet and media outreach tools to attract tens of thousands of radical Islamists to join its fight in Syria, Iraq, and beyond. They have captured and control major population centers in Iraq, including Mosul, Fallujah, and Ramadi. They have secured their bases of operations in Syria and expanded the territory ISIS controls throughout Syria, threatening to dominate any successor state emerging from the Syrian civil war. In the meantime, ISIS has also expanded its influence and secured allegiance from cooperating terrorist organizations in Yemen, Libya, Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon.

Yet early last year, the President compared ISIS to a junior varsity. Some junior varsity—it looks more like something that rises to the level of a major, major threat to the nations of the world—not just in the Middle East but to the nations of the world. But why call it a junior varsity?

Then, following the terrorist group's dramatic expansion, later the President acknowledged the threat but admitted that ''we don't have a strategy yet'' to confront ISIS. Eventually, though, the President did come up with a plan that included two main elements: training moderate volunteers—not American volunteers but Iraqi volunteers—to fight ISIS in Syria and training and equipping the Iraqi Defense Forces to fight ISIS in Iraq.

The first part of this plan has produced no fighters after a year of talk and has just begun to train the first cohort of 400 volunteers, whose training is to be complete in another year or so. Even then, they will be equipped to assume only defensive missions in Syria, according to the Pentagon. That is the U.S. portion. The Iraqi portion deals with training that I will be talking about here in just a moment.

How could this severely limited strategy be even remotely responsive to ISIS, to the means and the threat ISIS poses? How is it that ISIS manages to recruit, transport, train, deploy, and effectively fight tens of thousands of radical men and women, while we are spending 2 years finding and training just 400 in our program in Syria?

In Iraq, 10 years and billions of dollars spent creating defense forces has produced nothing capable of standing up to the ISIS fanatics.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said earlier this month that Iraqi forces ''did not have a will to fight'' when confronting a vastly inferior—vastly inferior—''Islamic State'' force in this particular battle. They just melted away in Mosul and Ramadi, said the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Those who had spent months, if not years, and spent very significant amounts of money on training simply melted away because they did not have the will to fight.

The President's intention to train and equip the Iraqi forces to confront the Islamic State has failed to produce an effective fighting force that is adequately led and sufficiently equipped. That is the only conclusion we can come to after months and years and extraordinary expenditures of dollars to try to deal with the ISIS threat.

The other major component of the President's strategy is airstrikes. Airpower, when used as part of an integrated grand strategy, can play an essential role. In this case, there is no integrated larger strategy, and therefore airpower is limited in terms of what it can do.

The administration's airstrikes have been much less effective in dealing with the ISIS threat than anticipated. They have not halted ISIS's advances in the region.

In the words of retired Air Force General David Deptula, a key architect of the air campaign in Operation Desert Storm:

> Air power has to be applied like a thunderstorm, not a drizzle. In the campaign against the Islamic State, we are averaging 12 strike sorties per day. During Operation Desert Storm in Iraq and Kuwait, the average was 1,241.

Airpower, when properly utilized in concert with troops to support the effort, can bring battlefield success. However, the Obama administration has failed to provide the proper number of well-trained American spotters on the ground in Iraq designating targets. If you do not have forces in position to target the exact target, airpower becomes random and not nearly as effective as it should be. And that has not been authorized by the President as a means of dealing with this issue; therefore, the limits that have been placed on the use of airpower have left us in a situation where it is much less effective than it could be.

It has now been over a year since ISIS was widely acknowledged as a major threat to our national security. When asked just last week what is and is not working in the fight against ISIS, the President stated once again that we still do not have ''a complete strategy'' to confront ISIS. Instead, he blamed the Pentagon and the Iraqis for not finalizing a plan. Yet the President says we still do not have a complete strategy to address this threat. How is that possible?

As the Wall Street Journal put it in its June 11 editorial, ''The fundamental problem with Mr. Obama's strategy is that he is so determined to show that the U.S. isn't returning to war in Iraq that he isn't doing enough to win the war we are fighting.''

In the meantime, the White House announced that we would be sending another 450 troops to Iraq to train Sunni tribal fighters. I understand that this really means little more than 50 actual trainers, the rest of this small cohort to provide security for themselves. So we are down to about 50 trainers, and that is the next step in dealing with a threat that far expands the need to do much more.

We must insist that President Obama immediately produce a complete, detailed, and realistic plan to confront, degrade, and defeat the Islamic State. This plan must include realistic, well-substantiated estimates of timeframes, resources required, expected allies, and anticipated obstacles. Also, it must include clear definitions of milestones and metrics of success. Most importantly, the plan must include clear accountability. I have introduced an amendment to the Defense authorization bill that will require just that—a serious, credible, complete strategy for addressing the threat posed by ISIS.

President Obama has shown a tendency to blame others—the Pentagon or allies or Sunnis or the Iraqi Government or Congress—for his own failures of leadership in this effort; therefore, we must demand a coherent, realistic plan so the American people can properly apportion the credit for success or the blame for failure where it belongs.

Let me briefly talk about a couple of other amendments I have introduced, and I am hopeful we can include these two amendments in the managers' package.

Amendment No. 1705 addresses the Department of Defense's present policy of not allowing Active-Duty flag and general officers to visit our friends in Taiwan. Instead, the DOD relies on retired flag and general officers—retired officers to visit Taiwan in what can only be seen as appeasing Communist China.

It is difficult for military officials in both Taiwan and the United States to discuss contingency responses when Active-Duty U.S. generals and flag officers are not able to meet regularly with their Taiwanese counterparts. Without visiting Taiwan, they are not able to familiarize themselves with Taiwan's command centers, terrain, and operational capabilities.

Active-Duty U.S. generals and flag officers have to be able to visit Taiwan and see its military in action in order to gain a better understanding of Taiwan's armed forces and the weapons they require for self-defense.

In the event of an emergency, such as humanitarian assistance or a disaster relief mission, senior officers from Taiwan and the United States will have little, if any, experience working together to save the lives of thousands of Taiwanese citizens and Americans living abroad in Taiwan.

My amendment would simply state that the Department of Defense should undertake a program of senior military officer exchanges with Taiwan. Note that this amendment does not require such exchanges. I do not believe in tying the military's hands in this sort of matter, but I do believe it is important that the Senate go on record as concerned about the current policy of refusing to allow such exchanges. The armed forces of Taiwan are a very valuable partner of the U.S. military. These visits by our generals and admirals will encourage Taiwan to make increased investments in their national defense, especially in light of the belligerent behavior demonstrated by the Chinese.

I understand that there is bipartisan agreement on this amendment, and I hope and trust that we can include this measure in any upcoming managers' package.

Finally, I have offered amendment No. 1877, which would require the Secretary of the Navy to submit to both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees a report detailing the potential impacts to the industrial base if the July 2017 start date for the refueling and complex overhaul of the USS George Washington is delayed by 6 months, 1 year, or 2 years.

As we learned last year when the administration briefly considered postponing the scheduled overhaul of the USS George Washington, such delays only drive up costs because of the uncertainty they create among the industrial base. I hope to avoid a repeat of that mistake by requiring the Navy to report on the true costs of any delay.

I hope the Senate will agree to this amendment.

Once again, I thank Senator MCCAIN for his leadership on the Defense authorization bill, and I hope the Senate will act to pass this critically important bill without delay. This is one of the most essential bills this Congress takes up each year, and to deter this for any political reason simply is not acceptable when our troops' lives and safety are at risk. They are there to defend us. They need our support, and they need it now.

I yield floor.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the pending business.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1735) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Pending:

McCain amendment No. 1463, in the nature of a substitute.

McCain amendment No. 1456 (to amendment No. 1463), to require additional information supporting long-range plans for construction of naval vessels.

Cornyn amendment No. 1486 (to amendment No. 1463), to require reporting on energy security issues involving Europe and the Russian Federation, and to express the sense of Congress regarding ways the United States could help vulnerable allies and partners with energy security.

Markey amendment No. 1645 (to amendment No. 1463), to express the sense of Congress that exports of crude oil to United States allies and partners should not be determined to be consistent with the national interest if those exports would increase energy prices in the United States for American consumers or businesses or increase the reliance of the United States on imported oil.

Reed (for Blumenthal) modified amendment No. 1564 (to amendment No. 1463), to enhance protections accorded to servicemembers and their spouses.

McCain (for Paul) modified amendment No. 1543 (to amendment No. 1463), to strengthen employee cost savings suggestions programs within the Federal Government.

Reed (for Durbin) modified amendment No. 1559 (to amendment No. 1463), to prohibit the award of Department of Defense contracts to inverted domestic corporations.

Fischer/Booker amendment No. 1825 (to amendment No. 1463), to authorize appropriations for national security aspects of the Merchant Marine for fiscal years 2016 and 2017.

McCain (for Hatch) amendment No. 1911 (to amendment No. 1456), to require a report on the Department of Defense definition of and policy regarding software sustainment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to tell my colleagues that I think we are winding down here. We have several other issues to address, but I think it is very possible that we could see the end here for final passage of the bill. There are still some issues that need to be resolved, but I am grateful for the progress all of my colleagues have made on both sides of the aisle.

I would like to call up and speak briefly on McCain amendment No. 1482. This amendment would prohibit the Secretary of Defense or the Secretary of a military department from funding or conducting medical research or development projects unless the Secretary determines that the research or project is designed to protect, enhance, or restore the health and safety of members of the Armed Forces through phases of deployment, combat, medical recovery, and rehabilitation.

I will not seek a vote on this amendment, but I will say that it is an issue which must be addressed if we are going to spend American tax dollars on defending this Nation, the security, and the men and women who are serving.

What I am going to show my colleagues is what happens with almost any bad deal around here, and that is the incredible increase in congressionally directed spending on medical research which is on the Department of Defense authorization bill—not on the Health and Human Services appropriations but on Defense. When we are cutting defense, when we are experiencing all the bad results of sequestration, we continue to grow to nearly $1 billion in medical research that has nothing to do with defense.

I am all for medical research. I am all in. The National Institutes of Health is doing great things. I am all for it. But when we take it out of defense spending rather than what it should be taken out of, which is Health

and Human Services, then I object to that.

I am aware of the outcry that has taken place at these various organizations which are dedicated to improving the health of Americans, and so therefore of course I am not subjecting it to a vote. But it is outrageous that this has gone up to nearly $1 billion in spending that is taken out of the Department of Defense.

My friends, what it is, is the Willie Sutton syndrome. When the famous bank robber Willie Sutton was asked why he robbed banks, he said, ''Because that's where the money is.''

So this medical research, which has nothing to do with defense, comes out of the Department of Defense. It is wrong, and it needs to stop, as every scarce dollar that is earmarked for defense must go to the defense of this Nation.

I know what the response is going to be: Oh my God, MCCAIN, you want to take money away from—fill in the blank. No, I am not asking to take money from any medical research; I am asking that it be put where it belongs, and that is not in the Department of Defense. It is not about disputing the great value of much of the medical research Congress and America's taxpayers make possible. I will match my record on support for medical research with anyone's. Any person who has reached my advanced age likely has some firsthand experience with the miracles of modern medicine and gratitude for all who support it. Much of the medical research for which Congress appropriates money each year helps to extend and improve the lives of many Americans. This amendment is not about the value of medical research or whether Congress should support it.

Immediately I will hear the response waiting now: Oh, MCCAIN, you want to cut very beneficial research that helps the lives of Americans. No. No, I do not. I want it appropriated from the appropriate appropriations bill, not from defense.

This amendment is absolutely about what departments and agencies of our government should be funding what kinds of medical research and specifically what the proper role of the Department of Defense is in this work.

Over the past 20 years, Congress has added billions of dollars to the Department of Defense's medical research portfolio for disease research that has nothing to do with defense. Since 1992, Congress has appropriated almost $10 billion for medical research in the Department of Defense's Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, and only about $2.4 billion of that $10 billion was for research that could be considered in any way relevant to the military.

To be sure, the Department of Defense has a proper and vital role to play in medical research that benefits the unique work of our men and women in uniform in areas such as prosthetics, traumatic brain injury, and spinal cord injury, among others. However, through years of congressionally directed spending, the DOD medical research program has been used to fund research on breast cancer, prostrate cancer, lung cancer, genetic disorders such as muscular dystrophy, and even mad cow disease.

In other words, over the last 2 decades, in a time of war and fiscal challenge, even despite sequestration, Congress has appropriated $7.3 billion for medical research that is totally unrelated to the military—money that the Department of Defense did not request and our military did not need.

This graph right behind me shows the explosive growth that has occurred in this program since 1992. At that time, in 1992, Congress had funded one research project for breast cancer. Over time, that has now grown to 30 separate medical research projects funded by the Congress. Funding has increased by almost 4,000 percent, from $25 million in 1992 to almost $1 billion last year. I will repeat that for the benefit of my colleagues. Spending on medical research at DOD—nearly 75 percent of which has nothing to do with the military—has grown 4,000 percent since 1992. Even the late Senator from Alaska, Ted Stevens, under whose leadership the original funding for breast cancer was added, reversed course in 2006 because the money would be ''going to medical research instead of the needs of the military.''

During the floor debate on the annual Defense appropriations bill, Senator Stevens had this to say:

> We could not have any more money going out of the Defense bill to take care of medical research when medical research is basically a function of the NIH. . . . It is not our business. I confess, I am the one who made the first mistake years ago. I am the one who suggested that we include some money for breast cancer research. It was languishing at the time. . . . Since that time it has grown to $750 million . . . in the last bill we had, dealing with medical research that had nothing to do with the Department of Defense.

My friends, when Senator Ted Stevens is saying that a congressionally directed spending program has gotten out of hand, we know there is a problem. Yet, despite the urgings of Senator Stevens in 2006, the problem has only gotten worse since then. Last year alone Congress appropriated $971.6 million for medical research programs that the Department of Defense did not request in its budget. More than $280 million of that money was appropriated for cancer research in the defense budget while six other Federal agencies spent more than $50 billion on cancer research in fiscal year 2015.

I will put that in perspective. For the amount of money that Congress appropriated for medical research last year at the Department of Defense—again, most of which had nothing to do with the military and which the Department did not request—we could have bought 12 F–18 Superhornets, 2 littoral combat ships or roughly 1 Army brigade combat team.

My friends, in these days of sequestration, that is not acceptable. Once again, I am sure every Member of this body agrees that this research is vitally important to Americans suffering from these diseases, to the families and friends who care for them, and to all of those who know the pain and grief of losing a loved one. But this research should not be funded by the Department of Defense. It belongs in civilian departments and agencies of our government.

Appropriating money in this way only harms our national security by reducing the funding available for military-relevant medical research that helps protect service men and women on the battlefield and for military capabilities they desperately need to perform their missions. Furthermore, this kind of misguided spending only puts decisionmaking about medical research in the hands of lobbyists and politicians instead of medical experts where it belongs.

So I say to my colleagues, what I had proposed and will not seek a vote on—because the result is very clear—is a commonsense amendment. It focuses the Department's research efforts on medical research that will lead to lifesaving advancements in battlefield medicine and new therapies for recovery and rehabilitation of servicemembers wounded both physically and mentally on the battlefield. It could finally begin the long overdue process of shifting the hundreds of millions of dollars of nonmilitary medical research spending out of the Department of Defense and into the appropriate civilian departments and agencies of our government. That is a change that needs to start now, and I hope my colleagues, especially my friends on the Appropriations Committee, will make that happen.

I want to point out again that we started in fiscal year 1992 with $25 million. We are now up to nearly $1 trillion, and I am sure that the appropriators have an equal or like amount that they are proposing.

I see that my colleague from Illinois is here on the floor, and I know he will defend with vigor, passion, love, and every emotion he has what we are doing because of those who are suffering from illnesses such as breast cancer and all of the other terrible things that afflict our society. I say to my friends who will come to the floor in a high dudgeon over what I am proposing: I am not saying that we should cut any of these programs—not a single one. We should probably increase them. But let's put them where they belong, and that is not in the Department of Defense.

While I have the floor, I want to talk about some other issues. Former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates said in an interview over the weekend:

> What it feels like to me is really what the President said last week, which was a lack of strategy. Just adding a few hundred troops doing more of the same I think is not likely

to make much of a difference. . . . We should have had a strategy a year ago. . . . And we have to be willing, if we think ISIS is truly a threat to the United States and to our interests, we have to be willing to put Americans at risk. That's just a fact of life. . . . [I]f the mission [President Obama] has set for the military is to degrade and destroy ISIS, the rules of engagement that he has imposed on them prevent them from achieving that mission.

I don't know anyone who is more respected by both sides of the aisle and served Presidents of both parties in key administrative positions than Secretary of Defense Bob Gates. Quite often, I and my friend from South Carolina, Senator GRAHAM, are accused of being biased and partisan and attacking the President and his strategies in a partisan fashion. I will remind my colleagues that in 2006 Senator GRAHAM and I called for the resignation of the Secretary of Defense, who was then in a Republican administration. In 2006, we said: We are losing the war. In 2006, I had a spirited argument with then-General Dempsey—who was in charge of training the Iraqis and assured me everything was going fine—when I was showing him the facts when things were going to hell in a handbasket. So to somehow accuse me, Senator GRAHAM, and others of making these comments about a feckless and without-foundation foreign policy that is allowing ISIS to succeed does not bear scrutiny.

I agree with former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates when he says: ''What it feels like to me is really what the President said last week, which was a lack of a strategy.'' There is a lack of a strategy.

I want to tell my colleagues that we will be having hearings when we get through with this bill, and we will try to figure out what the Congress and the American people should know about what is happening in the world, not just in the Middle East.

Facts are stubborn things. The fact is we can knock off an ISIS or Al Qaeda leader, and we can trumpet that as a great victory and thank God that it has happened. But to think that really has a significant, long-term impact on the ability of ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other terrorist organizations to not reconstitute and continue their success, with occasional setbacks—which they are achieving and spreading that poison throughout the Middle East and the latest being Libya, aided and abetted in many cases by the Iranians—is obviously a fact that cannot be denied.

For example USA Today reports: ''Death of al-Qaeda leader may benefit Islamic State.''

The U.S. missile strike that killed al-Qaeda's No. 2 leader is another in a string of devastating blows to the terrorist group's old-guard leadership that might inadvertently help a more brutal terror group: the Islamic State, analysts said.

The Washington Post Editorial Board writes today: ''A dangerous mission in Libya requires a firm approach.''

The Washington Post editorial board, not known as a rightwing periodical, writes:

It's good those two militants have been taken off the battlefield, but their elimination will not remedy the growing crises in Libya and Yemen. In that respect, the operations are another example of the limited benefits of President Obama's narrow approach to counterterrorism.

The New York Times reports today: ''As Vladimir Putin Talks More Missiles and Might, Cost Tells Another Story.''

Reuters reports today: ''China gives more details on South China Sea facilities.''

This is very disturbing. I say to my colleagues and all of us—whether we are members of the Intelligence Committee or members of the Armed Services Committee—that we must address this issue of cyber security.

My friends, we just went through a long back-and-forth debate and discussion over whether we should restrict the kinds of telephone information and whether it be shared or not shared and who should store it and all of that. Meanwhile, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday: ''Hackers Likely Stole Security-Clearance Information During Breach of Government Agencies.''

Hackers who raided the U.S. government's personnel office gained access to secret background investigations conducted on current and former employees, senior administration officials said Friday—an ominous development in the recent threat of federal data, one of the largest in history.

The Washington Post editorial board writes today: ''A pathetic breach of responsibility on cybersecurity.''

[T]he breach of Office of Personnel Management networks this year . . . represents a failure of stewardship and a serious external threat.

After the OPM suffered a cyberintrusion in 2014, its director, Katherine Archuleta, asked Congress in February for $26 million in additional funding for cybersecurity. She said the agency stores more personally identifiable information than almost any other in the government, including banking data for more than 2 million people and background investigations for more than 30 million, among them individuals being considered for military enlistment, federal job appointments and employment by federal contractors. ''It is imperative,'' Ms. Archuleta wrote, that . . . ''threats to identity theft, financial espionage, etc., are real, dynamic and must be averted.'' They were not averted.

In April, the new breach was uncovered. Intruders had stolen the names, Social Security numbers, pay history, health records and other data of some 4.2 million current and former federal workers.

It seems to us that just slamming doors and building more firewalls may be an insufficient response to an assault of this magnitude. An essential aspect of deterrence is the credible threat of retaliation.

Why do I quote from that? It is because every time we ask a question as to what the policy is, whether it is strictly defensive against a cyber attack or whether offensive in order to prevent one, the policy has ''not been determined.''

I say we have to address this issue. First of all, we have to have an administration policy or that policy somehow may be developed in the Congress, which is not the right way to do it, obviously.

So I intend to work with Senator BURR, Senator FEINSTEIN, Senator REED, and others in holding hearings and figuring out what we need to do because this is a serious threat in many respects that we have faced in recent times.

Finally, I wish to mention this: ''Former CIA Chief Says Government Data Breach Could Help China Recruit Spies.''

Retired Gen. Michael Hayden, who once led the National Security Agency and later the Central Intelligence Agency, said the threat of millions of U.S. Government personnel records could allow China to recruit U.S. officials as spies.

The general said:

This is a tremendously big deal. My deepest emotion is embarrassment.

He said the personnel records were a ''legitimate foreign intelligence target.''

He continued:

To grab the equivalent in the Chinese system, I would not have thought twice. I would not have asked permission . . . This is not ''shame on China.'' This is ''shame on us'' for not protecting that kind of information.

So I urge my colleagues to understand that this new issue of cyber security is an area which the United States of America, in the view of many experts, does not have a significant advantage. It is an area where, in some respects, we may even be at a disadvantage, if we look at the extraordinary events that have taken place in the issue of cyber security. The latest information, of course, of 4 million people has to get our attention. It has to get the attention of the administration. We need to work together. I stand ready—and I know my colleagues on the other side of the aisle do as well—to sit down and come up with some policies and then implement those policies into ways of combating this new form of warfare we call cyber.

Again, I anticipate the comments of my friend from Illinois who will vigorously defend all of the research that is done in medical research. I wish to point out, again, that I am not in opposition to one single dime of any kind of medical research. I say it is coming out of the wrong place. We cannot make a logical argument that this belongs in the Department of Defense. Some of it does, and I have pointed that out. The majority of it belongs with other agencies.

When we are facing sequestration and when we are cutting our national security to the bone, according to our military leaders who have said that continued sequestration puts the lives of the men and women who are serving in the military in danger, we cannot afford another $1 billion to be spent on medical research. We want the money spent on medical research. We want it spent from the right place.

I look forward to addressing the remaining amendments with my colleague and friend from Rhode Island.

Hopefully, we can wrap up the Defense authorization bill sometime very soon. Then we can move on to conference and then bring the bill back after the conference to the floor of the Senate so we can carry out our first and most urgent responsibility; that is, the security of the Nation and men and women who defend it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

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

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, let me say at the outset that the Senator from Arizona, although we are of opposite political faith, has been my friend and colleague for a long time—since we first were elected together in a class in the House of Representatives. Our friendship and relationship has had its peaks and valleys. I hope we are at a peak at this moment. I will concede, before I say a word about his amendment, that I have no question in my mind, nor should anyone, about the commitment of the Senator from Arizona to the men and women who show extraordinary courage in battling for the United States of America in our military. The Senator's own personal life is a testament to his dedication to the U.S. military. I know he has brought that dedication to his service as the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and in bringing this authorization bill to the floor.

Secondly, I don't question his commitment to medical research either. As he said, when we reach a certain stage in life, we may value it more because we realize our own vulnerabilities and the vulnerabilities of those we love. So what I am about to say is not a reflection of his commitment to the military nor his commitment to basic medical research, but I do question this amendment, which Senator MCCAIN has said he will not offer but has filed, and I have been prepared for several days now to debate.

Here is the question: Should we have within the Department of Defense a medical research capacity? I think yes, and I think for obvious reasons—because there are certain challenges to the men and women who serve in our military and to their families which relate to their military service.

Secondly, if we are going to have such a military research program, should politicians and lobbyists, as the Senator said, be able to pick the diseases and pick the research? No, of course not. That is why this appropriations bill, which we will consider later this week, and this authorization bill address a situation where this is done by competitive grant. In other words, if we have researchers at some hospital who are researching a medical condition important to our military, we have to compete for it. It is not automatic. The decision is not made by Senators or Congressmen. It is made by medical professionals about which research makes a difference. So I think medical research is important to our military. Politicians shouldn't pick and choose those researchers and those research grants; it ought to be done by professionals.

Third, this undertaking in the Department of Defense is substantial. It is about $1.8 billion for all of the different medical research. In perspective, the funding for the National Institutes of Health is about $30 billion. This is relatively small.

Dr. Francis Collins heads up the NIH and I went to him and I said: Doctor, I am working on this defense medical research bill; I want to make sure we don't waste a penny. I don't want to duplicate anything you are doing at NIH.

He said: Trust me, we will not. We coordinate everything we do. What they do is complementary to our work and what we do is complimentary to their work. We are not wasting a penny.

So I think those three things are an important starting point in this debate. Medical research is important to national defense. Politicians have no role in choosing who is going to do the medical research. Also, whatever we do is going to be coordinated with medical research at leading agencies such as the National Institutes of Health.

There are a lot of items on this list of research that I think very few people would ever quarrel with. Should we have a joint warfighter medical account in research? Should we have orthotics and prosthetics research for those who have lost a limb in military service? How about a military burn research unit, wound care research, military dental research—all of these topics relate to actual service.

The only specifics which the Senator from Arizona raised, questioning why the Department of Defense would get involved in research, I would like to address. One item he specified is breast cancer. It is true the second largest undertaking for breast cancer research in America takes place at the Department of Defense. It started there—and I will be honest—I remember why. It started there because the funding through the National Institutes of Health was not reliable or predictable, and the Department of Defense made a commitment: We will make our commitment to breast cancer research.

Is there a reason it would be in the Department of Defense? Even though the Senator from Arizona has raised questions about it, I wish to call his attention to the following: In 2013, researchers in the Department of Defense developed a vaccine that promises to protect women against a recurrence of breast cancer. Breast cancer is a disease diagnosed in female troops at a rate 20 percent to 40 percent higher than the civilian population. I am a liberal arts lawyer, so I don't know why. Can I figure out why more women in our military are diagnosed with breast cancer than women in our civilian population? I don't know the answer to that, but I want to know the answer to that. I want to know if there is something—anything—environmental or otherwise that our troops, and particularly women in the military, are exposed to that makes them more likely to come down with a diagnosis of breast cancer. Is that a legitimate question at the Department of Defense? It is obvious it is.

How good are these researchers if we put several billion dollars into breast cancer research in the Department of Defense? The researchers recently completed a 10-year study of this vaccine known as E75, tested on more than 100 female soldiers recovering from breast cancer and they had a similar test group of civilian women. The research is happening within the Cancer Vaccine Development Program, an Army research network studying vaccines' potential to fight breast, ovarian, uterine, and prostate cancers.

Researchers indicated that in trials, the vaccine cut the risk in half that a woman's breast cancer will return—in half. Is it worth it? Is it worth it for us, through the Department of Defense, to put money into breast cancer research when female troops have a rate of breast cancer diagnosis 20 to 40 percent higher, when these researchers are finding a vaccine which in trials is cutting the recurrence of breast cancer in half compared to other populations? It seems very obvious to me.

This is not the first time the defense researchers in breast cancer have done extraordinary things. In 1993, defense researchers developed Herceptin, now FDA approved, and one of the most widely used drugs to fight breast cancer—developed at the Department of Defense. Do we want to take the research decisions away from the researchers?

The amendment which the Senator from Arizona offers would give the Secretary of Defense the last word as to whether we do this research. Now, I have known Secretaries of Defense, and they are talented individuals, but when it comes to making medical decisions about medical research, I don't think any of them are qualified to do that. Let's leave it in the hands of the professionals, not in the hands of politicians, not in the hands of political appointees, and not in the hands of bureaucrats.

Let me also say this: When we look at the list of diseases that are studied at the Department of Defense, some of them may sound odd. Lou Gehrig's disease—ALS—why would we include that on a list for Department of Defense research? Let me explain. Men and women who have served in the U.S. military are 60 percent more likely than civilians to develop Lou Gehrig's disease—men and women who serve in the military. Gulf war veterans are twice as likely as the general population to develop Lou Gehrig's disease. Should we invest money for medical research in the Department of Defense for Lou Gehrig's disease? And then should we ask the basic question, Why? Why would it be more likely that one

would develop Lou Gehrig's disease if one served in the U.S. military or if one was in the Gulf war? Those are legitimate medical questions that relate to our military. For the Senator to offer an amendment to take out any of that type of research, I think that is the wrong thing to do.

We don't have to speak about traumatic brain injury. Everybody knows what has happened. We have seen the returning veterans—roadside bombs—what they have gone through. Between 48,000 and 169,000—169,000—military servicemembers who have served and are serving in Iraq and in Afghanistan have developed post-traumatic epilepsy—head injuries. Post-traumatic epilepsy is a form of epilepsy resulting from traumatic brain injury. I put a provision in here for competitive grants on epilepsy and seizures for this reason: $7.5 million—we have 169,000 who are dealing with these traumatic brain injuries and dealing with seizures and epilepsy afterward. Is this a legitimate area of Department of Defense medical research? Absolutely. We cannot ignore the reality of what our troops have gone through and what they need when they come home. To cut out this research would be a mistake.

Let me also say, in 2013 alone, 100,000 servicemembers sought treatment for seizures at our veterans hospitals. It is a serious, serious problem.

I could go through every single element I have here of medical research at the Department of Defense. I hope the examples I have given illustrate that men and women who serve our country face medical challenges which the ordinary civilian population may not face. I think we have a special obligation to them to engage in the research that can make their lives whole again and give them a chance to come back from our military and have a happy and full life, which we promised them. We said: If you will hold up your hand and give an oath to America that you will risk your life for our country, we will stand by you when you come home, and that includes more than a GI bill to go to school. It is more than a place to live. It is even more than basic medical care. It involves medical research.

The final point I wish to make is this. This Senator will never apologize for trying to come up with more money for medical research. Never. Once every 67 seconds in America someone is diagnosed with Alzheimer's in America. When my staff told me that, I said you have to be wrong. They are not. It is once every 67 seconds. We spent $200 billion in Medicare and Medicaid on Alzheimer's patients last year, not to mention the devastating costs to individual families who have someone they love suffering from this disease.

We don't have an Alzheimer's provision. Well, we have a small Alzheimer's provision in this particular medical research bill. Am I going to stand here to apologize for putting $12 million in Alzheimer's research? I will tell you, if we could delay the onset of Alzheimer's by 1 month, by 2 months, by 6 months, God willing, if we could find a cure, we would more than pay for this medical research over and over and over again. We would spare people from the pain and suffering they go through with this disease and spare their families as well. When it comes to medical research, I will never stand and apologize for putting money into medical research. Every one of us has someone we love in our family facing a terrible, threatening, scary diagnosis and praying to God that there has been some area of research that may find a cure or a surgery. That is what this is about.

I am glad the Senator has withdrawn his amendment. I repeat what I said at the outset. I will never ever question his commitment to our members in uniform and our veterans, nor will I question his commitment to medical research, but I will be sending him information that I think demonstrates what we are doing here has a direct impact on military families and military veterans.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have printed in the RECORD three pages of organizations that support my effort to stop this amendment.

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

GROUPS OPPOSING THE MCCAIN AMENDMENT TO PROHIBIT CERTAIN TYPES OF MEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS AT DOD

(June 16, 2015)

INDIVIDUAL LETTERS/GRASSROOTS ACTIVATION

The Arc; The Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance; National Breast Cancer Coalition; The American Urological Association (AUA); Alzheimer' s Association; Arthritis Foundation; Easter Seals.

DEFENSE HEALTH RESEARCH CONSORTIUM SIGN-ON LETTER/GRASSROOTS

ALS Association; American Association for Dental Research; American Association of Clinical Urologists; American Cancer Society; Cancer Action Network; American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists; American Dental Association; American Gastroenterological Association; American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy; American Society for Reproductive Medicine; American Urological Association; Aplastic Anemia & MDS International Foundation; Arthritis Foundation; Autism Speaks; Bladder Cancer Action Network; Breast Cancer Fund.

Children's Tumor Foundation; Colon Cancer Alliance; Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America; Cure HHT; Debbie's Dream Foundation: Curing Stomach Cancer; Digestive Disease National Coalition; Epilepsy Foundation; Fight Colorectal Cancer; FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered; Foundation to Eradicate Duchenne; GBS/CIPD Foundation International; International Myeloma Foundation; Kidney Cancer Association; LAM Foundation; Littlest Tumor Foundation; Living Beyond Breast Cancer; Lung Cancer Alliance.

Lupus Research Institute; Lymphoma Research Foundation; Malecare Cancer Support; Melanoma Research Foundation; Men's Health Network; Muscular Dystrophy Association; National Alliance of State Prostate Cancer Coalitions; National Autism Association; National Multiple Sclerosis Society; Neurofibromatosis Network; Ovarian Cancer National Alliance; Pancreatic Cancer Action Network; Parent Project Muscular Dystrophy; Parkinson's Action Network; Phelan-McDermid Syndrome Foundation.

Preventing Colorectal Cancer; Prostate Cancer Foundation; Prostate Health Education Network; Pulmonary Hypertension Association; Research!America; Scleroderma Foundation; Sleep Research Society; Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates; Society of Gynecologic Oncology; Society for Women's Health Research; Sturge-Weber Foundation; Susan G. Komen; Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance; Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network; Veterans for Common Sense; Veterans Health Council; Vietnam Veterans of America; ZERO-The End of Prostate Cancer.

OVARIAN CANCER COMMUNITY LETTER

Ovarian Cancer National Alliance; Ovarian Cancer Research Fund; Foundation for Women's Cancer; #gyncsm Community; Arkansas Ovarian Cancer Coalition; Bluegrass Ovarian Cancer Support Inc.; Bright Pink; CancerDancer; Capital Ovarian Cancer Organization, Inc.; Caring Together, Inc.; Celma Mastry Ovarian Cancer Foundation; Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance; Feel Teal Club; FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered; Georgia Ovarian Cancer Alliance.

GRACE'S Gynecologic Cancer Support; Help Keep a Sister Alive; HERA Women's Cancer Foundation; Hope for Heather; Kaleidoscope of Hope of New Jersey; Life of Teal, Inc.; Lilies of the Valley; Lydia's Legacy; Michigan Ovarian Cancer Alliance; Minnesota Ovarian Cancer Alliance; NormaLeah Ovarian Cancer Foundation; Oasis of Southern California; Ovacome USA; Ovar'Coming Together; Ovarian & Breast Cancer Alliance; Ovarian and Gynecologic Cancer Coalition/Rhonda's Club; Ovarian Awareness of Kentucky.

Ovarian Cancer 101; Ovarian Cancer Alliance of Arizona; Ovarian Cancer Alliance of California; Ovarian Cancer Alliance of Greater Cincinnati; Ovarian Cancer Alliance of Ohio; Ovarian Cancer Alliance of Oregon and SW Washington; Ovarian Cancer Alliance of San Diego; Ovarian Cancer Coalition of California; Ovarian Cancer Education and Research Network (OCERN); Ovarian Cancer Orange County Alliance; Perspectives Association; Sandy Rollman Ovarian Cancer Foundation; SHARE.

Sherie Hildreth Ovarian Cancer Foundation; South Carolina Ovarian Cancer Foundation; Sue DiNapoli Ovarian Cancer Society; Susan Poorman Blackie Ovarian Cancer Foundation; Teal Diva; Teal Tea Foundation; Teal Toes; Tell Every Amazing Lady About Ovarian Cancer (T.E.A.L.); The Betty Allen Ovarian Cancer Foundation; The Judith Liebenthal Robinson Ovarian Cancer Foundation (Judy's Mission); The Rose Mary Flanagan Ovarian Cancer Foundation; Turn the Towns Teal; Utah Ovarian Cancer Alliance; Wisconsin Ovarian Cancer Alliance; WNY Ovarian Cancer Project; Women's and Girls Cancer Alliance; You'll Never Walk Alone.

Mr. DURBIN. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I, too, would like to speak on this National Defense Authorization Act and observe that we just, I think, had a very important exchange between the distinguished chairman of the Armed Services Committee and the Senator from Illinois. They disagree on an amendment that will actually not be voted

on, but I was struck by the remarks of the Senator from Illinois and would observe to my colleagues that he has made a compelling case in favor of the bill, which I appreciate, and in favor of the proposition that the President of the United States should, in fact, sign this bill. So I appreciate my colleague from Illinois pointing that out, and I hope people at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, and in the Oval Office even, are listening to this stirring defense of the legislation from the Senator from Illinois.

We are indeed moving in the right direction on this bill. I came to the floor last week to talk about the importance of this act. I reminded my colleagues at the time that this has always been a bipartisan matter. For some 53 years, this Senate, with people who have come long before me, has supported this particular bill on a bipartisan basis, and that is as it should be.

I also disagreed strongly in my remarks last week with the remarks of the distinguished minority leader, the Senator from Nevada, who said that taking up this bill was a waste of time because the President had stated his intention to veto the bill. I made the point at that time that the success of our Nation's premier Defense bill can never be a waste of time. Taking care of the troops, taking care of the men and women who have stepped forward as volunteers, can never be considered a waste of time. I really think that more and more of our colleagues are coming around to that conclusion.

We have made so much progress in the weeks we have been dealing with this. I would remind my colleagues that we started off in the Armed Services Committee with a complete partisan divide. It was troubling at the time, but we have recovered from that. When we began consideration of this bill in the Senate Armed Services Committee, we were told that every Republican would vote aye and every Democrat would vote no. That was definitely a concern to those who obviously know that this has to be bipartisan, that national security has to be something that has the support from both sides of the aisle.

As we worked through the process, as the distinguished ranking member the Senator from Rhode Island worked with the chairman of the committee Senator MCCAIN, we gained more and more support for this legislation in committee. At the end of the day, only four Members of the entire committee voted no. So the vote was 22 in favor and only 4 opposed in the committee—again, moving in the right direction.

We got to the floor last week, and we heard the statement that this is a waste of time. I think we are moving away from that. Indeed, yesterday we voted on cloture on the bill. I have in my hand a very encouraging vote tally of 83 Senators in favor of this bill on this motion for cloture. There were 83 in favor and only 15 opposed.

At the beginning of my brief remarks, I would just say it is encouraging to me that both at the committee level and also on the Senate floor, we are getting to where the Senate has always been on this bipartisan issue, and we certainly need to. We need to authorize the best tools available for our troops, the best training available for our troops, and our veterans, as the distinguished Senator from Illinois just pointed out, are in need of the support this bill gives them. In addition, our veterans are ready for much needed reforms to improve retirement and to improve military benefits.

Of course, we live in a very unstable and insecure world. We need this bill to meet the threats that are out there. We wish they weren't there. I wish things were better in Iraq. I wish our hard-fought gains had not been tossed away by our precipitous withdrawal, but, in fact, the situation has worsened in Iraq, and we need this bill to protect our interests there. We face old Cold War tensions with the reasserting of an aggressive Russia, in the form of President Vladimir Putin, increasingly intent on restoring the Soviet Empire. We face other realities: cyber terrorism, the nuclear ambitions of Iran, which we heard so much about recently, and we need to reaffirm that the United States has a capable and strong U.S. defense.

Let me for a brief few moments come home to my home State of Mississippi and say why people in my State feel so strongly about this. Of course, we have military bases from north to south in Mississippi. Our own Mississippians, as in all of our States, have stepped forward and are volunteering and serving capably. We also manufacture so many things in my State of Mississippi that are important for national security. We make unmanned aerial vehicles in Mississippi. Some of the finest ships in the world are made on the gulf coast of Mississippi. Helicopters, radars, and other electronic war technology, all of these are manufactured in my home State. So for people in Mississippi, I think the talk of this bill—these weeks on the floor—being a waste of time does not ring true.

A few examples: In my hometown of Tupelo, MS, this bill recognizes the importance of the Army's Apache helicopters and the Tupelo Army Aviation Support Facility. At Columbus Air Force Base, where over 2,000 personnel serve, this bill and the Defense appropriations bill, which the Senator from Maryland may speak about in a few moments—these pieces of legislation allow our student pilots to have adequate training and adequate flying training hours.

In Starkville, MS, the authorization and appropriations bills are integral to completing the Army Reserve Center for equipping and training military personnel. Along the gulf coast, these Defense bills—the authorization and the appropriations bills—would support a new Army National Guard aviation depot at the Gulfport-Biloxi Airport, as well as the continued mission of over 11,000 Americans who work at Keesler Air Force Base. I am proud of these, and I am proud of what they do for our overall national defense of the United States.

Mississippi is just one of many States to take part in this. Simply put, the future of our defense should not be put in jeopardy because of disagreements about unrealistic domestic funding issues. We can get to those issues, but defending the United States of America is something only the Federal Government can do. We can't devolve national defense down to the States. We have to do it in this building, in this body, on this floor of the Senate. Besides, it is well worth saying and reminding my colleagues that this bill gives the President every penny he has requested for national defense. It meets the $612 billion requested by President Obama in his budget. So it really should not be partisan at all.

I will go back to what the Senator from Illinois said. He made a stirring defense of this legislation, I think one that should be listened to by the President of the United States. He should listen to the fact that we had an 83-to-15 vote on cloture, and we had a 22-to-4 vote in the Appropriations Committee.

We have had a few partisan flareups along the course of this legislation, but I think as we get to the end of the day, I am more and more encouraged about the prospect of this bill. I think we can pass it tomorrow with an overwhelming vote, which shows we are voting for it not as Republicans, not as Democrats but as Americans, because we want to defend the vital national interests of the United States of America.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Thank you very much.

Mr. President, standing here listening to the debate and discussion by colleagues on both sides of the aisle really makes the point that many of us are saying. We need a new budget agreement. We have people—I think we all agree on both sides of the aisle that we need to defend America. There is no doubt about that. In order to do that, we need to look at national security both in its funding for the Department of Defense, but we also need to be looking at what are the components to national security. Many of the key agencies that are not in the Department of Defense are also important to the national security.

Yet, at the same time, we have defense with this budget gimmick, and that is what it is. It is a budget gimmick to avoid the caps we have on spending on both defense and discretionary spending. What this bill is, is a gimmick to have the money through something called OCO, which was meant to be a specific expense for overseas contingency funds. It was meant

to deal with specific wars. Now it has been plussed-up by several millions and millions of dollars to avoid the budget caps.

This isn't a budget debate here. I will be saying more about it on the floor. But I just want to say to my colleagues, think about national security. Yes, we do need a strong national defense and we do need to support our troops and we do need to support our military families. We do need to support our troops. We do need to support our military families. That is what I am going to be elaborating on in a minute. But we also have to look at the other aspects.

First of all, you need a State Department. Part of national security is diplomacy. You need a State Department.

Second, in the State Department, you need Embassy security. If you don't want another Benghazi, you must put money in the Federal budget to make sure we have Embassy security. You have to fund the State Department. That is in discretionary funding.

You do not like the cyber attacks? We are going to have meetings, and we are going to hold hearings, and—hoorah—all of the things we should have been doing 3 to 5 years ago but were stopped on this Senate floor because of concerns of the chamber of commerce that we would overregulate.

We have a Department of Homeland Security. It needs to be funded. It is in discretionary spending.

You want to have a cyber security workforce? Yes. They need to be trained at our great colleges and universities. We need a Department of Education with the Pell Grants and so on to be able to help our people get the jobs for the 21st century so they can do the type of work we are talking about we need them to do here.

I could go through other agencies.

I am not here to stand up for government agencies. I am here to stand up for America. I am here to say: Yes, we do need national security. We need to fund the Department of Defense, but we need to fund those other agencies and programs that are integral to national security. That is why I think we need a new budget agreement along the lines of Ryan-Murray, and we need to end the sequester.

I hope—and I call upon leadership on both sides of the aisle but particularly on the other side of the aisle: Let's get to it now, sooner rather than later.

I am the vice chair of the Appropriations Committee and am working very closely with my esteemed colleague, the senior Senator from Mississippi, on trying to bring bills to the floor, but we simply have to come up with a new agreement.

So we will go through a lot of parliamentary motions and commotion, but I am not so sure we are going to get the locomotion we need to look out for America. We cannot let our military be hollowed out. We cannot let our country be hollowed out. We need to really move ahead with this new agreement, and a perfect example is why I come to the floor.

All through this debate, I have heard that the most important tool to a strong military is the military themselves, the military and their families. Consistent through all, from both sides of the aisle, is that we must look out for our troops. Well, I could not agree with that more. Yet, what is it that we know in this bill, tucked away, is really an erosion of one of the key earned benefits our military and their families and the retirees have—commissaries. Commissaries.

Commissaries have been around since the 19th century. They have been around since 1826. Military families have been able to shop at networks of stores that provide modestly priced goods—primarily groceries—to military families and to retirees. There are 246 of them, many in our own country, many overseas, many in our country where they are only place our military can go. There are those in some other countries where they are not even looked upon and welcomed in some of these countries, even though we are there.

So what is in this bill? Two things: One, let's privatize the commissaries; the other is, let's cut their budget by $322 million.

I am for saving money by eliminating Pentagon waste, but I will tell you that no money is wasted at a commissary. In fact, just the opposite happens. The commissaries are the most popular earned benefit the military has.

Also, this is not Senator BARB talking; this is coming from the military themselves. If you listen to the National Military and Veterans Alliance, they say this: Commissary and exchanges are a vital part of pay and compensation. The military community greatly value these benefits. The proposed cuts would dismantle the commissary benefit relied upon by shortening hours and raising prices.

When we look at commissaries, we know that people shop there, they save money, and at the same time they are also a major source of employment.

What I want to do is work with my colleague, the Senator from Oklahoma, a member of the Armed Services Committee, Senator JIM INHOFE. It is his amendment. We want to prevent the commissary privatization pilot program. I also have an additional amendment. I would like to restore the $322 million in cuts to commissaries. We have an offset to be able to pay for it as well. The benefits of the commissaries are significant. That is why I want these two amendments to be offered. They feed our troops, they help military families stretch their budgets, and they provide jobs to military spouses and to military children old enough to work and military retirees.

The military families tell me they get significant savings—sometimes as much as 30 percent—on their bill. For a family of four, that could be $4,500 per year. As I said, 60 percent of the commissary workers are spouses or retirees at these commissaries.

DOD says we want commissaries to be more self-sustaining. They have proposed cuts of more than $1 billion through 2020. They are talking about, in fiscal year 2016, cutting $322 million. Next year, they want to cut $1 billion. And they also want to look at how to privatize.

Joining with my colleague from Oklahoma, the distinguished senior Senator, JIM INHOFE—he has legislation to deal with the privatization. In this bill that is pending, they implement this commissary pilot plan. Well, we have heard that before. I think it is a plane without a pilot. But we do not even know if it is a good option. It was made up by Pentagon bean counters, Pentagon bean slicers who were told: Find savings. So they went after the commissaries.

Well, the Senator from Oklahoma and I want to require the DOD and GAO to study the impact of privatization before a plan can be implemented. In other words, before you privatize, why don't you study the impact? The Senator from Oklahoma is proposing that this study be due in September so that we would be able to act appropriately in our appropriations. I support him in his amendment.

I also am looking for support in the cuts to commissaries. Right now, proposed in both the authorization and then they tried it in our appropriations bill, is a cut in the appropriations by $322 million. This means hours would be cut, so instead of operating 7 days a week, they would be open 5. It would raise prices in many instances by as much as 25 percent. In far-flung places such as Hawaii or Alaska, prices could even go up by as much as 50 percent because of the formula being used.

This is just not right. Of all of the places that we could save money, let's not go after commissaries. Let's not go after commissaries. They help military families and retirees stretch their budgets. For many of our young military, particularly the enlisted, the commissary is the place where they learn how to stretch their dollar. At the same time, it provides employment to military spouses, in some instances military children, and also to retirees.

What is the problem here? We cannot get votes on our amendments. We cannot get a vote on the privatization issue proposed by the Senator from Oklahoma, and I cannot get a vote on my amendment to restore the $322 million.

I know the leadership is now meeting on how to wrap up this bill. Well, I don't want to wrap up this bill. I think that what we need to do is to be able to vote on these two amendments.

We have had all kinds of amendments. We had one on the sage-grouse. I know the sage-grouse is a protected species. As an appropriator, I had to deal with this as a rider on the appropriations bills. So I am not against the

sage-grouse. I am not against talking about the sage-grouse. But why, with all of the problems facing America, do we need a sage-grouse amendment on defense when I cannot get a vote on protecting commissaries, protecting an earned benefit of our military, helping them stretch their dollar, and making sure some of them have a chance to work on a military base? Why can't I get an amendment? Why can't the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma get a vote on his amendment that would call for a halt to the privatization pilot until we get a study from GAO on impact? So you can stand up for the sage-grouse, but I will tell you that I am standing up for military families.

I urge the leadership at the highest level and the leadership moving this authorization to give Inhofe-Mikulski privatization of commissaries a vote and give me a chance to offer my amendment. Let the Senate decide. Let's not have me stopped and stymied because of parliamentary procedure.

You might say—and to everybody listening—well, BARBARA, you are pretty outspoken. You are not shy. Why can't you offer your amendment?

Under the rules of the body we are now operating under, I have to get consent. That means all 99 other Senators should not object to me offering an amendment. Well, I am stuck. So what I need is for the leadership to give me the consent to at least have my amendment discussed and debated in the light of day. I want to hear their justification why they have to go after commissaries. Let's stand united. Let's get a new budget agreement. Let me offer our amendment.

We should not be fighting with each other over these things. Instead of going after commissaries, let's go after the bad guys in the world and let's do it in a united way.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

3RD ANNIVERSARY OF DACA PROGRAM

Mr. KAINE. Mr. President, I rise today to mark the third anniversary of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program, which was this week. Since 2012, the program the President implemented, which has been known as DACA, has offered temporary relief from deportation to immigrants who arrived in the United States as young children. It has helped almost 665,000 young people since June of 2012, including more than 10,000 in Virginia. The DACA Program announced by the President has allowed young people to contribute to our communities, live without constant fear of deportation, keep families together, and provide economic and educational opportunities for these young recipients.

I want to thank President Obama and the administration because DACA has provided relief to thousands of youngsters who seek only to pursue opportunity, provide for their families, and contribute to the only place they have ever known as home—the United States.

Immigrants are not the only ones who benefit. DACA enforces the universal reputation of this country that we are proud of, that we value our immigrant heritage and we embrace and celebrate their contributions to American history, industry, and culture. This is a value which is something we feel very deeply in Virginia. We feel it more every day.

When I was born in 1958, 1 out of 100 Virginians had been born in another country. Today, in 2015, one out of nine Virginians was born in another country. That period coincides with the moving of the Virginia economy from bottom quarter per capita income to top quarter. Immigration and the contributions of immigrants to our State have been tremendously positive.

More than 10,000 youngsters in Virginia have benefited by DACA. We are 13th among all States. Let me just tell you two quick stories.

Hareth Andrade exemplifies what DACA recipients, if given the opportunity, can give back to their communities. Hareth arrived in the United States from Bolivia, brought by adults. She arrived without her parents. She excelled in school. She attended Washington-Lee High School right here in Arlington. She took advanced placement and international baccalaureate classes.

During a campus visit as she graduated, she learned for the first time that her undocumented status would be a barrier to earning a college education. But instead of giving up on her dream, she organized with other students to form DREAMers of Virginia, an organization that has led efforts to provide students access to instate tuition and college admission for kids just like her.

After the President announced the DACA Program in June of 2012, Hareth became a recipient, and she has since transferred from community college to Trinity Washington University, where she expects to graduate with a degree in international affairs next year.

Another student, Jung Bin Cho, also has seen doors open to him because of DACA, doors to educational opportunities such as the fine institution of Virginia Tech, where he now attends. Cho arrived in the United States with his parents from South Korea when he was 7 years old. He attended elementary school and graduated high school in Springfield, VA, where he played on the defensive line for the football team.

His dream—a lot of Virginians have this dream—was attending Virginia Tech, and he gained admission to the school. But at the same time he first realized that his undocumented status eliminated him from instate tuition or any financial aid. Because he couldn't afford it, he attended community college and worked two jobs to support himself. But following DACA and the decision last year to grant instate tuition to young Virginians—a decision for which I applaud our Governor and general assembly—Cho reapplied to Virginia Tech, won admission, and he now is able to attend Virginia Tech, where he will pursue a degree in business and hopefully participate in this great expansion of the Virginia economy that so many of our immigrants have been proud to lead.

For young people such as Hareth and Cho, DACA makes sense. Both came here as young children. They didn't come here on their open volition; they were brought here. They only know Virginia as home, and they seek to study, work, and build a life in this country. As proud Virginians, they want to return the opportunities afforded to them by using their talents to improve their communities and making it a better place for everybody.

In addition to the humanitarian aspect, as you heard, these talented students are the kinds of people who accelerate our economy. DACA is good for our economy, too. So I strongly support its continuation, but I also wish to encourage my colleagues—and I think we all agree, Democrat, Republican, Independent—we all agree this program is best not by Executive order but by legislation.

We are now almost exactly 2 years from the date when the Senate passed comprehensive immigration reform on this floor in June of 2013. For 2 years, after a strong bipartisan effort, we have waited for action—any action—by the House, not just taking up our bill but doing their own bill and then, in a conference, finding a compromise, which we can do.

It is time that the House act. It is time that the Senate and the House sit down together and do comprehensive immigration reform. We can give DREAMers and millions of other families who continue to live in the shadows an earned pathway to citizenship. It is time to pass that reform. It is in the best traditions of our Nation and in the best value traditions of my Commonwealth that we do so.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The majority whip.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, after the Senate concludes its work on the Defense authorization bill tomorrow—a very important part of our responsibility—we will then move to consider the Defense Appropriations Act. This actually is the legislation that will pay the bills for the Department of Defense and make sure our men and women in uniform get the resources they need in order to do their job, not to mention their pay, which is why it is so disturbing to see the leadership of our minority in the Senate announce in the papers here in Washington that they are going to begin what they call a filibuster summer. In other words, they are going to use the power they have as the minority to block important funding bills, beginning with the bill that pays for our national security, in what can only be called a cheap political stunt.

Why they have decided to do that on this important Defense appropriations bill is, frankly, beyond me. I think I understand what their general point is, which is they don't think the Federal Government spends enough money, and so they want to spend more money, and they have no concern whatsoever for the fact that under this administration, we have raised the national debt by trillions of dollars, making sure that my generation will not end up having to pay that money back, but the next generation will unless we meet our responsibilities.

So for them to pull this kind of political stunt and say ''You know what, we are not spending enough money, we are not incurring enough debt, and so we are going to force a filibuster on the Defense appropriations bill'' in order to extort more spending, more debt, more irresponsibility—the bill our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are pledging to filibuster is not controversial in itself because it would, as I said, provide for our military and would help our troops maintain their status as the greatest military in the world. It also includes simple initiatives that make a lot of sense and serve our troops well, such as giving the men and women who wear the uniform a modest pay raise. Yet the Democratic leader still plans to block this legislation and stymie this Chamber's efforts to fund our troops.

We saw a little glimpse of this last week when Senate Democrats, with the exception of seven, blocked us moving an amendment to deal with cyber security. We saw that their timing could not have been worse because, of course, then it was announced that millions of records at the Office of Personnel Management had been hacked by the Chinese Government and some of the most sensitive security clearance background records were now in their hands—a dramatic act of counterintelligence and espionage.

Then, when we offered an amendment to the Defense authorization bill that would deal with cyber security, would allow more information sharing, would allow lawsuit protection for those who shared information in order to protect the privacy and the information of American citizens, it was blocked by all but seven Democrats on the other side.

So while I have been by and large encouraged by this new Congress and what we have been able to accomplish together in a bipartisan way, I think there are some very troubling signs on the horizon, starting with this ill-considered idea of filibuster summer, throwing a temper tantrum until you can get more money that we don't have to spend on your pet projects. But I think their decision to hold Defense appropriations bill hostage is just inexcusable. This is the essential funding for our military, for national security.

I should point out, as my colleagues across the aisle use this bill as leverage to spend more taxpayer dollars on things like the IRS, not long ago they vocally opposed the obstructionist tactics they are now employing. Here are the words of the Democratic leader, Senator HARRY REID, in 2013. He said: ''It's time to get back to setting fiscal policy through the regular order . . . rather than through hostage taking.'' I agreed with his comments then, and I wish he would act consistently with those words today.

The American people aren't served well by these kinds of manufactured crises and threats to cut off funding for our troops. And that is why the new Republican Senate, under Majority Leader MCCONNELL, has prioritized and restored the kind of regular order that Senator REID talked about in 2013. Finally, the Congress and the Senate are actually getting back to work on a bipartisan basis.

As I have said, we have had some signs of progress. I know Majority Leader MCCONNELL likes to quote Woody Hayes from Ohio State when he talks about the nature of the progress we have made. He said: ''Three yards and a cloud of dust.'' I like to think of it more as a baseball analogy of singles and an occasional double. But you get the basic point. We are actually beginning to make some progress, and that is why I find so troubling these signs of filibuster summer and this announcement by our Democratic friends.

We have done our best after this last election, after the American people entrusted us with the majority of the House and the Senate, to deliver on our promises. We have held more rollcall votes on amendments in the past 5 months than the minority leader, as the Democratic leader, allowed in the entire year when they were under control—more rollcall votes on amendments in the last 5 months than Democrats allowed in an entire year when they were in control.

The truth is that our Democratic colleagues, I think, like it better, too, because not only was the minority—Republicans—shut out when Senator REID was majority leader, he shut out Members of his own party, the majority party. Now, how you explain that back home, I am not too clear.

But it is not only Senator REID who has made this commitment to restoring regular order and eschewing this idea of hostage taking, which now they are talking about doing.

Here are the comments of one other member of their Senate leadership, the Senator from Washington, Ms. MURRAY. In 2013, she said the American people had no patience for ''politicians holding the economy and the Federal Government hostage to extract concessions or score political points.''

I agree with her, and I agreed with Senator REID in 2013, but these are the exact same Democratic leaders who are now today threatening the same sort of hostage taking they condemned in 2013.

Well, I like to point out that the legislation we are considering, the Defense appropriations bill, is not a partisan bill. In fact, it was voted out of committee last week by a vote of 27 to 3. This is not a partisan bill, so why they should decide to hold this hostage is beyond me.

All but three Democrats supported the defense spending measure in committee last week. But, unfortunately—and defying logic—some Democrats have publicly admitted to supporting the text of the bill while vowing to do everything they could to keep it from advancing on the floor of the Senate.

Just one example is the junior Senator from Connecticut, who hailed the bill's passage—this is the Defense appropriations bill in committee—through the committee as a ''victory for Connecticut''—I am sure there was a press release to go along with that back home—only to go on and say he would go along with the ill-fated strategy to vote no to actually block the bill from being considered on the floor.

The American people are very smart, and they can identify hypocrisy when they see it. When a Senator says, ''I am going to vote for the bill in committee, but I am going to vote against it on the floor because that is what my leadership tells me I have to do in order to extract more spending and impose more debt on the American people in future generations,'' the American people get it once it is pointed out to them.

So this is all about gamesmanship. This is not about responsible legislating, and it is not why the American people sent us here.

I can only hope, being the optimist that I am, that our colleagues on the other side will reconsider this stated strategy of filibuster summer. What a mistake that is. What an unsustainable position when they have to go home over the Fourth of July and tell the veterans, tell the Active-Duty military in their State: Yes, I voted to kill the bill that would pay your salary and provide you the tools you need in order to succeed in your commitment to keeping America safe.

I just don't know how you sustain that position.

So I would encourage our colleagues from across the aisle to remember that filibuster summer is a bad idea and that it is not good for the American people. It irresponsibly signals to our troops that some Members of the Senate are not fully behind them.

So let's continue to working productively. We have done it on hard pieces of legislation, most recently on the trade legislation we passed out of the Senate with a strong bipartisan vote. Let's continue to work together productively in a way that serves the American people and not resort to the sort of political maneuvers that I don't think reflect well on us and on the Senate as an institution but, more fundamentally, undermine the men and women who wear the uniform of the U.S. military.

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

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

THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF DACA PROGRAM

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I rise to acknowledge the third anniversary of the Deferred Action For Childhood Arrivals—the DACA Program—as many of my colleagues have over the past few days.

The DACA Program was created because our government faced an impractical mandate to deport hundreds of thousands of undocumented children who pose no risk to society. Congress, thus far, has been unable to solve the problem. Despite the very good bipartisan efforts that occurred in this body back in 2013, we have been unable to pass any meaningful immigration reform. Why? Well, a group from the far right in the House of Representatives oppose immigration reform at all costs and have sort of tied Speaker BOEHNER into knots so he can't bring anything to the floor.

So 3 years ago, with no choice, President Obama moved forward on his own to shield children who were brought to this country through no fault of their own. They were brought by their parents when they were very young, most of them; children who have lived here for many years and know no other country as their own, children who are in our school system and dreaming of getting a college degree in America.

The President created DACA, a temporary program modeled on the DREAM Act, which is a vital component of comprehensive immigration reform. As I said, we couldn't get immigration reform, unfortunately. That would have been the best way to go, and I am still hopeful that will happen at some point in time. But doing what the President did was the humane and practical thing to do because the House couldn't do anything. What choice was there? Leave these kids here through no fault of their own in total limbo? That was not the right thing to do. So we hope this is a policy Congress will implement into law at some point, but right now, of course, as I mentioned, the House is hog-tied.

In the 3 short years since its inception, the DACA Program has deferred deportations for over one-half million young DREAMers. In New York, nearly 34,000 have been approved for DACA. Of those 34,000, there is a girl named Kirssy Martinez from New York City. Kirssy came to our country from the Dominican Republic in 2002, and she attended high school in New York City.

After graduating, Kirssy lived in the shadows, working small jobs here and there as a waitress, a babysitter, whatever she could do to make ends meet. She was a good student coming out of high school. She even had a few scholarship offers but couldn't attend college because she didn't have a green card and, moreover, she didn't have the means to afford a college education.

In 2012, Kirssy was one of the first to sign up for DACA. With her new temporary legal status, she was able to enroll in Bronx Community College. She got loans to pay for her first semester. She had to drop out once the loans ran out. She scraped together more funding from TheDream.US scholarship that provides tuition assistance to DREAMers at CUNY schools.

Now Kirssy is 26 years old. I met her at her graduation at Bronx Community College. She was covaledictorian of her class with a perfect 4.0 average.

These are the kinds of kids we are talking about. They want to be Americans. They want to get out of the shadows. They want to live productive, full lives. They do not want a handout. They want to be able to be on their own. That is what Kirssy did. I met her, and I was so proud of her.

Kirssy has realized a DREAMers dream because of both her hard work and the President's DACA Program, which helped bring her out of the shadows. There are many more in New York and around the country just like her.

The sad truth is that instead of harnessing the potential and the contributions these young people could make, instead of welcoming them as full-fledged members of our society, the Republican majority in the House of Representatives voted to repeal the DACA Program. With these votes, House Republicans have made it clear they want to deport these DREAMers.

Many of the DREAMers have a sibling who may have been born in the United States and is a citizen of the United States or a parent who may have a green card. House Republicans have no qualms about tearing these families apart. They have no qualms what it could cost us as a nation to lose these young people.

If you look at the workforce in America, it is different than Europe in that we do have enough young people who want to work to help support those who are in retirement or on disability—but not if our House Republicans have their way.

In my home State of New York, DREAMers like Kirssy are doing amazing things. They are studying medicine, they are working at startup tech companies and more. If Republicans in the House have their way, these talented people would be putting their skills to use to compete against us rather than working to make America stronger.

Like the millions who came here before them—like the ancestors of our Presiding Officer and my ancestors—they came here because they want to be Americans, not because they want to get a benefit, not because they want to be a leach on society. They want to be a full-fledged, productive member of society. Somehow these folks in the House—and I don't even know if they know who these kids are—want to stop that from happening.

As we recognize this anniversary, we should remember the real human stories behind the DACA Program and think how our Nation could be made better by sensible immigration reform now.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

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

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

NATIONAL ALZHEIMER'S AND BRAIN AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I rise to ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing June as National Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month. Every 67 seconds someone in our country develops Alzheimer's disease. It is the sixth leading cause of death in the United States. Yet it is the only disease in the top 10 that cannot yet be prevented, cured or slowed.

Of the 5.3 million Americans with Alzheimer's disease, 5.1 million are 65 and older, accounting for 96 percent of the diagnosed population. By 2050, the number of people 65 and older with Alzheimer's disease may nearly triple from 5.1 million to an estimated 13.8 million Americans. The disease will take the lives of an estimated 700,000 seniors in the United States this year, and that number is rapidly rising.

While deaths from other major causes have decreased in this country, deaths from Alzheimer's disease have increased significantly. Between 2000 and 2013, deaths attributed to Alzheimer's disease increased 71 percent, while deaths attributed to heart disease, the No. 1 cause of death in the United States, decreased by 14 percent.

This devastating disease is also one of our country's most expensive diseases. Nearly one in every five Medicare dollars is spent on people with Alzheimer's and other dementias. Unless something is done, by 2050 it will be $1 out of every $3. We cannot afford to overlook Alzheimer's disease. Both the human cost and the cost to our health care system are simply too great. We must invest more in research to develop treatments to prevent or delay the progression of Alzheimer's disease and ultimately to find a cure.

Of all the statistics and data regarding Alzheimer's disease, perhaps the most upsetting is the immense gap between the amount we spend on Alzheimer's research and the cost of caring for those with Alzheimer's disease.

In 2014, the total cost of Alzheimer's was $214 billion, including $150 billion to Medicare and Medicaid. During that same year, the National Institutes of Health invested only one-quarter of 1 percent of that amount—$566 million—in Alzheimer's research. This year, cancer research will be allocated an estimated $5.4 billion in Federal funds and heart disease will get $1.2 billion,

while Alzheimer's and other dementias will receive a fraction of that, at $586 million. Simply put, it is imperative we provide NIH with robust and sustained funding, which will allow it to support Alzheimer's research that is so desperately needed.

Let me make it clear. I strongly support the research dollars going into cancer and would like to see more funds put into it. I strongly support the amount of funds we are putting into heart disease and would like to see more funds put in. I know there is bipartisan support in this Congress to increase the pie that NIH has—the funds NIH has—because we understand it advances the humanitarian need in our country to find the answers to cures for diseases but also creates good jobs. We need to dramatically increase the amount of resources that we make available for Alzheimer's research.

We must also support innovative, evidence-based models to address the needs of those currently living with Alzheimer's disease and their family caregivers. I am proud to tell you about the Maximizing Independence at Home—or MIND at Home Program—developed at Johns Hopkins in my home State of Maryland.

In the MIND at Home Program, an interdisciplinary team provides home-based assessments, care coordination and support to individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, allowing them to remain in their homes longer, improving their quality of life, and supporting their family caregivers.

During an 18-month pilot project, the MIND at Home Program helped participants stay safely in their homes for an average of 9½ months longer than would have been otherwise possible, while also improving their quality of life.

We have an opportunity to improve the lives of millions of Americans suffering from Alzheimer's, and the lives of their family members, by building on the success of programs such as MIND at Home. This June, in honor of National Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, let us pledge to provide robust, sustained funding for NIH, so it can support much needed research on this devastating disease, and let us pledge to support innovative programs such as MIND at Home to improve the quality of life of those currently living with Alzheimer's and their family caregivers.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, today is my 103rd time coming to the floor to ask my colleagues to wake up to the urgent problem of climate change.

Pretty much everyone is telling us climate change is a problem. First of all, there are the scientists, virtually every major scientific society and agency. Then there are our military and national security leaders, leading American companies, doctors, and faith leaders who are all telling us this is a problem and asking us to wake up.

The American people understand climate change is real. Nearly 80 percent think that doing nothing to reduce future warming will cause a very serious or somewhat serious problem for the United States. Two-thirds of Americans, including half of Republicans, favor government action to reduce global warming, and two-thirds, including half of Republicans, would be more likely to vote for a candidate who campaigns on fighting climate change.

I have visited with voters in early primary States, with people in Iowa, in New Hampshire, and in South Carolina—business owners, teachers, community leaders, and elected officials. There will be no avoiding this issue in the 2016 election.

So we might expect Republican Presidential hopefuls to present to the voters their plans for climate action. We might expect the Republican candidates to address this problem in an honest and straightforward manner. But we would be wrong.

Republican Presidential candidates who venerate our military turn deaf when that military warns of climate change's national security dangers. Republican Presidential candidates who are conspicuously religious ignore Pope Francis and other religious leaders when they warn of the fundamental indecency of not addressing climate change. Republican Presidential candidates who seek to represent our corporate elite ignore those corporations' own business case for addressing climate change. And Republican candidates who root boisterously for their home State university sport teams ignore the climate change warnings of scientists and researchers at those very same universities. The Republican Presidential primary is a festival of climate denial, with candidates competing to tie themselves in knots to avoid acknowledging carbon pollution.

A few even subscribe to the big hoax theory. One candidate wrote in his book that climate science is based on ''doctored data'' and that ''it's all one contrived phony mess that is falling apart under its own weight.'' Another even claims to know who is behind the hoax. He said: ''The concept of global warming was created by and for the Chinese in order to make U.S. manufacturing noncompetitive.'' Wow, he got to the bottom of that. ''This very expensive global warming''—I will delete the word since this is the Senate floor—''has got to stop. Our planet is freezing,'' the same candidate wrote last winter.

Then there is the ''who knows'' caucus. One Republican hopeful seems to think we don't really know one way or the other. ''We may be warming, we may be cooling,'' he says. Another has said that people who are concerned about climate change ''don't like to look at the actual facts and data.'' Now there is a really perverse piece of rhetoric, because what do the actual facts and data show? The data show that the amount of carbon in the Earth's atmosphere has risen dramatically, since the onset of the industrial revolution just over a century ago, to the highest levels mankind has ever experienced and the highest levels Earth has experienced in at least 800,000 years. It is a fact of basic science that carbon dioxide traps heat and alters the climate. That has been known since the days of President Abraham Lincoln. The data match and show decades of increase in global temperature. The scientists we pay to know these things say that warming of the climate is ''unequivocal.'' The ocean is warming. Sea levels are rising. Ocean water is growing more acidic. We measure all of that. It is not theory. Those are the facts.

At least two candidates, by the way, have compared those who accept the established science of climate change to people who believe the Earth is flat. That is particularly rich when we consider that NASA scientists are among the strongest and most articulate proponents of the science of climate change. Do we really think that NASA scientists believe the world is flat? Do we think the scientists who launched a rover through space, landed it safely on the surface of Mars, and are now driving it around are confused about the circular nature of the Earth?

Then there is the ''always changing'' crowd. One Republican Presidential hopeful says:

> [T]he climate is changing. I don't think the science is clear on what percentage is manmade. . . . And for the people to say the science is decided on this is just really arrogant.

Actually, it is just really factual.

''[T]here's never been a moment where the climate is not changing,'' another candidate observed. ''The question is: What percent of that is . . . due to human activity?''

Well, the links of climate change to human activity are something that scientists have studied extraordinarily closely. According to the leading scientific body on climate change, the best estimate is that pretty much all of the recent rise was due to human activity. The lead scientific organization says greenhouse gas emissions, along with human activity, ''are extremely likely to have been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.'' And, by the way, ''extremely likely'' is defined in that document as 95 to 100 percent certainty.

So this gaggle of Republican Presidential hopefuls is willing to take the ''worse than 1 in 20'' bet that human activity is not the dominant cause of recent climate change. Or, as another Republican candidate put it, ''the conclusions you make from that are not conclusive''—whatever that means.

Then, of course, there is this: ''I'm not a scientist.'' At least three of the declared Republican candidates have used that line. Imagine if Congress answered other policy questions that way. What is your position on abortion? Oh, I am not a gynecologist. What should we do about health care? Oh, I am not a medical doctor.

We are not expected to be experts. We are expected to listen to the experts and to make conscientious, informed, and prudent decisions—and, oh, are we failing that test.

There are even Republican candidates for President who in this American century would abdicate American leadership on the climate crisis. ''Is there anything the United States can do about it?'' one of the Republican candidates asked. ''Clearly, no''—reducing greenhouse gas emissions ''will have zero impact,'' he said, on climate change. Another candidate said: ''A single nation acting alone can make no difference at all.'' I would love to hear Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt conversing about whether America can make a difference.

Last week the senior Senator from Oklahoma, whose skepticism about climate change is well documented, was the keynote speaker at the climate denial conference of a creepy outfit called the Heartland Institute. Here is what he told them—and by the way, when I say ''creepy,'' they are the group that put up a billboard comparing climate scientists to the Unabomber—pretty responsible stuff. ''If you look at the Republican candidates,'' he assured the attendees at that forum, ''they're all denying this stuff, with the exception of LINDSEY GRAHAM. . . . They're all with the people in this room''—quite a room to want to be with.

I am glad that our colleague from South Carolina, Senator GRAHAM, has called for reducing carbon pollution with smart probusiness policies. He has lit a path for other Republican colleagues to follow, and he is not the only one on this path. Prominent conservative thinkers and former administration officials from Nixon, Reagan, and both Bush administrations have voiced support for putting a fee on carbon emissions. Prominent conservatives and libertarians think that we can put a price on carbon, relieve taxes on profits and work, and come out economically for the better. Even setting aside the environmental and climate benefit, just economically, that is a win.

So I offered a carbon fee bill last week with our colleague Senator SCHATZ, what one conservative called an ''olive limb''—doing better than just an olive branch—to conservatives who are ready to address this problem.

So LINDSEY GRAHAM has articulated one path. There is a different, darker path. It is the path of obedience to fossil fuel interests. The fossil fuel companies, their super PAC allies, and their front groups swing a heavy financial club, and they want to herd Republican candidates down the darker path. Americans for Prosperity, part of the Koch brothers-backed political machine, plans on spending $900 million in the 2016 election cycle—$900 million. Its president, Tim Phillips, threatened publicly that any Republican candidate in the 2016 Presidential campaign who supported climate action ''would be at a severe disadvantage in the Republican nomination process.'' Gee, what might candidates conclude from that? And that is just one part of the fossil fuel political machine.

So I ask myself: Why are there all of those preposterous statements by the Republican Presidential candidates? The only conclusion I can reach is to signal that very obedience. We are now at the stage in the Republican Presidential primary where candidates caper and grovel before the fossil fuel industry's political machine, hoping they will be the chosen beneficiaries of fossil fuel election spending. Remember that there is $900 million from just one group. It looks like that earns the industry a lot of groveling and capering.

Eventually, the Republican Party is going to have to find its true voice on climate change. It can't continue indefinitely as the political arm of the fossil fuel industry in an environment in which 80 percent of Americans want climate action and a majority of young Republicans think that climate denial is ignorant, out of touch or crazy, according to the words they selected in the poll. Ultimately, the Republican Party is going to have to find its true voice. Until then, America is presented the unseemly spectacle of Republican Presidential candidates fighting to have the best position on climate change that money can buy.

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

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

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I come to the floor again to speak about Iran as we count down to the deadline for an agreement about Iran's illusiveness when it comes to the military dimensions of their program and how they respond to that in any agreement. The truth, as it has always been, is illusive, and it remains so.

Yesterday, Secretary of State Kerry said—in response to a question about whether Iran's atomic work by the Iranian military would have to be resolved before sanctions would be lifted—that we are not fixated on Iran specifically accounting for what they did at one point or another. What we are concerned about is going forward.

Given Iran's history of deception, I am very concerned about what they did ''at one point or another.''

In an Iran task force memo on verification, it says that ''until Iran provides a full accounting of its past and present possible military dimension activities, the international community cannot have confidence that it knows either how far Iran is along the path to nuclear weapons or that Iran's nuclear weapons activities have effectively ceased.''

David Albright—who has appeared before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and whom I called many times when I was the chairman and still do—is the founder of the Institute for Science and International Security. Mr. Albright said the Secretary's remarks were ''very worrisome.'' He said that they reflect what he sees as the administration's long practice of offering concessions to Iran. He said: ''Whenever confronted with Iranian intransigence. . . . It's going to be hard for a lot of people to support this deal if they give in on past military dimensions.''

He also said:

> Addressing the International Atomic Energy Administration's concerns about the military dimensions of Iran's nuclear programs is fundamental to any long-term agreement. . . . An agreement that sidesteps the military issues would risk being unverifiable. Moreover, the world would not be so concerned if Iran had never conducted weaponization activities aimed at building a nuclear weapon.

Speaking of the possible military dimensions of Iran's program, the former Deputy Director General of the International Atomic Energy Administration, Olli Heinonen, said:

> Without addressing those questions . . . the IAEA Secretariat will not be able to come to a conclusion that all nuclear material in Iran is in peaceful use, which is essential in building confidence of the international community over Iran's nuclear program. A comprehensive deal—that would include uranium enrichment—can only be reached if uncertainties over Iran's military nuclear capability are credibly addressed. . . . That should be an unambiguous condition to achieving a final accord that is meaningful in safeguards terms.

Now, this is the former Deputy Director General of the International Atomic Energy Administration, whom we hear overwhelmingly under the proposed agreements saying this is the entity that will be responsible for the verification of any potential agreement.

Well, his experience says that without understanding the weaponization elements of Iran's program, you can't fully be able to do that. He also warned that outsiders really can have no idea where and how fast the mullahs could build a nuclear weapon unless they know what Iranian engineers have done in the past.

As to Secretary Kerry's assertion yesterday that we know what their program was—and he said it, as I read it, almost as unequivocal that we know what their program was. Well, I get

concerned when I read the former Director of the CIA, Gen. Michael Hayden, who has said not addressing the possible military dimensions ''creates an increased burden on verification if I don't have high confidence in where the Iranians actually are, not such as fissile material development, but in their weaponization program. . . . we do have intelligence estimates, but they remain estimates.''

They remain estimates.

[F]or a country that says ''that's not our objective,'' they refuse to come clean on their past. . . . How can we know their intent, how can we know their capacity for breakout or sneak out, without high confidence in where it is they are right now?

He also said in reference to Secretary Kerry's remarks:

I'd like to see the DNI or any intelligence office repeat that word for me. They won't. What he is saying is that we don't care how far they've gotten with weaponization. We're betting the farm on our ability to limit the production of fissile material. He's pretending we have perfect knowledge about something that was an incredibly tough intelligence target while I was director and I see nothing that has made it any easier.

This is the former Director of the CIA, supposedly where we have all of this knowledge. This is his expression of what we have or don't have. Clearly, basically what he is saying is we have estimates, but they are just that, estimates.

I am very concerned when the Secretary of State says that we are prepared to ease sanctions on Iran without fully understanding how far Iran progressed on its secret nuclear weapons program. It has been a fundamental question from the very beginning of these negotiations. It was made very clear in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and other venues where Members asked about would Iran have to come clean on its possible dimensions of its militarization of its weapons program and would that have to be upfront. That was always an understanding, almost like a red line. Now that seems to be erased.

It has been a fundamental question to which we need—not just want—a full and verifiable answer. This is not just about Iran making some admission. That is beyond. I think the world has acted the way it has acted with the sanctions from the U.N. Security Council and elsewhere because it knows Iran was pursuing weaponization of its nuclear program. It is just that we don't know how far they got in that process, and how far they got in that process is important to know as we are determining the other elements of any agreement, particularly with breakout. That has been the case as long as I have been working to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state.

Now, the Secretary of State says we are prepared to ease economic sanctions without a full and comprehensive answer to that question. He says Iran's past suspected nuclear activities need to be ''addressed.'' That is all, simply addressed—not specifically answered but only addressed. According to the New York Times article that I read, he made it clear that sanctions could be lifted—they could be lifted—before definitively resolving concerns of the International Atomic Energy Agency about Iran's past nuclear research and the extent of the military dimensions of that research.

That is simply unacceptable, in my view, and it should be unacceptable to everyone in this Chamber.

You know, the New York Times article goes on to say:

Those favoring full disclosure of what diplomats have delicately called the ''possible military dimensions'' of Iranian nuclear research say that the West will never know how long it would take Iran to manufacture a weapon—if it ever developed or obtained bomb-grade uranium or plutonium—unless there is a full picture of its success in suspected experiments to design the detonation systems for a weapon and learn how to shrink it to fit atop a missile.

That is exactly what I believe, and I came to the floor recently and had a map that described where the possible reach of Iran's present missile technology exists, and it is most of the gulf, into parts of Eastern Europe, Turkey, Egypt, and of course our ally, the State of Israel. So its reach today, under missile capacity—and something they continue to perfect—is incredibly significant.

For a decade since obtaining data from an Iranian scientist from a laptop that was spirited out of the country, the CIA and Israel have devoted enormous energy to understanding the scope and success of the program.

Failing to require disclosure, they argue, would also undercut the atomic agency—a quiet signal to other countries that they, too, could be given a pass.

That is quoted from the Times article. Those are exactly my continuing concerns, and I think they are concerns of a very large universe of people who have been following these developments. I need to know the answer to those questions before I can support any lifting of sanctions against Iran that I have fought for, authored, and that this Senate has unanimously supported.

So I am going to conclude, but I will be back to point out the unfolding problems with dealing with the mullahs in Tehran and what it means to the national security of the United States and to our allies in the Middle East and to the stability of the region and to what I am increasingly concerned is the moving of goal posts that move increasingly in the direction of Iran.

I remember when we started off this conversation—these negotiations—Iraq's plutonium reactor, we were told they will dismantle it or we will destroy it. Well, this agreement allows Iraq to continue—reconfigured somewhat, but it can be reconfigured back. The President himself has said there was no need for Fordow, built deeply under a mountain, an enrichment facility.

Now, if you want a peaceful nuclear civilian program, you don't go deep into a mountain to ultimately do enrichment, but that is what the Iranians did. The President himself said that was an unnecessary facility. We were told it was going to be closed. Well, it is going to stay open—reconfigured to produce less uranium and supposedly with safeguards, but it is going to stay open. The point is, with regard to the weaponization elements, Iran has for a decade—a decade—worked against the U.N. Security Council resolution that said it had to come clean on this question. So for a decade they haven't done it.

When you have the leverage, why wouldn't you seek to achieve it now, so you know and can calculate the rest of your agreement? That, too, seems to be lost in the shifting sands of these negotiations. This is of deep concern to me, and I can only hope we will end up at a better deal than that which is being unfolded as we speak.

Every time I listen to another element of what I thought was a critical element of any deal, that critical element seems to be oddly moving in the direction of what Iran wants it to be and not what we in the international community should want to see. That is my concern, and I will continue to come to the floor to report on it.

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. SCHATZ. 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. SCHATZ. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business for up to 10 minutes.

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. SCHATZ. Mr. President, the facts are undeniable. Climate change is real. It is caused by humans. It is happening now and it is solvable.

One solution to climate change is putting a fair price on carbon pollution. Last week, Senator WHITEHOUSE and I introduced a bill, S. 1548, to do just that and to return all of the revenue to American families and businesses.

I thank Senator WHITEHOUSE for his leadership on this bill, but we want a Republican dance partner. We want conservative leadership on this great challenge of our time.

Climate change increases the severity and frequency of storms and natural disasters. This is not only a humanitarian problem but also an economic issue. A heat wave in Texas in 2011, for example, caused $5 billion in livestock and crop losses. Climate change makes events like this 20 times more likely to occur today than in the

1960s. Climate change's impact on the economy is particularly damaging because it creates so much uncertainty.

There is a role for the government here. The administration is doing everything it can to reduce carbon pollution within the statutory constraints of the Clean Air Act, but it will not get us to the reductions we need. Congress needs to step in and legislate to get the reductions we need to make sure we are protecting low-income and working families and growing our economy.

Regulations like the Clean Power Plan and market mechanisms such as a price on carbon are not mutually exclusive; in fact, they work together. They are mutually reinforcing. If powerplants reduce emissions under the Clean Power Plan, they will pay less in carbon fees. Market mechanisms for reducing pollution work.

In the 1990s, President George H.W. Bush used cap and trade to reduce emissions from sulfur dioxide in order to combat acid rain. The program was successful in slashing emissions, which not only meant healthier lakes and waterways but healthier communities. The health benefits for humans linked to lower sulfur dioxide emissions were estimated at $50 billion annually by 2010.

Mrs. BOXER. Will the Senator yield for a question?

Mr. SCHATZ. Yes, I will be pleased to yield to the Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. I thank the Senator, and I welcome his remarks. We are in a space in the Senate where there are some people who still say climate change isn't happening, even though, as the Senator and I know, 98, 99 percent of the scientists in this country say it is obvious.

I am also so pleased my friend is here today because he is talking about cap and trade, and that leads us into my question. I will ask two questions.

One question I have for the Senator from Hawaii is how he feels about the Pope and the encyclical, where the Pope is basically stating it the way it is, and it needs to be heard by everyone. I wonder how my friend responded to that. Also, I wanted to make sure my friend knew in California we have a cap-and-trade program, and I thought it was so good that you reminded people that this was a creation by a Republican President dealing with acid rain and it was so successful and the public health benefits so outweighed the costs.

So I wanted to make sure my friend was aware we had this cap-and-trade system in California that is working well. We balanced our budget in large part because of this, and businesses like it. They liked the certainty of it. Also, will the Senator respond to the issue of the Pope entering into this debate.

Mr. SCHATZ. I thank the Senator from California.

Through the Chair, I will answer the first question.

First, when it comes to the Pope's encyclical, it seems to me that he is displaying the moral leadership that is going to be necessary in all sectors—in the private sector, in the public sector, among Democrats, Republicans, Independents. People across the planet are starting to understand the magnitude of the climate challenge.

One of the reasons I have been coming to the floor so frequently is not to lambaste the other party, but rather to encourage that there be conservative leadership in this space. There is certainly progressive leadership in this space. There is increasingly corporate leadership. There is leadership in the Department of Defense, in the scientific community. But what we really need is for conservatives to step up and to acknowledge the reality of this problem and propose their own set of solutions.

They may disagree with a carbon fee or a cap-and-trade program or the President's Clean Power Plan. But let's have that debate out in the open. Come down and beat up on our bill or beat up on the President's proposal. That is fine. But we need to have this great debate in this great Chamber because this is one of the greatest challenges of our time.

To the Senator's second question, talking a little bit about how cap and trade has worked in California but also how market-based mechanisms have worked all over North America and across the planet, the Senator is right. There is a cap-and-trade program in California, and the economy has continued to improve. The State's fiscal situation has continued to improve.

We have the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative. We have tripled clean energy in a very short period of time, all while unemployment has gone down. In 2008, British Columbia became the first and only jurisdiction in North America with an economy-wide price on carbon emissions. Seven years later, evidence shows that even going it alone, British Columbia was able to reduce petroleum consumption more than the rest of Canada and without any negative impact on growth.

So the Senator from California is right. We can do this and grow our economy. But we are going to need bipartisan leadership. Market mechanisms are one of the most straightforward solutions to climate change. They have growing support across the ideological spectrum. The carbon fee in our bill is predictable. It can start right away. There is no new government program to administer or to run and no need for complex financial transactions or trading.

It is simple and relatively easy to administer, and it gets the reductions that we need: an estimated 40 percent of greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2030. The bill, importantly, is revenue neutral. The original carbon fee legislation poured back the new revenue into a bunch of goodies that I liked in terms of dealing with the challenge of climate change. But we understand that if we are going to get Republican support, this needs to be revenue neutral or close to it, and we need to use the revenue to ameliorate the challenges that are going to occur as we transition into a clean energy economy.

It also lowers corporate tax rates, which will make our Tax Code more competitive with other countries. But reducing carbon emissions and growing our economy ought to go hand in hand. This bill lays out a clear framework for how to accomplish that. Climate change demands leadership from both progressives and conservatives. A price on carbon is a market-based solution that can appeal to people of multiple ideologies but share a common goal of solving one of the great challenges of our time.

In the tradition of Margaret Thatcher and Barry Goldwater, we need conservatives to embrace their own market-based solutions to our climate challenge. There is nothing conservative about ignoring the collective knowledge of the scientific establishment. There is nothing conservative about ignoring the warnings from our Department of Defense. There is nothing conservative about shirking our responsibility for global leadership. There is nothing conservative about conducting a dangerous experiment on the only planet that we have.

So we have no desire for this to continue to be an issue where only one party is on the floor talking about it. Let's have the argument about what the right solution set ought to be. But let's have it out in the open, and let's have it together.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

EPA WATER RULE

Mr. BOOZMAN. Mr. President, the EPA recently released its final water rule, claiming much greater power for the administration to oversee the land use decisions of homeowners, small businesses, and family farms throughout our country. This mandate is full of problems, and the American people are being sold a false bill of goods.

Just look at the potential impact to my home State of Arkansas. As you can see, the entire State will come under this jurisdiction. The red on this map, compiled by Agriculture's Waters of the United States Mapping Initiative, highlights the extent to which this EPA rule would impact Arkansas. As you can see, the Obama administration wants to give bureaucrats in Washington control of almost all of the water in Arkansas. They are deceiving the American people in order to justify this power grab. First, they imply that unless Washington is in control, water is simply not protected.

This is not true. Clean water protection involves our local communities. Private land owners, conservation districts, States, and local communities protect non-Federal waters all of the time. Second, the Agency claims this rule is designed to protect drinking water.

Again, this is an attempt to scare the American people. It is dishonest.

We all want to protect our water resources, and clean drinking water is certainly a priority. I support the Safe Drinking Water Act. For more than 40 years the Safe Drinking Water Act has encouraged Federal-State cooperation in improving safe drinking water. That work has made tremendous progress, which we can all be proud of. This law has been strongly supported by both Republicans and Democrats. It has been reauthorized and extended by Republican-controlled Congresses, and it will continue to improve safe drinking water whether or not this Federal power grab continues.

This administration says one thing about safe drinking water, and then it does another. For example, in 2013 and 2014, the Obama administration cut funding for the Safe Drinking Water Grant Program. This program, which is a Federal-State partnership, does far more to protect safe drinking water than anything in the EPA's new power grab.

Third, we hear rhetoric about rivers catching on fire and toxic pollution. Once again, this is an attempt to scare the American people. Major rivers will continue to receive Federal and State protection just as they have for decades. Isolated non-navigable waters will continue to be protected by State and local efforts as they are now. Let's not forget that farmers and landowners care about clean water.

Northeast Arkansas farmer Joe Christian told the Jonesboro Sun after the EPA finalized the rule: I am not going to do something detrimental to the land I work and live on.

There is no greater environmentalist than a farmer. For the past year, Arkansas farmers and ranchers have shared with me their concerns over this EPA overreach. I want to share some of the comments that I recently received. Fred in Trumann wrote:

> Like every other person in America, I favor clean water. However, there appears to be a grab for power or control related to water. I fail to see how a low spot in a field or yard or ditch that I create on my own land should be included. We are being overregulated by Washington—please continue to limit intrusion into our lives where none is needed.

Rodney in Lonsdale sent me an email saying:

> The EPA doesn't need to be monitoring my pond and streams, telling me what to do or how to use them. This is an overreach.

These frustrations are the result of an agency that often abuses its authority, creating unnecessary and costly mandates. It is not just Arkansans. Across the country, people are sounding the alarm on this power grab.

''Extreme'' and ''unlawful'' are two words the American Farm Bureau used to describe the rule. An analysis of the finalized rule by the organization determined that the ambiguity of the rule will give the Agency ''broad discretion to identify waters and to limit the scope of most of the exclusions.'' The good news is that we have a bipartisan agreement that this EPA rule is a problem.

After EPA finalized this rule, the Wall Street Journal published an editorial calling this rule by EPA an ''amphibious attack'' and urged Congress to overturn the rule and force ''Members to show whose side they're on—the average landowners or the Washington water police.''

That is why I joined the Senate's efforts to protect property owners and keep Washington's hands off of private lands. The Federal Water Quality Protection Act safeguards Americans from this overreach. It sends EPA back to the drawing board to craft a proposal that encourages true cooperation. It will keep the hands of Washington's politicians out of the decisions that have been made in the States and local communities for generations.

Under this modest, bipartisan legislation, the EPA will be able to protect Federal waters without expanding its power. I appreciate Senator BARRASSO, the bill's author, for his continued leadership in holding EPA accountable. Last week, my colleagues and I who serve on the Environment and Public Works Committee moved this legislation forward. This is a step in the right direction to protecting the rights of landowners while protecting our Nation's waters.

I look forward to supporting this commonsense legislation on the Senate floor and encouraging my colleagues to do the same. Congress must build on the progress that we have made toward better water quality. We can do this best by protecting the role of States, local communities, and private citizens to be a part of the process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE ACT

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I rise to discuss a bill I will be introducing, the Transition to Independence Act.

The bill is a Medicaid demonstration program that will give incentives to States to achieve more integrated employment for people with disabilities.

The Federal Government funds a hodge podge of programs that provide supports for people with disabilities.

However, the largest of all programs providing supports for people with disabilities, the Medicaid program, could do much more to drive better outcomes.

The Medicaid program provides critical supports for people with disabilities including primary health care and home and community-based care.

This bill is unique in that it uses the resources of the Medicaid program to drive better outcomes for people with disabilities.

Our public policy encourages people with disabilities to participate in society, to live in the community and to have integrated employment.

But what does the government do to encourage that outcome?

What does government do to insure that all people with disabilities have the opportunity to achieve their maximum participation?

I would argue, not enough.

The program that is the largest funder of supports for people with disabilities is Medicaid.

Unfortunately, Medicaid funding to States is in no way tied to producing better outcomes.

Now I know we cannot just snap our fingers and make it so.

The Federal Government cannot just order the States to do better.

The Federal Government needs to provide States the right incentives to achieve better outcomes.

That is the goal of the Transition to Independence Act.

This bill creates a 5-year, 10–State Medicaid demonstration program.

States participating in the demonstration program will receive Medicaid bonus payments for meeting achievement targets for individual integrated employment.

Simply stated, as States move people with disabilities to integrated settings, they get more money.

States can also achieve additional funding for agreeing to give up new congregate placements.

States can achieve additional funding for ending vocation rehabilitation for congregate settings.

States can achieve additional funding for taking actions that will grow the workforce serving people with disabilities.

Finally, States can achieve additional funding for taking steps to improve interagency collaboration.

Too much of disability policy occurs in isolated silos where people in charge of policy don't talk to each other.

There is health services, long-term supports, housing, education and workforce training, and transportation available to people with disabilities all run by people who aren't working together to maximize the outcome for the individual.

Now it is legitimate to ask: why can't States take these policy steps today?

They can take some actions of course.

But they have a significant financial incentive not to take these actions.

It will take a significant investment of resources for a State to achieve better outcomes for people with disabilities.

If a State wants to improve outcomes, it needs to invest in providing the supports necessary to help people with disabilities participate more fully in the community.

In the end, moving people with disabilities from more expensive congregate settings to more self-sufficient, integrated settings is better for the individual and ultimately better for the taxpayer because it will require less intensive, less expensive supports.

But under Medicaid, when a State makes that investment, it has to give

half or more of the savings achieved back to the Federal Government.

Again, that is a serious disincentive for the States.

Basically, the bonuses I am proposing in this bill allow the States to keep the savings they achieve.

It is my intention that this bill be essentially budget neutral to the Federal taxpayer while giving States a real incentive to achieve better outcomes.

We can build better supports for people with disabilities.

The term often used is a ''lifespan benefit.''

I believe that creation of a lifespan benefit, where people with disabilities receive coordinated, multidisciplinary support to achieve the maximum functional outcomes possible begins with the Medicaid program.

It is my intention to prove that through this demonstration bill.

I have talked to scores of people with disabilities and their families and they want to work a real job that pays a fair wage.

Agencies that provide these services are committed to helping them find real jobs.

It is time to change Medicaid incentives to encourage and reward that.

Last week, a constituent of mine from Dubuque, Rose Carroll, visited my office with the Autistic Self Advocacy Network.

Rose is currently in college working on a degree in math.

All Rose wants is to know that she will have the supports available to her when she needs them so that she can do all she can to participate in her community.

That is exactly what this bill intends to do.

It will demonstrate that States, when given the right incentives, will do all they can to make sure Rose has those supports.

Back home, my friend Chris Sparks is the Executive Director of Exceptional Persons Incorporated in Waterloo, IA.

Chris and his staff go out into the community every day to provide direct support services for people with disabilities.

These workers provide a necessary service in order to assist people with significant intellectual and developmental disabilities to have jobs in their community.

But it is a struggle every day for Chris to find workers, to train them and retain them.

This bill will provide States the incentives to grow the workforce to make it easier for people like Chris Sparks to go out and provide services that allow individuals with disabilities to achieve independence.

The bill I introduce today has the support of the American Association of People with Disabilities, the American Association on Health and Disability, Autism Speaks, the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the National Adult Day Services Association, the National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services, the National Association of States United for Aging and Disabilities, and the National Down Syndrome Congress.

The bill also has the support of the American Network of Community Options and Resources including Iowa members: Christian Opportunity Center, Hope Haven, Opportunity Village, Hills & Dales, New Hope Village, and Exceptional Persons Incorporated.

In their advisory role to Congress, the National Council on Disability provided technical assistance on the bill.

This is an opportunity for us to say that outcomes matter, for us to further a conversation about setting the goal of maximum participation and using all our tools to meet it.

I look forward to working with my colleagues and others to move this legislation forward in the months to come.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCOTT). The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, are we in the parliamentary procedure to proceed to speak?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator is recognized.

PAPAL ENCYCLICAL ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, tomorrow, Pope Francis will release a papal encyclical on the environment. It is basically a letter to all Catholics about high-priority issues, and he has chosen the environment.

Some might think the Pope is straying outside of his expertise by discussing environmental issues and climate change as the expected encyclical is revealed, but the Pope actually has more of a scientific background than many Members of Congress because the Pope was trained as a chemist before he entered seminary. And, as we have seen over the course of his first 2 years as head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis is particularly committed to addressing issues that affect the poor.

According to recent news reports, the Pope's encyclical will emphasize the moral imperative that we as a global community face in addressing climate change. He calls every person across all faiths to come together to address the global deterioration of our common home. This stewardship case is a shared common truth for all people—the faith community and all.

Many of us have spoken on this floor about climate change and the resulting sea level rise. The President has spoken about it numerous times recently, and he visited the Florida Everglades in my State recently and made a similar case for the urgent need to take action on climate change and sea level rise.

Taking care of treasured places such as the Everglades isn't just about conservation, it is about survival.

Millions of people in South Florida depend on the Everglades as the source, as that water flows south from upper central Florida and recharges the aquifers. It is a vital source of drinking water. It is a vital source no one can live without. But drinking water wells in South Florida are already being compromised by saltwater intrusion through the porous limestone foundation of our State.

We had a hearing of our commerce committee in Miami Beach, which is ground zero. A NASA scientist testified that over the last 40 years, measurements—not forecasts, not projections; measurements—over the last 40 years, the sea level has risen 8 inches in South Florida.

What happens when that rises—and, of course, that starts to inundate the porous limestone, which holds the freshwater, which supports the foundation of the peninsula of Florida. You can't do as the Dutch have done—build a dike around it—because the water will seep right underneath your dike into the porous limestone.

So we need to take a hard look at what can be done—and do it soon—to get ready for the impacts of climate change in the future, to stop pumping carbon dioxide, which is the main greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere.

There are a lot of good ideas out there that could protect communities from climate change, and there are a lot of good ideas out there that could help folks pay their bills. For example, my colleague from Rhode Island, Senator SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, has proposed a plan to place a carbon fee or a dollar fee per ton of carbon emissions and then use that money to lower everybody's tax rate, both corporate and individual. Let it be revenue neutral. It is a fee on carbon, and the marketplace will then kick in, making it less desirable to put those greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, particularly carbon dioxide.

In the last Congress, Senator BOXER proposed a similar idea of setting a carbon pollution fee. Her bill would have directed that new revenue toward helping communities adopt climate resiliency measures as well as providing a monthly rebate to U.S. households.

Well, maybe we don't have the magic formula yet, but we ought to be able to agree that lowering tax rates for businesses and individuals would be a good thing. But if you are going to do that, you have to have the revenue to pay for it. In other words, you have to have the revenue to replace the revenue that is there now if you lower the tax rates.

If you set a price on carbon emissions, it could generate anywhere from $1 trillion to $2 trillion over a decade. That revenue can put money back into the pockets of hard-working people by virtue of lowering their tax rates.

Some people might think this is a political issue that Big Business is unanimously opposed to. When I first heard it, that is what I thought would be the case. But, lo and behold, that is not the case. On June 1, six major oil and gas companies, including Shell, signed a joint letter to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

Change in support of establishing a carbon pricing system. What these giant corporations understand is that something must be done to reduce carbon emissions, and if they do not pursue a carbon fee or something like it, they are going to face what they do not want to face, which is EPA regulation and lawsuits and additional public scrutiny over their contribution to pollution.

In their letter, these CEOs write: ''As major companies from the oil and gas sector, we recognize both the importance of climate challenge and the importance of energy to human life and well-being.''

If these corporate giants can acknowledge the seriousness and urgency of climate change, then it just doesn't make sense that we can't get over this political hangup about a fee—call it a tax—on carbon and address it here in the Senate.

Many of my colleagues are concerned and frustrated, especially if they live in a State like mine where the sea level is rising. The mayor of Miami Beach cut a TV campaign advertisement in a kayak at seasonal high tide on Alton Road in Miami Beach. Is it any wonder we feel like the canary in the coal mine? So we are sounding the alarm and echoing the warning of scientists, echoing the warning of faith leaders—now the Pope is going to speak tomorrow in his encyclical—and we are echoing the warnings of Americans who are already experiencing real consequences of what is happening with the climate. The State of Florida is the literal canary in the coal mine. The State of Florida is ground zero for all of this that is happening.

This year is going to mark 10 years since Hurricane Katrina, and just last month experts at CBO estimated that with climate change, hurricane damage will skyrocket over the next 60 years. Why? Because as the Earth heats up—when the Sun rays reflect off the Earth and reflect back into space, if the greenhouse gases are there, they act as a shield, and that traps the heat. Where does 90 percent of the heat go? It goes into the world's oceans. The hotter the water, the more fuel for a more ferocious hurricane. Floods, droughts, heat waves, sea level rise, wildfires, melting sea ice—these are costly and deadly consequences.

Regardless of what it takes—the science, the economics, the corporate executives, the moral imperative, and the Pope—we must call attention to the problem. Let's not suffer the same fate as other canaries in the coal mines. I encourage all of our colleagues to look at this issue anew. Look at it with an eye toward confronting the challenge and being good stewards of Earth's bounty that we are all blessed to have.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I wish to speak a few moments as in morning business.

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

CONGRATULATING THE GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, I have had three chances to say congratulations to the San Francisco Giants when they won the World Series over the last 5 years, and I didn't do it. Last night, the Golden State Warriors won the NBA Finals, and I want to remedy the error of my ways and come and offer the heartiest congratulations to a truly great basketball team.

This team had a remarkable season. Their regular season of 67 and 15 was the sixth best in the history of the NBA, and they went 16 and 5 in the playoffs. But their dominance wasn't built on brute force; it was built on finesse, strategy, and teamwork.

Steph Curry was a real superstar, offering flashes of brilliance all season. I had the occasion to meet him and have a picture taken with him, and as I stood against this tall American and put my arm around his waist, I realized how slender he was. I subsequently learned they are trying to get him to eat 6,000 calories a day—I guess to meet LeBron James. It was quite a matchup, and I was delighted to be able to watch these games. After a scary fall in game 4 against the Rockets, Steph came back in game 5 to lead the Warriors in scoring, boosting them into the finals.

Last year, when I met them at a Warriors' practice, I saw a little bit about the team. And one player I hadn't met was a gentleman by the name of Andre Iguodala, who really came alive against the Cavaliers in the finals. After playing off the bench the first three games, he started the final three and was the defensive spark the Warriors needed.

Now, no one can stop LeBron James, and as I watched the series, I really marveled at this man because he was a very intelligent player. Once he charged toward that basket, there were very few who could stop him. It was an amazing performance.

All season long, Klay Thompson was an offensive dynamo, stepping up when the team needed him most. And of course Draymond Green, Harrison Barnes, and others.

And what a season for a brand new rookie coach Steve Kerr. He spent his whole life in basketball but has only a handful of months as coach under his belt. He took an undersized team with little playoff experience all the way. It was a dream come true.

I would also like to congratulate the Warriors owners, Joe Lacob and Peter Guber, as well as the team's president, Rick Weltz. I have had the privilege of meeting these three people. Oakland can be very proud of them. They are building a new arena in San Francisco, so the whole Bay Area will have an opportunity to participate in this team's glory. These gentlemen bought the team 4 years ago. And in that short time, they have guided what was a moribund franchise into the best team in the league. So they rightly should be thanked for their accomplishment.

Finally, to my colleague, the distinguished Senator from Ohio, ROB PORTMAN, I offer my condolences, and I look forward to collecting on our wager, which Mr. President, is some Ohio beer. I trust it is going to be good beer, and I look forward to drinking it and hopefully being able to tell him that there will be another time, and his team can only but rise in glory as well.

Finally, to the Warriors, I look forward to continued greatness, both in Oakland and across the bay in San Francisco. Their first title since 1975 really brought the city of Oakland together and made them proud. I say to them, thank you for some wonderful memories.

Mr. President, 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. 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.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of the remarks of the Senator from Virginia, I be recognized for 5 minutes.

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

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak for up to 15 minutes as in morning business.

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

THE ECONOMY

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I come to the floor today to speak about the changing nature of our economy. I come to talk about a part of our economy that I don't think most folks in this Chamber understand. It goes by many names. It is called the sharing economy, the on-demand economy, the gig economy, the 1099 economy. There is a lot of discussion, actually, in some circles about exactly what to call this changing nature of our economy, but there is no dispute that it represents a new dynamic and growing part of our American economy.

It used to be that when you were introduced to someone, one of the first questions asked was, Where do you work? Today, particularly for the 80-plus million millennials who make up the largest age cohort in our society, the more appropriate question to ask is, What are you working on? That is because the American workforce is increasingly made up of freelancers, independent contractors, and the self-employed. Yet Washington mostly has remained on the sidelines as our economy, the workforce, and the workplace have undergone what may be the most dramatic transformation literally in decades.

By my count, as folks announced yesterday, almost 25 people are running for President in 2016. Frankly, I find it remarkable that none of them in either party are even talking about these fundamental changes in how, when, and where Americans are currently working because, whether by economic necessity or by choice, one-third or more of the American workers now find themselves piecing together two, three, or more on-demand opportunities to make a living. As I said earlier, it is called the sharing economy, the on-demand economy, or the gig economy. It includes, as I mentioned earlier as well, a lot of young and—at least they think so—invincible millennials, 80 million-strong, who began entering the workforce in the year 2000 and afterward.

The good news about this generation is it is the best educated, the most diverse and tolerant, the most technologically adept, and the most comfortable with disruptive change of any generation America has seen. And that is good. Most millennials grew up in the glow of a computer monitor. Since childhood, most have maintained an online identity and network in real time with friends. Members of this generation can, if they choose, graduate from a college or university without ever stepping foot on its campus. Armed with a tablet or smart phone, they can successfully work for an employer without ever sitting at a desk from 9 to 5. But it is not just the millennials who are pushing the envelope in how, when, and where people work. It also includes many middle-aged professionals, unexpectedly downsized at midcareer. It includes baby boomers—folks from my generation and a number of my college classmates—who have been hit with a premature end to what they thought before the recession was a solid career. Frankly, it also includes a lot of folks for whom working multiple jobs at the same time is nothing new. They call it survival, and it hasn't gotten any easier. Yet, here in Washington, too few policymakers are thinking creatively about ways to provide more Americans with more footholds into this new world of on-demand or freelance work.

In addition, today we have a whole set of new online platforms, companies that didn't even exist 5 years ago, such as Airbnb, Uber, TaskRabbit, and Etsy. Think about Airbnb alone—it already has more rooms available than Marriott. These platforms match supply and demand for things people never even thought about monetizing before—a room, a ride, a specific skill, even the whole notion of free time. But many of the business models in this on-demand economy are built upon the premise that workers are independent contractors, not employees. This means that employers can end the relationship at any time. Much of the work is project-based. Contracts and clients can dry up, and it is tougher to create new ones without an office to go to. It also means employers do not have to pay costs or contribute to health insurance or retirement. They also particularly don't pay a share of unemployment or workers' compensation.

The whole notion of the social safety net and social contract between the employer and the worker has totally changed. If we think back to my parents' generation 40 years ago—I think about my father. He didn't make a lot of money but knew that he would get benefits, that when he retired, he would get a pension. That changed in my generation, the baby boomers. You didn't work for the same place. You moved around to a few different jobs. We moved into what I would call the 401(k) generation, defined benefits. We moved to defined contribution.

The fact is, today these on-demand workers, even if they are doing relatively well, exist on a high wire with no social safety net beneath them. That may work for many of them when times are going well—until the day they aren't. That is why ultimately, when things go wrong for this new gig economy, workers without any safety net, without any unemployment, without any workmen's comp, could fall and ultimately end up on the taxpayers' dime.

That is why Washington needs to catch up and start asking some tough policy questions—but also with the recognition that with the growth in this part of the economy, Washington can't impose a solution.

First, the biggest challenge may be this fundamental change in the employer-employee relationship. Are there other options for providing a safety net of basic benefits for workers who are not connected to a traditional full-time employer? Who should administer it? Should it be opt-in or opt-out? We could look to the health care exchanges as a public-private model now—in many cases—that they largely appear to be working. Could we think about an unemployment or workmen's comp exchange that workers and employers could work with?

We might borrow the idea of the hour bank used by the traditional trade unions for 60 years. A carpenter would move from one contractor to another, committing a little bit of resources, the employer committing resources, but it was administered by a trusted third party.

Other countries—primarily in the EU—are experimenting with worker-administered pools. Freelancers put in a certain amount of income based on the income they would need to replace if they got sick or injured, and they collect it if they are sidelined for more than a month.

Part of a solution might even be consumer-driven. What if customers could designate a portion of their payments to Uber or Airbnb into a designated fund that helps support workers—a social insurance fund? There may be other public-private models out there, and they deserve a look, too.

Second, this is too important to leave to the courts. While litigation is underway about whether on-demand workers are independent contractors or employees, we cannot and must not leave this to the courts alone. We learned just today of a ruling from California labor regulators—a ruling that is expected to be challenged. California labor regulators have determined that Uber drivers are to be considered employees and not independent contractors. This ruling demonstrates yet again why Federal policymakers need to reexamine the whole notion of 20th-century definitions and employment classifications when we are thinking about a 21st-century workforce.

As I mentioned, as many as one-third of American workers are participating in some aspect of this on-demand economy. We have a responsibility to provide clarity and predictability instead of allowing inconsistency as these issues are litigated on a case-by-case, State-by-State basis.

Third, the Federal Government needs to become much more nimble. Frankly, folks on both sides of the aisle would acknowledge that the Federal Government operates at less than dial-up speed. We need better data about how many people are a part of the gig and sharing economies.

At the request of Senators MURRAY and GILLIBRAND, the GAO reported last month that the Department of Labor has not been tasked with a deep-dive on workforce data in more than 10 years. Better data would tell us a lot about who is working in this sharing economy and what characteristics they share. Better data would result in better policy.

As Federal policymakers, we also need to recommit to extending broadband to underserved and unserved regions. You can't be linked in if you don't have a link.

In addition, we should streamline the hodgepodge of Federal programs we have set up to support innovators and entrepreneurs. These programs are scattered across dozens of Federal agencies, and they exist in a budgetary cycle of feast or famine.

We cannot ignore the opportunity costs of this generation's combined $1.2 trillion in student debt. It is limiting options, opportunities, and economic mobility for an entire generation.

Finally, this millennial generation is beginning to fuel a tremendous shift in one of the most traditional anchors of America's economy, and we need to, quite honestly, recognize and respond to it. Younger Americans are making it clear that in many cases they prefer sharing and renting over ownership.

I was talking to Brad Chesky, the CEO of Airbnb, the other day. As I mentioned, Airbnb already provides more rooms than Marriott, and this is a company that didn't even exist 5 years ago. The CEO offered this comparison: His parents' generation—my generation—defined the idea of success

in America as owning a nice house, having two cars, putting your kids through college, and maybe, just maybe, if you did well, getting a little house at the beach or on the lake. But he says the hallmarks of success for this millennial generation are much more different. Younger people want control of their data and online reputations. They don't necessarily aspire to own things such as cars or houses; they want to collect cool experiences, which they can best document and share online.

I ask all my colleagues, the next time you are at a townhall, ask your audience: Would you rather have a home mortgage deduction or a direct credit against your student debt? It doesn't matter what the age group is, 90 percent overall will say: Give me that credit on my student debt rather than on a home mortgage deduction.

Think about this. As policymakers, this generational move away from ownership and toward sharing and renting could have huge impacts for every level of government. That is because we currently use our Tax Code to reward ownership of everything from homes, to vehicles, to factories. Property taxes are how State and local governments pay for public schools, public health, and public safety. If we have an economy increasingly built on sharing and renting and not ownership, that could have tremendous ramifications.

I mentioned that 5 years ago no one had even heard of Airbnb or Uber. And while we don't know what the disruptive technology of tomorrow might look like, we know developments such as driverless cars, same-day drone deliveries, and 3–D printing are right around the corner. Some version is here to stay. As policymakers, we need to ask the right questions, discuss the appropriate rules of the road, and know when we need to get out of the way. Instead of trying to make this new economy look like the old, Washington should encourage more of this innovation, and we need to work to create more opportunities and more upward economic mobility for everybody.

I, for one, look forward to continuing this discussion today and in the weeks to come.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. 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. 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.

AMENDMENT NO. 1911, AS MODIFIED

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that, notwithstanding the filing deadline in rule XXII, it be in order for me to offer a modification to the pending Hatch amendment No. 1911 with the text that is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, reserving the right to object—and I will not object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I am aware that the Senator from Oklahoma feels very strongly about this amendment. We discussed it and voted on it in the committee. At that time, I told the Senator from Oklahoma—who is my friend, for many years—that I would do what I could to see that he got a vote before the entire Senate. I am in disagreement with his amendment, but I want to respect his right to offer it. So—and I appreciate less than you know his tenacity—Mr. President, I will not object.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I send the amendment to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The amendment is so modified.

The amendment, as modified, is as follows:

(Purpose: To study the impact of commissary privatization prior to initiating a pilot program and to require a report on the Department of Defense definition of and policy regarding software sustainment)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. REPORT AND ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL COSTS AND BENEFITS OF PRIVATIZING DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMISSARIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than February 1, 2016, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report assessing the viability of privatizing, in whole or in part, the Department of Defense commissary system. The report shall be so submitted to Congress before the development of any plans or pilot program to privatize defense commissaries or the defense commissary system.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The assessment required by subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) A methodology for defining the total number and locations of commissaries.

(2) An evaluation of commissary use by location in the following beneficiary categories:

(A) Pay grades E–1 through E–4.

(B) Pay grades E–5 through E–7.

(C) Pay grades E–8 and E–9.

(D) Pay grades O–1 through O–3.

(E) Pay grades O–4 through O–6.

(F) Pay grades O–7 through O–10.

(G) Military retirees.

(3) An evaluation of commissary use in locations outside the continental United States and in remote and isolated locations in the continental United States when compared with other locations.

(4) An evaluation of the cost of commissary operations during fiscal years 2009 through 2014.

(5) An assessment of potential savings and efficiencies to be achieved through implementation of some or all of recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

(6) A description and evaluation of the strategy of the Defense Commissary Agency for pricing products sold at commissaries.

(7) A description and evaluation of the transportation strategy of the Defense Commissary Agency for products sold at commissaries.

(8) A description and evaluation of the formula of the Defense Commissary Agency for calculating savings for its customers as a result of its pricing strategy.

(9) An evaluation of the average savings per household garnered by commissary use.

(10) A description and evaluation of the use of private contractors and vendors as part of the defense commissary system.

(11) An assessment of costs or savings, and potential impacts to patrons and the Government, of privatizing the defense commissary system, including potential increased use of Government assistance programs.

(12) A description and assessment of potential barriers to privatization of the defense commissary system.

(13) An assessment of the extent to which patron savings would remain after the privatization of the defense commissary system.

(14) An assessment of the impact of any recommended changes to the operation of the defense commissary system on commissary patrons, including morale and retention.

(15) An assessment of the actual interest of major grocery retailers in the management and operations of all, or part, of the existing defense commissary system.

(16) An assessment of the impact of privatization of the defense commissary system on off-installation prices of similar products available in the system.

(17) An assessment of the impact of privatization of the defense commissary system, and conversion of the Defense Commissary Agency workforce to non-appropriated fund status, on employment of military family members, particularly with respect to pay, benefits, and job security.

(18) An assessment of the impact of privatization of the defense commissary system on Exchanges and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) quality-of-life programs.

(c) USE OF PREVIOUS STUDIES.—The Secretary shall consult previous studies and surveys on matters appropriate to the report required by subsection (a), including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) The January 2015 Final Report of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

(2) The 2014 Military Family Lifestyle Survey Comprehensive Report.

(3) The 2013 Living Patterns Survey.

(4) The report required by section 634 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113-291) on the management, food, and pricing options for the defense commissary system.

(d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF REPORT.—Not later than May 1, 2016, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report setting forth an assessment by the Comptroller General of the report required by subsection (a).

SEC. _____. REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEFINITION OF AND POLICY REGARDING SOFTWARE SUSTAINMENT.

(a) REPORT ON ASSESSMENT OF DEFINITION AND POLICY.—Not later than March 15, 2016, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees and the President pro tempore of the Senate a report setting forth an assessment, obtained by the Secretary for purposes of the report, on the definition used by the Department of Defense for and the policy of the Department regarding software maintenance, particularly with

respect to the totality of the term ''software sustainment'' in the definition of ''depot-level maintenance and repair'' under section 2460 of title 10, United States Code.

(b) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT.—The assessment obtained for purposes of subsection (a) shall be conducted by a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC), or another appropriate independent entity with expertise in matters described in subsection (a), selected by the Secretary for purposes of the assessment.

(c) ELEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The assessment obtained for purposes of subsection (a) shall address, with respect to software and weapon systems of the Department of Defense (including space systems), each of the following:

(A) Fiscal ramifications of current programs with regard to the size, scope, and cost of software to the program's overall budget, including embedded and support software, percentage of weapon systems' functionality controlled by software, and reliance on proprietary data, processes, and components.

(B) Legal status of the Department in regards to adhering to section 2464(a)(1) of such title with respect to ensuring a ready and controlled source of maintenance and sustainment on software for its weapon systems.

(C) Operational risks and reduction to materiel readiness of current Department weapon systems related to software costs, delays, re-work, integration and functional testing, defects, and documentation errors.

(D) Other matters as identified by the Secretary.

(2) ADDITIONAL MATTERS.—For each of subparagraphs (A) through (C) of paragraph (1), the assessment obtained for purposes of subsection (a) shall include review and analysis regarding sole-source contracts, range of competition, rights in technical data, public and private capabilities, integration lab initial costs and sustaining operations, and total obligation authority costs of software, disaggregated by armed service, for the Department.

(d) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SUPPORT.—The Secretary of Defense shall provide the independent entity described in subsection (b)with timely access to appropriate information, data, resources, and analysis so that the entity may conduct a thorough and independent assessment as required under such subsection.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, there is one last comment I wish to make. This is something that doesn't happen on the Senate floor. But the Senator from Arizona is indeed a very good friend. We disagree on this amendment. We will have a chance to have a vote on it. But the fact that he did make a commitment that I would have the vote is very meaningful to me, and he did keep his word, and I thank him very much.

I yield the floor.

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

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

NUCLEAR AGREEMENT WITH IRAN

Mr. GRAHAM. Mr. President, I wish to inform the body that I had a very good conversation with Secretary Kerry just a few minutes ago. Many of you may have been following the news. There was a statement attributed to Secretary Kerry that the possible military dimension of the Iranian nuclear program was no longer a priority in terms of reconciling what they have been doing in a military fashion with their nuclear program. Some of the words were to the effect that there will be no mea culpa required.

I just got off the phone with him, and he indicated to me that possible military dimensions of the program in terms of the Iranian past behavior are very much on the table and essential to any agreement.

April 8, 2015, here is what Secretary Kerry said. When asked in April if Iran must disclose past military-related nuclear activities as part of an agreement, Secretary Kerry said: They have to do it. It will be done. If there is going to be a deal, it will be done.

Secretary Kerry reaffirmed to me that statement. I appreciate his calling me. I want the body to understand that a good deal with Iran would be a blessing. A bad deal would be a nightmare. The IAEA has not had access to the sites they need in terms of evaluating the possible military dimensions of the Iranian program and have not been allowed to go to Parchin, where we suspect that high explosive detonation was being tested as part of their nuclear weapons ambition.

There are three things that the IAEA wants to look at before it can pass judgment over how far the Iranian nuclear program has gone down the military road. I can't imagine any deal that does not fully and completely answer every question about possible military dimensions of the Iranian nuclear program, because if you don't understand what they have done in the past, you don't know where you are in terms of going forward, and you can't have a meaningful inspection regime until you understand what they try to do in terms of our military dimension.

I really do appreciate Secretary Kerry calling me. The one thing we learned about the Iranians and their nuclear program is that they cannot be trusted. They have lied, and they have cheated at every turn. There can be no wiggle room when it comes to the Iranians and a nuclear deal. Anytime, anywhere inspections are absolutely a must. Understanding their possible military dimensions is an absolute ingredient along with others.

I am glad to have received this phone call from Secretary Kerry. But all of us need to be aware of whom we are dealing with when it comes to the Iranians and get every i dotted and every t crossed before you would even entertain a deal with the Iranians.

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

Mr. GRAHAM. Absolutely.

Mr. MCCAIN. Is it my understanding from the Senator's statement that Secretary Kerry is now saying that was not an accurate quote of his——

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes.

Mr. MCCAIN. That it was not urgent that the previous activities concerning the development of nuclear weapons would be absolutely required?

Mr. GRAHAM. Yes. He indicated that the statement that was attributed to him was taken out of context, and he reaffirmed to me on the phone that possible military dimensions are an essential part of the deal, as he indicated on April 8, 2015. I think he is issuing a statement or his office is right now. I think it is important for the body to understand that Secretary Kerry wants to clear up the record. I applaud him for that.

I hope we can get a deal we all can live with. But at the end of the day, you have to remember who we are dealing with in terms of the Iranians. They have lied. They have cheated. When it comes to the military dimensions of their program, it is essential we know every detail before we can move forward with confidence.

Mr. MCCAIN. Could I ask additionally this: Did the Senator from South Carolina have an opportunity to ask Secretary Kerry about the latest information concerning Iranians who are now supplying weapons to the Taliban—the same Taliban that has killed many hundreds of Americans and wounded thousands of others? In other words, did you have a chance to ask the Secretary why we are pursuing this agreement while the Iranians' latest activity is supplying arms to the Taliban to kill Americans; the support of the Shiite militias in Iraq; the support of the Houthis in other countries, including Yemen; the support of the Iranians for Hezbollah in Lebanon, which in Syria is killing off the Free Syrian Army forces that we are supporting; and the continued development by Iran of a nuclear warhead and the vehicle with which to deliver it? I wonder if the Senator from South Carolina had the chance to ask the Secretary of State about those events and situations that exist in the Middle East today.

Mr. GRAHAM. No, I did not. We talked specifically about his statements. But I understand the concern of the Senator from Arizona about the idea of doing an agreement with the Iranians that would give them money to fund what I think has been a very destructive war machine.

From my point of view, we need to look at the Iranian behavior holistically and understand the consequences of flooding this administration with cash—the Iranian administration with cash—given the fact that what they are doing today is using whatever resources they have under sanctions to destabilize the Mideast. I doubt if any additional funds, if sanctions were relieved, would go to build

hospitals or roads. I think they would go into the activity you just described. But this conversation was limited to the statement attributed to him yesterday. I think all of us should be very attuned to what is going on with these negotiations, as it is the most important decision any administration will make probably in modern history. The consequences of a bad deal are enormous. You could start a nuclear arms race in the Mideast. At the end of the day, the behavior of the Iranians, apart from their nuclear ambitions, is at best disturbing and should be, in my view, part of any negotiating package.

But we are where we are, and I am glad to hear from the Secretary himself that possible military dimensions have to be fully explored and understood before you move forward with an agreement.

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

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

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding Rule XXII, the time until 4 p.m. today be equally divided between the managers or their designees; that at 4 p.m. all post-cloture time be expired; further, that if cloture is invoked on H.R. 1735, that the time count as if it was invoked at 10 p.m. tonight and that the mandatory quorum call with respect to this cloture motion be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. McCAIN. 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. KING. 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. KING. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak for 10 minutes as in morning business.

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

TREE STREET YOUTH

Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I come to the Senate floor with some good news from my home State of Maine. World Refugee Day is this Saturday, and I would like to highlight an organization that sprung up spontaneously in one of our Maine cities that is really making a difference in the lives of young people, particularly young refugees from Somalia, Sudan, and other African countries, helping them to expand their own horizons.

As the roots of our refugee and immigrant population continue to grow stronger in Maine and in the process strengthen our communities, a group called Tree Street Youth is helping to nurture that growth one student at a time. I have visited the Tree Street Youth, and it is an amazing program.

Maine's history, like the rest of America, is inexorably linked to immigration. With the exception of our native tribes, we are all from somewhere else originally. It began with European immigrants from England, Scotland, and Ireland. People with French heritage came down from Canada, and Swedes settled in northern Aroostook County in Maine. African Americans were brought here against their will, but they became part of the stock of this country. For years, immigrants in Maine found work in mills, farms, and fields, and now their descendants are our leaders—business leaders, political leaders, our neighbors, our friends, and our family.

Just as previous waves of immigrants have come to Maine in search of a better life for themselves and their children, newer immigrants—including refugees, asylees, and asylum seekers from Somalia, South Sudan, and several central African countries—are making new homes in Maine and making Maine more diverse, more dynamic, and a better place in the process.

I think it is important to point out that these refugees are people we have, in effect, invited to come to this country because the conditions in their former countries were so unstable or because they feared persecution. These people are not illegal immigrants. They are people, and they are not illegal aliens. They are people here under a legal process. They are looking for a new start, and they are willing to work hard, as we learned in Maine. But anyone who finds themselves in an entirely new and unfamiliar situation—in a situation where they may not be familiar with the language—can always use some help and support, and groups such as the Tree Street Youth in Lewiston are so important and can have such a huge impact because they smooth the transition and help promote cooperation and understanding within the community and particularly the transition of young people.

This remarkable organization was founded in 2011 by two former Bates College students located in the city of Lewiston—Julia Sleeper and Kim Sullivan. They recognized the need for such a group—for such a facility. Tree Street Youth is dedicated to supporting young people in the Lewiston-Auburn area through academics, the arts, and athletics. The organization, which originally grew out of a simple after-school homework help program, now provides local youth with a safe space to promote healthy physical, social, emotional, and academic development.

Through its flourishing arts, college prep, and job-training programs, Tree Street is not only giving young people the tools, support, and confidence they need to succeed, but it is also helping to bring all students from all backgrounds in the city of Lewiston together.

Tree Street Youth has proven to be a tremendous resource in Lewiston and Auburn, particularly for young people from immigrant families. The support services and sense of community that is provided there empowers these young people to be independent and productive members of society. While integrating into the community can be difficult for recent immigrants, refugees, and their families, the Tree Street experience helps to connect young people to their peers and to the community as a whole. This is a two-way street of understanding that helps bring our communities together.

For example, Tree Street Youth had an annual banquet this past May, and it was, I am told, a fun and emotional event and a showcase that allowed the Tree Street students to share some of their talents with the Lewiston-Auburn community. I am told that after students gave a variety of inspiring poetry readings, dance, and other performances about their experiences, it was hard to find a dry eye in the house. That really speaks to the life-changing power that this organization has brought to our community.

Just as Tree Street Youth improves young lives, these young people can in turn improve Maine and America. We need motivated, talented, and creative people from all backgrounds if we are going to keep pace with the rest of the world. We need students like Muna Muhammad, whom I met here just a few weeks ago when she represented Maine in the Senate Youth Leadership Program. Muna, whose family is from Somalia, is the president of her class at Lewiston High School, serves as a student representative on the Lewiston school committee, is involved in her school's speech, mock trial, and civil rights teams, and has a long list of other accomplishments. They highlight her remarkable leadership qualities, which radiate when you meet her.

This is what America is all about. It is about families from around the world finding a new start, bringing with them new perspectives, new ideas, and new hope for the future. It is the mainspring of the American experience. It is about a melting pot of peoples, cultures, and ideas that create a tapestry that is much stronger than any single thread.

Welcoming new people and cultures hasn't always been easy, and it is not easy. Sometimes our differences are more immediately apparent than our similarities, but over the years, immigrants and refugees have proven to be an irreplaceable part—the essential part—of who America is.

This wonderful organization started spontaneously in one of our great cities of Maine. Tree Street Youth has proven that support and community engagement can help ease that transition and

create a brighter future for those students, for Maine, and for our entire country. That is good news for Maine and good news for the United States.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

PORTS ACT

Mr. GARDNER. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the PORTS Act, legislation I have introduced to protect the American economy from crippling labor disputes at our seaports. Somebody asked why a Senator from Colorado was interested in legislation dealing with the work stoppage or slowdown that occurred on our ports on the west coast. Well, I will tell you why.

I was contacted by numerous businesses and people that had their entire furniture lines taken out of their furniture stores. I talked to ranchers who had to face threats of a $1 billion ag export market. I talked to onion growers who watched as their domestic commodity prices crashed due to the port slowdown. I watched as stories were written in newspapers about apple growers in Washington unable to export apples so they dumped apples just to rot in the fields in Washington State.

Trade through U.S. seaports is critical. We have been spending weeks on this floor and the floor of the House talking about the Trans-Pacific Partnership and talking about the importance of trade promotion authority, and none of that is possible without an active, successful port system in this country.

According to the American Association of Port Authorities, U.S. ports support 23 million jobs, and the value of related economic activity accounts for 26 percent of our national gross domestic product.

Contract negotiations and related labor disputes at our ports clog up these vital arteries and lead to delays, higher costs, and lost business for industries throughout our country. Strikes, lockouts, and slowdowns may have been business as usual for labor unions in the past, but an increasingly global economy means that the collateral damage done to American workers and businesses has increased exponentially.

The U.S. economy recently endured a 9-month labor dispute that affected all 29 of our west coast ports. The resulting logistical nightmare caused delays, higher costs, and lost businesses for industries in Colorado and throughout the United States. Ships full of cargo were anchored off our coast waiting for longshoremen to do their job on unloading international goods and loading American-made products for shipment to markets across the world. In Los Angeles and Long Beach alone, dozens of container ships sat anchored and idle.

After 9 months and huge financial costs to our national economy, the parties reached an agreement in February to allow cargo to begin moving normally through the west coast ports again. Four months later, we are finally seeing that congestion beginning to ease, but it has taken this long.

Many economists, including the Federal Reserve Board of Governors cited the labor dispute as a primary cause of the 0.7-percent decline in GDP in the first quarter of 2015. That means 29 west coast ports were primarily responsible for a 0.7-percent decline in GDP.

Agricultural exports, including apples, hay, and Christmas trees lost export opportunities to overseas customers because they couldn't get products to market. Meat and poultry companies lost sales and faced port charges in excess of $30 million per week. Retail shipments were delayed from reaching store shelves, and some stores resorted to expensive air freight to stock goods. Manufacturers waiting on shipments had to shut down production lines and risked losing contracts with foreign customers.

Colorado supplies Asia with over $500 million in beef products through the west coast ports, which accounts for about 23 percent of Colorado's total exports and 57 percent of Colorado's international exports. These and other meat and poultry exporters saw many of their products spoil as shipments were turned away at the port gates.

Grain, machine parts, coal, fishing supplies, furniture, fresh produce, and pliable metals are all products of Colorado, and all were damaged by the labor dispute.

Our exporters' relationships with Asian customers disintegrated as their orders were caught in the bottleneck. And storefronts lost customers because products took months to reach show floors.

When Congress enacted Taft-Hartley nearly 70 years ago, Congress decided the health and reputation of the greatest economy in the world should not be used as leverage in labor contract negotiations.

The opening statement of the act explains that Congress intended to minimize ''industrial strife which interferes with the normal flow of commerce.'' That means current law had provided a remedy, but unfortunately the administration did not use it.

Under that very provision of Taft-Hartley, when a labor dispute threatens the national economy, the President is empowered to use the Federal courts to seek an injunction to end labor practices causing widespread disruptions. With 70 years of case law backing it up, this is a tried-and-true process that ensures that the self-interests and greed of a few does not impact the livelihoods of the many.

Yet, when the west coast ports dispute threatened businesses and entire industries in States across the country, the President refused to act. For months, the Federal Executive decided not to exercise his authority under Taft-Hartley, depriving the country of critical dispute resolution powers.

Legislation I have introduced, known as the PORTS Act, prevents this kind of economic disruption. It would discourage disruptions at U.S. ports by strengthening and expanding the well-known Taft-Hartley process.

As we saw recently, the President of the United States may not be willing to adequately protect the economic rights and interests of American citizens. The PORTS Act would solve this by granting State Governors Taft-Hartley powers currently reserved for the President.

A Governor from any State would have the opportunity to form a board of inquiry and start the Taft-Hartley process whenever a port labor dispute is causing economic harm. Once the board reports back, any Governor can petition Federal courts to enjoin slowdowns, strikes or lockouts at ports in their State.

The act would also explicitly include slowdowns as a trigger for Taft-Hartley powers, preventing the President or Governors from using legal ambiguity to excuse an action. As a result, this legislation would give a stronger voice to local leaders by allowing those who are most affected by disruptions—local community leaders, business, employees, and consumers—to apply pressure on their Governors rather than trying to mobilize a national campaign to convince the President to act.

In just 5 years, the labor contracts at both the east coast and the west coast ports will expire, possibly leading to labor disputes on both ends of the country. When the health of the national economy is threatened, the Federal Government has a duty to act, but it is clear the current Taft-Hartley powers depend too heavily on who controls the Presidency.

It is critical that we have the necessary tools in place to prevent another debilitating crisis. So I urge my fellow colleagues to join me in supporting this important legislation. Countless retail organizations, individual businesses, and people across this country recognize the need to avoid in 5 years simultaneous slowdowns or shutdowns on the east and west coasts—what we just went through.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

KING V. BURWELL DECISION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, people across the country are eagerly anticipating the Supreme Court's decision in

King v. Burwell and for good reason. This case will likely determine once and for all whether the Obama administration violated its own law when it opted to issue health insurance tax subsidies to those who purchased insurance on federally run exchanges.

Many have argued that this decision by the Supreme Court will determine the fate of the so-called Affordable Care Act. While that argument may be a little dramatic, it isn't far off.

I have my own views on how the Court should rule in this case. Indeed, I have made it abundantly clear that in my view, the statute unambiguously limits the availability of premium tax subsidies to insurance plans purchased on State-run exchanges. I have also stated numerous times my belief that the Obama administration overstepped its authority and broke its own law when it offered subsidies to patients on exchanges established by the Federal Government.

However, as we all await the outcome of the case, we need to be clear on one point. Regardless of how the Court rules in King v. Burwell, ObamaCare will continue to inflict harm on patients and taxpayers until it is repealed and replaced with sensible, patient-centered reform.

Last week, President Obama reiterated that he had no alternative plan in place in the event that the Supreme Court rules against the administration in this case. On top of that, he flippantly stated that ''Congress could fix this whole thing with a one-sentence provision.''

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The problems with ObamaCare are so fundamental and convoluted that the idea that the entire law could be fixed in one sentence borders on laughable.

The President and his allies in Congress have gotten pretty good at cherry-picking favorable data points in order to claim that ObamaCare is working, but the overall numbers do not lie. Earlier this month, the administration announced proposed rate hikes of 10 percent or more for health insurance plans that enroll more than 6 million people in 41 States. This is just the latest premium hike patients and consumers have seen under ObamaCare, despite the fact that the authors of the law—including the President himself—promised it would bring costs down.

The failure to reduce costs isn't the only broken promise we have seen with ObamaCare. Millions of Americans have lost their insurance plans and their doctors due to the overly burdensome mandates embedded in the law. Many of these same people were forced to navigate a failed Web site that jeopardized their private information. Others were forced to purchase plans that included coverage they didn't need or want.

As a result of this misguided law, many hard-working taxpayers received incorrect tax documents relating to their premium subsidies, followed by a surprise tax bill. Just yesterday, the Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General issued a report noting that the administration did not have systems in place to ensure that ObamaCare credits that went out last year were accurate. This vulnerability may be leading to untold billions in fraud, waste, and abuse.

I could go on. The problems and hardships associated with ObamaCare have been well documented, and none of them can be solved with a one-sentence bill.

Millions of Americans have already suffered under ObamaCare, and if over the next few weeks the Supreme Court confirms that the administration broke the law by offering subsidies on Federal exchanges, millions more will face the negative consequences of this poorly drafted statute. In fact, a study published today by Avalere shows that these consumers could face annual premium contribution increases of $3,300 in 2015.

Fortunately, Republicans in Congress have a transition plan to protect these patients. Indeed, there is a wide consensus that should the Court rule against the government in King v. Burwell, we need to act to protect Americans from further suffering at the hands of ObamaCare's broken promises.

Toward that end, I support a transition plan that provides temporary financial assistance to those who would lose subsidies as a result of the Court's decision, to help them to keep their insurance if they want it.

At the same time, the transition plan should peel back ObamaCare's burdensome mandates, give individuals more flexibility to purchase coverage that meets their needs, and give States the ability to develop policies to better serve their citizens.

This temporary transition should build a bridge that gets us away from ObamaCare and puts us on a path toward lasting, patient-centered reform. Of course, this ultimate goal will have to wait until a new administration is in place—one that is actually willing to work with Congress to address the actual needs of patients and taxpayers.

Despite the claims of uninformed critics, Republicans in Congress have been working for months to ensure that a transition plan will be ready when the Court delivers its ruling. And, make no mistake, we will do our best to be ready.

At the same time, Republicans in both Chambers have worked together to put forward substantive and workable alternatives that would permanently replace the President's health care law with reforms that increase patient choice and reduce the role of the Federal Government in health care.

I am a coauthor of one such plan called the Patient CARE Act. I, along with Chairman ALEXANDER and Congressman UPTON in the House, released the latest version of this plan earlier this year. The plan has gotten high marks from a number of analysts and publications.

So while it is a common refrain by supporters of ObamaCare that chaos will ensue if the Court rules against the government in King v. Burwell, the facts tell a much different story. Republicans in Congress will be ready to respond quickly and decisively to any possible outcome.

Now, let's be clear. None of us knows how the Court is going to rule in this case. I have heard analyses and predictions that vary across the board. But no matter how this particular case turns out, we know for certain that ObamaCare has been a dismal failure for American patients and hard-working taxpayers. This entire case is yet another reminder of how, more than 5 years after it was signed, this bill continues to cause problems. No matter how the Court rules in King v. Burwell, we need to chart a different course on health care for the American people.

Let's face it. One reason we would set up a timeframe in case the Supreme Court rules against Secretary Burwell and the administration is that we need to set up a timeline where we can work on these matters and hopefully bring a national consensus to bear. Only so will we be able to resolve the problems that will be found—that are there—if we don't do what is right. So it is going to take some time. That is why we suggest that there should be time leading well into the next administration to be able to work on this to accomplish these matters and, during that time, make sure nobody is hurt because of the decision of King v. Burwell should it go against the government.

This is one of the great problems of our time, and there is no simple answer, but we know we can't continue under the current law of ObamaCare as it is written. If we do, we are just going to continue to go down a sinkhole of expenditures, debts, doctors leaving their profession, and an inability to provide the health care that so glowingly was spoken of by this administration.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator withhold?

Mr. HATCH. I am glad to withhold.

Mr. INHOFE. First of all, let me say the senior Senator from Utah is doing a yeoman's job of exposing some of the fraudulent things we have been involved in for ObamaCare over this period of time, and I applaud him for that.

AMENDMENT NO. 1911, AS FURTHER MODIFIED

Earlier today, I made a motion that was incomplete, and I wish to correct it, having to do with a drafting error.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Hatch amendment No. 1911 be further modified to address a drafting error.

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

The amendment, as further modified, is as follows:

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. _____. REPORT AND ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL COSTS AND BENEFITS OF PRIVATIZING DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE COMMISSARIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than February 1, 2016, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report assessing the viability of privatizing, in whole or in part, the Department of Defense commissary system. The report shall be so submitted to Congress before the development of any plans or pilot program to privatize defense commissaries or the defense commissary system.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The assessment required by subsection (a) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

(1) A methodology for defining the total number and locations of commissaries.

(2) An evaluation of commissary use by location in the following beneficiary categories:

(A) Pay grades E–1 through E–4.

(B) Pay grades E–5 through E–7.

(C) Pay grades E–8 and E–9.

(D) Pay grades O–1 through O–3.

(E) Pay grades O–4 through O–6.

(F) Pay grades O–7 through O–10.

(G) Military retirees.

(3) An evaluation of commissary use in locations outside the continental United States and in remote and isolated locations in the continental United States when compared with other locations.

(4) An evaluation of the cost of commissary operations during fiscal years 2009 through 2014.

(5) An assessment of potential savings and efficiencies to be achieved through implementation of some or all of recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

(6) A description and evaluation of the strategy of the Defense Commissary Agency for pricing products sold at commissaries.

(7) A description and evaluation of the transportation strategy of the Defense Commissary Agency for products sold at commissaries.

(8) A description and evaluation of the formula of the Defense Commissary Agency for calculating savings for its customers as a result of its pricing strategy.

(9) An evaluation of the average savings per household garnered by commissary use.

(10) A description and evaluation of the use of private contractors and vendors as part of the defense commissary system.

(11) An assessment of costs or savings, and potential impacts to patrons and the Government, of privatizing the defense commissary system, including potential increased use of Government assistance programs.

(12) A description and assessment of potential barriers to privatization of the defense commissary system.

(13) An assessment of the extent to which patron savings would remain after the privatization of the defense commissary system.

(14) An assessment of the impact of any recommended changes to the operation of the defense commissary system on commissary patrons, including morale and retention.

(15) An assessment of the actual interest of major grocery retailers in the management and operations of all, or part, of the existing defense commissary system.

(16) An assessment of the impact of privatization of the defense commissary system on off-installation prices of similar products available in the system.

(17) An assessment of the impact of privatization of the defense commissary system, and conversion of the Defense Commissary Agency workforce to non-appropriated fund status, on employment of military family members, particularly with respect to pay, benefits, and job security.

(18) An assessment of the impact of privatization of the defense commissary system on Exchanges and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) quality-of-life programs.

(c) USE OF PREVIOUS STUDIES.—The Secretary shall consult previous studies and surveys on matters appropriate to the report required by subsection (a), including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) The January 2015 Final Report of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission.

(2) The 2014 Military Family Lifestyle Survey Comprehensive Report.

(3) The 2013 Living Patterns Survey.

(4) The report required by section 634 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. ''Buck'' McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113-291) on the management, food, and pricing options for the defense commissary system.

(d) COMPTROLLER GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF REPORT.—Not later than May 1, 2016, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives a report setting forth an assessment by the Comptroller General of the report required by subsection (a). Section 652 of the Act shall be null and void.

SEC. _____. REPORT ON DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE DEFINITION OF AND POLICY REGARDING SOFTWARE SUSTAINMENT.

(a) REPORT ON ASSESSMENT OF DEFINITION AND POLICY.—Not later than March 15, 2016, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees and the President pro tempore of the Senate a report setting forth an assessment, obtained by the Secretary for purposes of the report, on the definition used by the Department of Defense for and the policy of the Department regarding software maintenance, particularly with respect to the totality of the term ''software sustainment'' in the definition of ''depot-level maintenance and repair'' under section 2460 of title 10, United States Code.

(b) INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT.—The assessment obtained for purposes of subsection (a) shall be conducted by a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC), or another appropriate independent entity with expertise in matters described in subsection (a), selected by the Secretary for purposes of the assessment.

(c) ELEMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The assessment obtained for purposes of subsection (a) shall address, with respect to software and weapon systems of the Department of Defense (including space systems), each of the following:

(A) Fiscal ramifications of current programs with regard to the size, scope, and cost of software to the program's overall budget, including embedded and support software, percentage of weapon systems' functionality controlled by software, and reliance on proprietary data, processes, and components.

(B) Legal status of the Department in regards to adhering to section 2464(a)(1) of such title with respect to ensuring a ready and controlled source of maintenance and sustainment on software for its weapon systems.

(C) Operational risks and reduction to materiel readiness of current Department weapon systems related to software costs, delays, re-work, integration and functional testing, defects, and documentation errors.

(D) Other matters as identified by the Secretary.

(2) ADDITIONAL MATTERS.—For each of subparagraphs (A) through (C) of paragraph (1), the assessment obtained for purposes of subsection (a) shall include review and analysis regarding sole-source contracts, range of competition, rights in technical data, public and private capabilities, integration lab initial costs and sustaining operations, and total obligation authority costs of software, disaggregated by armed service, for the Department.

(d) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SUPPORT.—The Secretary of Defense shall provide the independent entity described in subsection (b)with timely access to appropriate information, data, resources, and analysis so that the entity may conduct a thorough and independent assessment as required under such subsection.

Mr. INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. President.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCAIN. 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. MCCAIN. Mr. President, shortly we will have a vote. I would like to say a few words about the legislation before we do. How much time is remaining?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. About 13 minutes remains.

Mr. MCCAIN. I say to my colleagues, this Defense Authorization Act is a reform bill. I repeat: It is a reform bill—a reform bill that will enable our military to rise to the challenges of a more dangerous world both today and in the future. It tackles acquisition reform, military retirement reform, personnel reform, headquarters and management reform.

We identified $10 billion of excess and unnecessary spending from the President's budget request. We are reinvesting it in military capabilities for our warfighters and reforms that can yield long-term savings for the Department of Defense. We did all of this while upholding our commitments to our servicemembers, retirees, and their families.

On acquisition reform, we put the services back into the acquisition process, created new mechanisms to ensure accountability for results, streamlined regulation, and opened up the defense acquisition process to our Nation's innovators.

On military reform, we modernized and improved our military retirement system. Today, 83 percent of servicemembers leave the service with no retirement assets or benefits. Under this new plan, 75 percent of servicemembers would get benefits. This reform, over time, is estimated to save $15 billion per year in the outyears.

On management reform, we ensure that the Department of Defense and the military services are using precious defense dollars to fulfill their missions and defend the Nation, not expand their bloated staffs. Targeted reductions in headquarters and administrative staff in this legislation—which is a

7.5-percent mandated reduction per year, up to a 30-percent reduction in the size of headquarters and administrative staff—will generate $1.7 billion in savings just for fiscal year 2016.

With these savings and billions more identified throughout the bill, we accelerated shipbuilding, added an upgraded fighter aircraft, invested in key modernization priorities across the services, and met our commanders' most urgent needs. As adversaries threaten our military technological advantage, the bill looks to the future and invests in new breakthrough technologies, including directed energy and unmanned combat aircraft.

The legislation is a reflection of the growing threats we face in the world. The legislation authorizes nearly $3.8 billion in support for Afghan security forces as they continue to defend their country in the gains of the last decade against our common enemies. The legislation authorizes the provision of defensive lethal assistance to Ukraine to help it build combat capability and defend its sovereign territory. It supports the efforts by Lebanon and Jordan to secure their borders against ISIL. It creates a new initiative to help Southeast Asian nations build maritime domain awareness capabilities to address growing sovereignty challenges in the South China Sea.

This is an ambitious piece of legislation, but in the times we live in, that is exactly what we need.

Henry Kissinger told our committee earlier this year that our Nation faces the most diverse and complex array of crises since the end of World War II. Rising to these challenges requires bold reform to our national defense. This legislation represents a strong first step in that direction.

As I said, this is a reform bill. This is an authorizing bill. This brings about much needed reforms. I cannot go to the people of Arizona and justify defense spending when there is a $2.4 billion cost overrun on an aircraft carrier, when there are a number of weapons systems which billions of dollars have been invested in and which have never become reality. That system has to be reformed. That is what this bill does.

We have to reform our military retirement system. We allow people, after just 2 years of service, to contribute to their own retirement. Today, they have to wait 20 years in order to do that.

We upgrade fighter aircraft.

We tell the defense industry that they cannot have those cost overruns. If there are cost overruns, the service chiefs have to personally sign that they know of, are aware of, and are taking action to prevent further cost overruns.

So there is a lot in this legislation. It is an authorizing legislation. That is why it disturbs me a great deal to hear my colleagues on the other side of the aisle saying they want to vote against it because of OCO. That is not sufficient reason in these times. If they want to fight against OCO, the place to do it—the overseas contingency operation money which brings up authorizing spending to the same level that the President has requested—if they want to do that, then let's have that fight in another arena. But let's not take away from the men and women who are serving in this military the equipment and the training and the leadership that is demanded in the world as it is today—in the words of Henry Kissinger, more diverse and complex array of crises since the end of World War II.

So I urge all of my colleagues to restate their commitment to the defense of this Nation by voting in favor of this legislation and cloture prior to that. I urge my colleagues—all of them—to understand that we can fight about this funding situation, the need to repeal sequestration—sequestration is destroying our military's capability to defend this Nation. Every uniformed service leader who appeared before the Armed Services Committee said that with sequestration, we are putting the lives of the men and women in uniform at greater risk. We should not do that. We ask young men and women to volunteer for the military, and yet we here in Congress won't take action to keep them from being placed in greater danger. That is an abrogation of our responsibility. This bill does not fix all that, but it certainly is a major step in the right direction.

Almost all of this legislation was done on a bipartisan basis. There were literally—there were some small disagreements, but overall the committee together.

Now, at the behest of their leadership and perhaps the President of the United States, they are so torqued up about OCO that they may vote against this legislation's passage, and that, my friends, is an abrogation of their responsibility to the men and women who are serving this country. If they choose to vote against this legislation on the grounds that they are opposed to the funding mechanism used to do so, then they have their priorities upside down, and I intend to tell the American people about it because I believe that we are not serving the men and women who are serving this country to the best of their ability and not receiving the support they need and deserve from the Senate of the United States of America.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

AMENDMENT NO. 1911, AS FURTHER MODIFIED

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I am speaking on an amendment that the Senate will be voting on shortly, the Inhofe-Mikulski amendment. Really, the amendment was led by the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. INHOFE. This is really about commissaries.

We are here ready to vote on the Department of Defense authorization. We want to stand up for our troops. One of the most important things we can do is to stand up for their families.

Senator INHOFE and I are deeply concerned that DOD has the misguided viewpoint that shrinking or eliminating or privatizing the commissaries will save money for the U.S. Department of Defense. We do not even know what the impact of that will be. Senator INHOFE, with my encouragement and support, wants to have an amendment that would actually look at the impact of privatization and a private program to do so. So I want my side of the aisle to know we stand shoulder to shoulder on this. The Senator from Oklahoma has done an outstanding job as always in standing up for the troops and their very important benefits.

I note that he is on the floor. I ask that when the rollcall is called, we support the Inhofe-Mikulski amendment.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be recognized for a couple of minutes.

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first, I wish to say to the Senator from Maryland how much I appreciate the fact that we are reaching across the aisle and doing something that is right for the kids who are out there risking their lives for us.

I make it a habit to go to the areas of combat with regularity, as do other members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, and I always get a chance to really talk with and get to know them. You learn a lot more by talking to the kids in the mess hall there than you do by going to the committee hearings here in the United States.

One of the things they have a real love for, as I am sure the Senator from Maryland suggested to you, is the commissary. In some areas that are remote, there is no competition. There aren't any Walmarts around; there is just a commissary. And there is almost a fraternal belief and feeling, as people go around—particularly, the spouses will meet there. They will do their shopping there. It is something that is very serious to them.

There is language in this bill that says that they will take an experiment in some five different areas that have large commissaries, go ahead and privatize those, and then after that takes place, do an assessment as to whether they should be privatized.

This amendment is very simple. It merely says: Let's do the assessment first. Why go ahead and close these commissaries if we find that is something that we should not, in fact, do?

We have so many interests. First of all, we have—as I am sure the Senator

from Maryland mentioned—we have some 25 cosponsors already. This is without real effort. We also have some 41 organizations supporting this bill.

I see that the time is up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time has expired.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. I yield to the Chair.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1911, AS FURTHER MODIFIED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to Hatch amendment No. 1911, as further modified.

The amendment (No. 1911), as further modified, was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1456

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the yeas and nays be vitiated.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is on agreeing to McCain amendment No. 1456.

The amendment (No. 1456) was agreed to.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that it be in order to make a point of order against all the pending nongermane amendments en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 1564, AS MODIFIED; 1825; 1559, AS MODIFIED; 1543, AS MODIFIED; 1645; AND 1486

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I make a point of order that the following amendments are not germane: amendments Nos. 1564, 1825, 1559, 1543, 1645, and 1486.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The point of order is sustained, and the amendments fall.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 1463, AS AMENDED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question now occurs on agreeing to amendment No. 1463, as amended.

The amendment (No. 1463), as amended, was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

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

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on H.R. 1735, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John McCain, Richard C. Shelby, Jeff Flake, John Barrasso, John Cornyn, Mike Rounds, Jeff Sessions, Shelley Moore Capito, Lamar Alexander, Lindsey Graham, Joni Ernst, John Hoeven, Roger F. Wicker, Kelly Ayotte, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on H.R. 1735, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE) and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

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

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 84, nays 14, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 214 Leg.]

YEAS—84

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

NAYS—14

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Reid
Brown	Leahy	Sanders
Casey	Manchin	Warren
Cruz	Markey	Wyden
Franken	Merkley	

NOT VOTING—2

Lee	Rubio

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 84, the nays are 14.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Kansas.

MORNING BUSINESS

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

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

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE YOUTH TOUR

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I rise this evening in support of more than 1,700 high school students who happen to be in our Nation's capital, in fact, this week. They are part of the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. During this year's tour, students will participate in leadership training and gain firsthand insight into the legislative process.

Those electric cooperatives that sponsor these kids coming to Washington, DC, from my State, yours, and every other State across the country, are more than just poles and wires. They are about people and communities. Recognizing that youth are the future of those communities is what the rural electric cooperative program is all about—sending 51 students to Washington, DC, for 51 straight years, so future leaders can have a front-row seat to American Government.

What would rural communities look like without power? That is pretty difficult to imagine. Think about the power of electric cooperatives. Sure, our local electric co-ops keep the lights on, but, as I say, they do much more than that. Co-ops are not-for-profits and owned by their members. They recognize the need to invest in future generations. Co-ops give back to the communities they serve, and the Youth Tour is proof of that.

Each year, I enjoy taking time to visit with Kansans who are part of the Youth Tour because they are among the most energetic, engaging, and respectful young men and women I see throughout the year in Washington, DC. It is always valuable for us to have folks from our home States come and visit us, but it is especially pleasing to have these young men and women visit us. In my view, it is a program that has figured out how to find the best and brightest and those with the greatest interest and find a way for them to come to Washington, DC, and see our Nation's Capitol and hopefully inspire them to continue their interest in government and politics throughout their lives.

Youth Tour alumni have gone on to become university presidents, Fortune 500 CEOs, Members of Congress, and built lifelong friendships. In fact, just last week I had Jacob Helm in my office. He is from Norcatur, KS, a small town along the Colorado-Nebraska part of our State. Jacob is an individual I nominated to attend the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, and he just graduated. He is now engaged to a fellow Youth Tour alumna, Michelle Peschel of Axtell, KS, which is on the other side of the State—Nebraska more than the Missouri part of our State. Both Jacob and Michelle grew up in communities of fewer than 500 people, and I am proud to see them giving back to their State and their country. They became engaged as a result of meeting each other on a Youth Tour back when they were in high school and will soon be married.

My own interest in public service stemmed from a summer internship from my Congressman when I was in college, and I am hopeful that visits like these that the rural electric cooperatives provide for these young men and women—these visits to Washington, DC—will inspire these young people to get involved and work to improve their hometowns, our State, and our Nation.

Each of these 1,700 Youth Tour students should be commended for being in Washington, DC, this week, just as our co-ops should be commended for realizing the need to invest in our future leaders.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT GENERAL NOEL T. ''TOM'' JONES

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, in a few short weeks an inspirational military leader will retire after serving his country proudly for over 35 years. Today I recognize and commend Air Force Lt. Gen. Noel T. ''Tom'' Jones for his exceptional leadership and service over those 35 years, most recently as the vice commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

Born to Margaret and Lem Jones, General Jones was no stranger to military service. His father was an F–4 fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force and retired after 23 years as a lieutenant colonel. His older brother, Lem Jones, Jr., served in the U.S. Army and retired as a major. The second oldest son, Ron Jones, served as an enlisted member in the U.S. Air Force for 6 years. Finally, General Jones' younger brother, James ''Rev'' Jones, recently retired as a major general after a distinguished career as an Air Force fighter pilot as well. In fact, at one point in time, all four Jones boys were serving in the military at the same time. All told, General Jones moved around to nine different States or countries before even entering college.

With a calling to serve and fly like his father, General Jones was commissioned in 1980 following graduation from the U.S. Air Force Academy with a bachelor of science degree in political science. He completed undergraduate pilot training in 1981 and began a long career flying the F–16 Fighting Falcon under the call sign ''Honez.'' During his career, he served as an instructor pilot and operations officer as well as holding numerous operational command positions.

An outstanding leader throughout his distinguished career, General Jones' service has spanned the country with assignments in 12 States and across the world with tours at Torrejon Air Base, Spain, Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, Baghdad, Iraq, and Ramstein Air Base, Germany. He has commanded a fighter squadron, operations group, and a fighter wing. Additionally, General Jones commanded the 332nd Expeditionary Wing at Ahmed Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait, during Operation Iraqi Freedom and served for a year in Iraq as the director of strategic plans and assessment for U.S. Forces-Iraq.

General Jones has also held staff assignments at North American Aerospace Defense Command, Air Combat Command, and the National Security Agency. Prior to his current assignment, he was the director, operational capability requirements, deputy chief of staff for operations, plans and requirements, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Washington, DC. In his current capacity, General Jones serves as the vice commander, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, the air component to U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command. The major command is responsible for providing full-spectrum warfighting capabilities to the combatant commanders throughout the entire area of responsibility, which encompasses 104 countries in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East, the Arctic and Atlantic Oceans, and possesses more than a quarter of the world's population and more than a quarter of the world's gross domestic product.

General Jones is a command pilot with more than 3,500 flying hours, including combat sorties over Iraq in operations Southern Watch, Desert Fox and Iraqi Freedom. His military decorations include the Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal with oak leaf cluster, Legion of Merit with two oak leaf clusters, and Bronze Star Medal, among many others.

Mr. President, Lt. Gen. Tom ''Honez'' Jones epitomizes the Air Force core values of integrity, service, and excellence, and has dedicated his life to serving our Nation. I am proud to say he plans to retire with the rest of the extended Jones Family in Coushatta, LA. Today I join my colleagues in honoring his admirable service to our Nation and all the airmen, sailors, soldiers, marines, and civilians, who have served alongside him. We offer our heartfelt appreciation to Tom, his wife Debbie, and their children, Tommy and Danielle, and a hearty congratulation on his retirement from the U.S. Air Force.

RECOGNIZING KATHY MERCHANT

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Kathy Merchant, a friend and an accomplished community leader in Greater Cincinnati over the past nearly two decades, on the occasion of her receiving the 2015 Northern Kentucky University Lincoln Award.

Kathy Merchant's professional accomplishments are noteworthy, having served as the president/CEO of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, GCF, from 1997 until her retirement in May 2015. Prior to joining GCF, Ms. Merchant was director of the Pew Charitable Trusts' Neighborhood Preservation Initiative and a partner in the consulting firm Holt, Wexler & Merchant.

Recognized as a national leader in her field, Ms. Merchant serves on the board of the Boston-based Center for Effective Philanthropy and in 2012 joined the national board of the New York-based Local Initiatives Support Corporation.

Ms. Merchant has served on a number of nonprofit boards, including the National Center for Arts and Technology, Cincinnati USA Chamber, Council on Foundations, Community Foundations of America/GivingNet, Ohio Grantmakers Forum, and the SC Ministry Foundation.

An advocate for the underserved, Ms. Merchant chaired the Strive Partnership's cradle-to-career initiative in Cincinnati—2009 to 2013—where she continues to serve as a member of the executive committee and as an advisor to the national Strive Network.

Ms. Merchant has earned many professional awards, including the YWCA Career Woman of Achievement, 2005; Ohio Philanthropy, 2006; Girl Scouts Woman of Distinction, 2009; Council on Foundations' Distinguished Grantmaker, 2011; Kentucky Commonwealth, 2012; WE Celebrate Woman of the Year—Nonprofit, 2012; and the Cincinnati Public Relations Society of America's Blacksmiths CEO Communicator of the Year, 2013. She was also named a ''Top 50 Power and Influence'' leader by The NonProfit Times, 2008.

I would like to congratulate Kathy Merchant on the many contributions she has made to the Greater Cincinnati community and beyond.

RECOGNIZING BOSMA ENTERPRISES 100TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. DONNELLY. Mr. President, today I rise to recognize Bosma Enterprises on the 100th anniversary of its founding. I commend Bosma for remaining steadfast in its mission to decrease the unemployment rate among those who are blind or visually impaired.

Since its founding, Bosma Enterprises has provided employment opportunities and rehabilitation to visually impaired Hoosiers throughout our State. Originally a public institution created by the Indiana State Legislature in 1915, the Board of Industrial Aid for the Blind was renamed after Charles E. Bosma, an advocate for the blind and visually impaired citizens of Indiana. Indiana State Representative and Speaker of the Indiana House Brian C. Bosma has served as a founding director since 1988 when the organization was granted not-for-profit status. Since then, Bosma has grown tremendously. A little more than 15 years ago, Bosma secured a major contract allowing it to package and distribute gloves to hospitals under the jurisdiction of the Department of Veterans Affairs. Bosma then expanded their contract with the Department of Veteran Affairs and began to package and distribute surgical gloves, creating even more jobs.

Bosma Enterprises has grown into a business with more than 200 employees,

85 of whom are blind or visually impaired, making this the largest employer of individuals with visual disabilities in the State of Indiana. Bosma relocated to the northwest side of Indianapolis 10 years ago, where it doubled in size with increased production, training rooms, and rehabilitation services. Recently, Bosma added a second location for production, warehousing, and office space. As the only service of its kind and magnitude in the State, Bosma Enterprises continues to make a difference in the daily lives of visually disabled Hoosiers.

Today, I commend the efforts of Bosma Enterprises as it prepares for its future, and the futures of the visually impaired Hoosiers it seeks to help. Innovation and diversification have allowed Bosma to grow, provide services to more and more people, and create jobs throughout Indiana. It stands as a shining example of the hard work and service of Hoosiers. I wish Bosma Enterprises continued success towards its noble vision: a future in which the blind and visually impaired will have equal opportunities in every aspect of their lives.

On behalf of the citizens of Indiana, I would like to congratulate Bosma Enterprises on 100 years of success. This organization embodies the Hoosier spirit and improves the lives of visually impaired Hoosiers across the State. Bosma has a proven track record of being an advocate and reliable employer for our visually impaired Hoosiers. We are proud that Bosma calls Indiana home.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO GENE PETERSON

• Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Gene Peterson, a native of Culbertson, MT, and an award-winning broadcast anchor. Over this past weekend, Mr. Peterson was inducted into the Montana Broadcasters Hall of Fame for contributing more than 50 years of service to the broadcasting industry in our State.

A graduate of the Brown Institute in Minneapolis, MN, Mr. Peterson moved with his wife and two daughters to Missoula in 1962, where he began working at a modest radio station that he then transformed into a thriving radio group of five stations.

Mr. Peterson has also undertaken a great deal of public service, for which he has been honored in many ways. He has served the city of Missoula as president of the Missoula Chamber of Commerce, president of the Montana Broadcasters Association, Grizzly Scholarship Association, St. Patrick Hospital Advisory Board, YMCA, and the University of Montana President's Advisory Board. Among his awards for his careers in both broadcasting and public service are Businessman of the Year, the Hugh O'Brien Lifetime Achievement, and Sportsman of the Year.

Mr. Peterson has made a difference in his years of community service and contributions to our State's economy. I join Montanans today in honoring him for his years of service to our State.•

RECOGNIZING THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA ON ITS VISIT TO CUBA

• Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the Minnesota Orchestra and its music director, Osmo Vänskä, for the ensemble's recent visit to Cuba—the first major American orchestra to do so since President Obama announced efforts to normalize our Nation's relationship with Cuba. The Minnesota Orchestra last visited Cuba in 1930, when it was known as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra.

For more than a century, the Minnesota Orchestra has demonstrated a deep commitment to innovation and diversity, and this visit is just the latest example. During its whirlwind visit, the orchestra won the hearts and minds of music lovers across the island nation. The performances were met with applause and acclaim, and they illustrated the importance of strengthening the cultural bonds between our countries and our people. In Cuba, there is a real eagerness for the person-to-person contact that has been blocked for decades. This trip signified real steps towards forming those crucial relationships—proving that music is a language that reaches beyond cultural, political, and geographical barriers to unite us all. I commend the Minnesota Orchestra for its willingness and initiative to take part in this historic cultural moment.

Since its inception in 1903, the Minnesota Orchestra has promoted new ideas, new connections, and new music. Under Mr. Vänskä's leadership, this orchestra has risen in the ranks to become one of the top symphonic ensembles in America, and I am proud that it calls Minnesota home. The orchestra has become a visionary leader in the world of symphonic and classical music, stretching beyond what other ensembles imagine is possible, in order to achieve excellence in its field.

I hope my colleagues will join me as I commend the Minnesota Orchestra, its Musical Director Osmo Vänskä and all of the talented musicians and dedicated staff on this historic tour of Cuba, and for more than a century of performing and producing beautiful music enjoyed not just in Minnesota but around the world.•

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 1:36 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2596. An act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes.

MEASURES REFERRED

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

H.R. 2596. An act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes; to the Select Committee on Intelligence.

MEASURES DISCHARGED

The following bill was discharged from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and referred as indicated:

S. 1519. A bill to amend the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947 to address slowdowns, strikes, and lock-outs occurring at ports in the United States, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 697. A bill to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reauthorize and modernize that Act, and for other purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

By Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself, Mr. ALEXANDER, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. KIRK, and Mr. GRASSLEY):

S. 1590. A bill to amend the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to provide protections against pregnancy discrimination in the workplace, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. TESTER (for himself and Mrs. MCCASKILL):

S. 1591. A bill to amend title 5, United States Code, to provide a pathway for temporary seasonal employees in Federal land management agencies to compete for vacant permanent positions under internal merit promotion procedures, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

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

S. 1592. A bill to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in the Kaibab National Forest; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. CRUZ:

S. 1593. A bill to eliminate the offsetting accounts that are currently available for use by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PAUL:

S. 1594. A bill to improve the Federal flight deck officers program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

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

S. 1595. A bill to describe the authority under which Federal entities may use mobile aerial-view devices to surveil, protect individual and collective privacy against warrantless governmental intrusion through the use of mobile aerial-view devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. BROWN):

S. 1596. A bill to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2082 Stringtown Road in Grove City, Ohio, as the ''Specialist Joseph W. Riley Post Office Building''; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

By Mr. WICKER (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Ms. COLLINS, Mr. FRANKEN, Mr. ISAKSON, and Mr. BENNET):

S. 1597. A bill to enhance patient engagement in the medical product development process, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. LEE (for himself, Mr. VITTER, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. ENZI, Mr. PERDUE, Mr. SESSIONS, Mr. DAINES, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. HATCH, Mr. COTTON, Mr. RISCH, Mr. CASSIDY, Mr. ROUNDS, Mr. WICKER, and Mr. SASSE):

S. 1598. A bill to prevent discriminatory treatment of any person on the basis of views held with respect to marriage; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 1599. A bill to provide anti-retaliation protections for antitrust whistleblowers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

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

S. 1600. A bill to extend Privacy Act remedies to citizens of certified states, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Mr. WHITEHOUSE:

S. 1601. A bill to establish an integrated national approach to respond to ongoing and expected effects of extreme weather and climate change by protecting, managing, and conserving the fish, wildlife, and plants of the United States, and to maximize Government efficiency and reduce costs, in cooperation with State, local, and tribal governments and other entities, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. SCHUMER, and Mr. NELSON):

S. 1602. A bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow certain hospitals in Puerto Rico to qualify for incentives for adoption and meaningful use of certified EHR Technology under the Medicare program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. FLAKE (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON, Mr. MCCAIN, and Mr. SCHUMER):

S. 1603. A bill to actively recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection Officers; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

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

By Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. SESSIONS):

S. Res. 203. A resolution designating June 20, 2015, as ''American Eagle Day'' and celebrating the recovery and restoration of the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States; considered and agreed to.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 134

At the request of Mr. WYDEN, the name of the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 134, a bill to amend the Controlled Substances Act to exclude industrial hemp from the definition of marihuana, and for other purposes.

S. 142

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 142, a bill to require the Consumer Product Safety Commission to promulgate a rule to require child safety packaging for liquid nicotine containers, and for other purposes.

S. 313

At the request of Mr. CASEY, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 313, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to add physical therapists to the list of providers allowed to utilize locum tenens arrangements under Medicare.

S. 356

At the request of Mr. LEE, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 356, a bill to improve the provisions relating to the privacy of electronic communications.

S. 488

At the request of Mr. SCHUMER, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Mr. CARDIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 488, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to allow physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurse specialists to supervise cardiac, intensive cardiac, and pulmonary rehabilitation programs.

S. 512

At the request of Mr. COONS, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 512, a bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to safeguard data stored abroad from improper government access, and for other purposes.

S. 539

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor of S. 539, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to repeal the Medicare outpatient rehabilitation therapy caps.

S. 598

At the request of Mr. CARDIN, the name of the Senator from Maryland (Ms. MIKULSKI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 598, a bill to improve the understanding of, and promote access to treatment for, chronic kidney disease, and for other purposes.

S. 613

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 613, a bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to improve the efficiency of summer meals.

S. 637

At the request of Mr. CRAPO, the name of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. GARDNER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 637, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to extend and modify the railroad track maintenance credit.

S. 676

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY) 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. 862

At the request of Ms. MIKULSKI, the name of the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 862, a bill to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to provide more effective remedies to victims of discrimination in the payment of wages on the basis of sex, and for other purposes.

S. 901

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. WYDEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 901, a bill to establish in the Department of Veterans Affairs a national center for research on the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions of the descendants of veterans exposed to toxic substances during service in the Armed Forces that are related to that exposure, to establish an advisory board on such health conditions, and for other purposes.

S. 928

At the request of Mrs. GILLIBRAND, the name of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 928, a bill to reauthorize the World Trade Center Health Program and the September 11th Victim Compensation Fund of 2001, and for other purposes.

S. 959

At the request of Ms. CANTWELL, the name of the Senator from New York (Mrs. GILLIBRAND) was added as a cosponsor of S. 959, a bill to establish a tax credit for on-site apprenticeship programs, and for other purposes.

S. 979

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Nevada (Mr. HELLER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 979, a bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan by veterans' dependency and indemnity compensation, and for other purposes.

S. 1099

At the request of Mrs. SHAHEEN, the names of the Senator from Montana

(Mr. TESTER) and the Senator from Alaska (Ms. MURKOWSKI) were added as cosponsors of S. 1099, a bill to amend the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to provide States with flexibility in determining the size of employers in the small group market.

S. 1119

At the request of Mr. PETERS, the name of the Senator from Maine (Ms. COLLINS) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1119, a bill to establish the National Criminal Justice Commission.

S. 1148

At the request of Mr. NELSON, the name of the Senator from Oregon (Mr. MERKLEY) was added as a cosponsor 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. 1302

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1302, a bill to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide leave because of the death of a son or daughter.

S. 1383

At the request of Mr. PERDUE, the names of the Senator from Montana (Mr. DAINES) and the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. BOOZMAN) were added as cosponsors of S. 1383, a bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to subject the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection to the regular appropriations process, and for other purposes.

S. 1434

At the request of Mr. HEINRICH, the names of the Senator from Minnesota (Mr. FRANKEN) and the Senator from Rhode Island (Mr. WHITEHOUSE) were added as cosponsors of S. 1434, a bill to amend the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978 to establish an energy storage portfolio standard, and for other purposes.

S. 1519

At the request of Mr. GARDNER, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. WICKER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1519, a bill to amend the Labor Relations Management Act, 1947 to address slowdowns, strikes, and lock-outs occurring at ports in the United States, and for other purposes.

S. 1555

At the request of Ms. HIRONO, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1555, a bill to award a Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the Filipino veterans of World War II, in recognition of the dedicated service of the veterans during World War II.

S. 1580

At the request of Mr. TESTER, the name of the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1580, a bill to allow additional appointing authorities to select individuals from competitive service certificates.

S. 1588

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the names of the Senator from Hawaii (Ms. HIRONO), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. UDALL) were added as cosponsors of S. 1588, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act to revise and extend projects relating to children and violence to provide access to school-based comprehensive mental health programs.

AMENDMENT NO. 1911

At the request of Mr. INHOFE, his name was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 1911 proposed to H.R. 1735, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1961

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1961 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1735, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 1962

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the names of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN) were added as cosponsors of amendment No. 1962 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1735, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2011

At the request of Ms. AYOTTE, the name of the Senator from Iowa (Mrs. ERNST) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2011 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1735, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2016

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2016 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1735, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2023

At the request of Mr. REED, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Ms. AYOTTE) was added as a cosponsor of amendment No. 2023 intended to be proposed to H.R. 1735, an act to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

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

S. 1592. A bill to clarify the description of certain Federal land under the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005 to include additional land in the Kaibab National Forest; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I am pleased to cosponsor legislation introduced by my colleague, Senator JEFF FLAKE, that would fix a mapping error involving the transfer of Forest Service land to Young Life's Lost Canyon Camp in northern Arizona.

The bill, S. 1592, would amend the Northern Arizona Land Exchange and Verde River Basin Partnership Act of 2005, P.L. 109–110, to clarify that Congress intended that Young Life could purchase at fair market value a full 237.5 acres of national forest land in the Kaibab National Forest as Congress intended. The Forest Service says there is an error in the Forest Service map referenced in the 2005 Act that has omitted about 25 acres from the land conveyance. This error appears to be preventing the Forest Service and Young Life from finalizing the transfer. Each year, nearly 5,000 young campers spend their summer at the Lost Canyon Camp, and this land conveyance is needed to expand the camp and create a buffer zone around the camp. I urge my colleagues to pass this clarifying legislation.

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

S. 1595. A bill to describe the authority under which Federal entities may use mobile aerial-view devices to surveil, protect individual and collective privacy against warrantless governmental intrusion through the use of mobile aerial-view devices, and for other purposes; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to introduce legislation to further protect American's privacy, while providing clear guidance for Federal law enforcement for information collection using the newest technologies. I

am sure my colleagues recall recent reports, from just a few weeks ago, detailing the FBI's use of secret planes to spy on people in dozens of cities without a warrant. These reports troubled both my colleagues and me, and left unclear exactly when the government thinks it is okay to surveil people from the air. As I have stressed many times before, the American public deserves to know the laws that the government relies on to surveil people, and the limits of those laws. And that's what this bill sets out to do.

Now, drafting legislation in an area where technology is advancing rapidly and so many policy issues intersect, is a very difficult task. But I am confident that the Protecting Individuals From Mass Aerial Surveillance Act of 2015 reflects feedback from several stakeholders, experts and civil liberties groups, and provides the government the tools it needs to keep us safe without sacrificing our civil liberties.

This bill would generally prohibit federal aerial surveillance without a warrant, but with several exceptions. It would allow the government to aerially surveil to protect people from disasters, terrorist attacks, entry of illegal substances at national borders, and other emergency situations. In addition, it would allow for government agencies to survey wildlife and conduct research by use of aerial vehicles, in order to ensure that habitats are preserved and environmental risks are assessed properly.

This bill also would prohibit the government from identifying people that happen to appear in aerial surveillance, unless it has probable cause to believe those people have committed specific crimes. All information gathered in violation of the bill would be barred admission as evidence in any court of law, and the bill would also prohibit private operators of aerial vehicles from being proxies for unlawful government surveillance.

I want to stress that we cannot stand to wait much longer to pass sensible limits on a type of surveillance whose technical capabilities are advancing rapidly. With the proliferation of drones in US airspace, and the numbers expected to increase by the thousands in the following few years, there is a real concern that the law has not been keeping up with technical advancements. And drones are not the only concern—use of planes and helicopters equipped with modern surveillance equipment make the technological landscape an incredibly dynamic one. That's why this bill today would remain technology neutral and apply to both manned and unmanned aerial vehicles.

To my fellow colleagues, I strongly believe that this bill strikes the proper balance between allowing for aerial surveillance and protecting individual privacy. I am glad to have received help and feedback from the Center for Democracy and Technology, SOAR Oregon—a leading voice in Oregon's UAV industry, the Small UAV Coalition, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, the ACLU, and other experts. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this bill and offering their feedback. At this time, I would like to ask that this statement be entered into the RECORD.

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

S. 1599. A bill to provide anti-retaliation protections for antitrust whistleblowers; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I am joining again with Senator GRASSLEY in introducing the Criminal Antitrust Anti-Retaliation Act, legislation that will provide protections to employees who come forward and disclose to law enforcement agencies pricefixing and other criminal antitrust behavior that harms consumers. This bill includes changes that we made in the Judiciary Committee last Congress, which enabled it to pass the Senate unanimously. Senator GRASSLEY and I have long worked together on protecting whistleblowers, and this legislation continues those efforts.

Whistleblowers are often instrumental in alerting the public, Congress, and law enforcement agencies to wrongdoing in a variety of areas. These individuals take risks in stepping forward and deserve to be protected from retaliation. Congress should encourage employees with information about criminal antitrust activity to report this information. The Criminal Antitrust Anti-Retaliation Act does exactly that by offering meaningful protection to those who blow the whistle on illegal behavior such as pricefixing.

This legislation is modeled on whistleblower protections that Senator GRASSLEY and I authored as part of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act. The protections are narrowly tailored and do not provide whistleblowers with an economic incentive to bring forth false claims. Last Congress, we made modest changes to the bill in the Judiciary Committee to improve the definition of a covered individual and clarify that protections only apply to employees reporting criminal violations. The protections in this bill build on recommendations from key stakeholders in a 2011 Government Accountability Office report to Congress.

The antitrust laws offer critical protections for consumers that promote free enterprise. By extending whistleblower protections to this area of the law, this bipartisan bill will help to ensure that criminal antitrust violations do not go unreported. This bill passed the Senate unanimously last Congress. I urge the Senate to pass it again.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 203—DESIGNATING JUNE 20, 2015, AS ''AMERICAN EAGLE DAY'' AND CELEBRATING THE RECOVERY AND RESTORATION OF THE BALD EAGLE, THE NATIONAL SYMBOL OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. ALEXANDER (for himself, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. CORKER, and Mr. SESSIONS) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to:

S. RES. 203

Whereas the bald eagle was chosen as the central image of the Great Seal of the United States on June 20, 1782, by the Founding Fathers at the Congress of the Confederation;

Whereas the bald eagle is widely known as the living national symbol of the United States and for many generations has represented values such as—

(1) freedom;
(2) democracy;
(3) courage;
(4) strength;
(5) spirit;
(6) independence;
(7) justice; and
(8) excellence;

Whereas the bald eagle is unique only to North America and cannot be found naturally in any other part of the world, which was one of the primary reasons the Founding Fathers selected the bald eagle to symbolize the Government of the United States;

Whereas the bald eagle is the central image used in the official logos of many branches and departments of the Government, including—

(1) the Office of the President;
(2) Congress;
(3) the Supreme Court;
(4) the Department of Defense;
(5) the Department of the Treasury;
(6) the Department of Justice;
(7) the Department of State;
(8) the Department of Commerce;
(9) the Department of Homeland Security;
(10) the Department of Veterans Affairs;
(11) the Department of Labor;
(12) the Department of Health and Human Services;
(13) the Department of Energy;
(14) the Department of Housing and Urban Development;
(15) the Central Intelligence Agency; and
(16) the United States Postal Service;

Whereas the bald eagle is an inspiring symbol of—

(1) the spirit of freedom; and
(2) the sovereignty of the United States;

Whereas the image and symbolism of the bald eagle has played a significant role in art, music, literature, architecture, commerce, education, and culture in the United States, and on United States stamps, currency, and coinage;

Whereas the bald eagle was once endangered and facing possible extinction in the lower 48 States, but has made a gradual and encouraging comeback to the lands, waterways, and skies of the United States;

Whereas the dramatic recovery of the national bird of the United States is an endangered species success story and an inspirational example to other wildlife, environmental, and natural resource conservation efforts worldwide;

Whereas, in 1940, noting that the species was ''threatened with extinction'', Congress passed the Bald Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668 et seq.), which prohibited killing,

selling, or possessing the species, and a 1962 amendment expanded protection to the golden eagle, thereby establishing the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act;

Whereas, by 1963, there were only an estimated 417 nesting pairs of bald eagles remaining in the lower 48 States, with loss of habitat, poaching, and the use of pesticides and other environmental contaminants contributing to the near demise of the national bird of the United States;

Whereas the bald eagle was officially declared an endangered species in 1967 under the Endangered Species Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-669; 80 Stat. 926) in all areas of the United States south of the 40th parallel due to the dramatic decline in the population of the bald eagle in the lower 48 States;

Whereas the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) was signed into law in 1973, and, in 1978, the bald eagle was listed as ''endangered'' throughout the lower 48 states, except in Michigan, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, and Wisconsin, where it was designated as ''threatened'';

Whereas, in July 1995, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service announced that bald eagles in the lower 48 States had recovered to the point where populations of bald eagles previously considered ''endangered'' were now considered ''threatened'';

Whereas bald eagles residing in the lower 48 States rebounded to about 11,000 pairs by 2007;

Whereas the United States Department of Interior and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service removed the bald eagle from Endangered Species Act protection on June 28, 2007, but the species continues to be protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940 (16 U.S.C. 668 et seq.), the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.), and the Lacey Act of 1900 and the amendments thereto (16 U.S.C. 3371 et seq.);

Whereas the trained, educational bald eagle ''Challenger'' of the American Eagle Foundation in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, was invited by the United States Department of the Interior to perform a free-flight demonstration during the official bald eagle delisting ceremony held at the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, DC;

Whereas experts and population growth charts estimate that the bald eagle population could reach 15,000 pairs by 2015, even though a physical count has not been conducted by State and Federal wildlife agencies since 2007;

Whereas caring and concerned agencies, corporations, organizations, and people of the United States representing the Federal, State, and private sectors passionately and resourcefully banded together, determined to save and protect the national bird of the United States;

Whereas the recovery of the bald eagle population in the United States was largely accomplished due to dedicated and vigilant efforts of Federal and State wildlife agencies and non-profit organizations, such as the American Eagle Foundation, through public education, captive breeding and release programs, hacking and release programs, and the translocation of bald eagles from places in the United States with dense bald eagle populations to suitable locations in the lower 48 States which had suffered a decrease in bald eagle populations;

Whereas various non-profit organizations, such as the Southeastern Raptor Center at Auburn University in the State of Alabama, contribute to the continuing recovery of the bald eagle through rehabilitation and educational efforts;

Whereas the bald eagle might have been lost permanently if not for dedicated conservation efforts, and strict protection laws like the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act of 1940, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, and the Lacey Act; and

Whereas the sustained recovery of the bald eagle population will require the continuation of recovery, management, education, and public awareness programs to ensure that the population numbers and habitat of the bald eagle will remain healthy and secure for generations to come: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) designates June 20, 2015, as ''American Eagle Day'';

(2) applauds the issuance of bald eagle commemorative coins by the Secretary of the Treasury as a way to generate critical funds for the protection of the bald eagle; and

(3) encourages—

(A) educational entities, organizations, businesses, conservation groups, and government agencies with a shared interest in conserving endangered species to collaborate and develop educational tools for use in the public schools of the United States; and

(B) the people of the United States to observe American Eagle Day with appropriate ceremonies and other activities.

AMENDMENTS SUBMITTED AND PROPOSED

SA 2058. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1463 proposed by Mr. MCCAIN to the bill H.R. 1735, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table.

SA 2059. Mr. BENNET submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1463 proposed by Mr. MCCAIN to the bill H.R. 1735, supra; which was ordered to lie on the table.

TEXT OF AMENDMENTS

SA 2058. Mr. COONS submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1463 proposed by Mr. MCCAIN to the bill H.R. 1735, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

On page 599, after line 21, add the following:

(g) ENHANCED SCOPE OF AUTHORITY.—Subsection (a)(1) of such section, as amended by subsection (b)(1) of this section, is further amended by inserting after ''activities described in paragraph (2)'' the following: '', to support the security cooperation objectives of the United States,''.

(h) PROCEDURES.—Such section, as amended by subsections (b) through (f) of this section, is further amended—

(1) by redesignating subsections (c) through (g) as subsections (d) through (h), respectively; and

(2) by inserting after subsection (b) the following new subsection (c):

''(c) COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES.—The Chief of the National Guard Bureau shall designate a director for each State and territory to be responsible for the coordination of activities under a program established under subsection (a) for such State or territory and reporting on activities under the program.''.

(i) ANNUAL REPORT.—Paragraph (2)(B) of subsection (f) of such section, as redesignated by subsection (h)(1) of this section, is amended—

(1) in clause (iii), by inserting ''or other government organizations'' after ''and security forces'';

(2) in clause (iv), by adding at the end before the period the following: ''and country'';

(3) in clause (v), by striking ''training'' and inserting ''activities''; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

''(vi) An assessment of the extent to which the activities conducted during the previous year met the objectives described in clause (v).''.

SA 2059. Mr. BENNET submitted an amendment intended to be proposed to amendment SA 1463 proposed by Mr. MCCAIN to the bill H.R. 1735, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, and for other purposes; which was ordered to lie on the table; as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title XVI, add the following:

SEC. 1628. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON MILITARY INFORMATION SUPPORT OPERATIONS.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) military information support operations are an important component of Department of Defense communications efforts and provide commanders with a valuable tool to shape the operational environment; and

(2) the Secretary of Defense should develop creative and agile concepts, technologies, and strategies to more effectively counter and degrade the ability of state and non-state adversaries to persuade, inspire, and recruit using both traditional and emerging forms of communication and information related-capabilities.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO MEET

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 17, 2015, at 10 a.m., in room SR–253 of the Russell Senate Office Building to conduct a Subcommittee hearing entitled ''Oversight of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.''

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

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Mr. WICKER. 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 June 17, 2015, at 9:30 a.m. in room SD–406 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled ''Oversight of

the Environmental Protection Agency's Final Rule to Regulate Disposal of Coal Combustion Residuals from Electric Utilities.''

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

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 17, 2015, at 2 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Nominations.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR, AND PENSIONS

Mr. WICKER. 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 June 17, 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: Evaluating Accreditation's Role in Ensuring Quality.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 17, 2015, at 9:30 a.m. to conduct a hearing entitled ''Governing Through Goal Setting: Enhancing the Economic and National Security of America.''

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

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 17, 2015, at 2 p.m.

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

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Mr. WICKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Indian Affairs be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on June 17, 2015, in room SD–628 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, at 2:15 p.m., to conduct a hearing entitled ''Accessing Capital in Indian Country.''

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

AMERICAN EAGLE DAY

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 203, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 203) designating June 20, 2015, as ''American Eagle Day'' and celebrating the recovery and restoration of the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

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

The resolution (S. Res. 203) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under ''Submitted Resolutions.'')

DISCHARGE AND REFERRAL—S. 1519

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that S. 1519 be discharged from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and be referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions.

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

ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2015

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 18; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein, and that the time be equally divided, with the majority controlling the first half and the Democrats controlling the final half; lastly, that all time during morning business and the adjournment of the Senate count postcloture on H.R. 1735.

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

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:05 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, June 18, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

RECIPIENTS OF THE 2015 CONGRESSIONAL AWARDS

HON. JOHN A. BOEHNER

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, the Congressional Awards recognize four avenues of individual growth—community service, physical fitness, exploration, and personal development—and how the fulfillment of these goals forms balanced and promising young citizens.

In their pursuit of these goals, recipients of the Congressional Awards have gained new skills and greater confidence. For many, these projects will be the cornerstone for future endeavors, further enriching their lives and encouraging others to follow their lead.

The recipients of the 2015 Congressional Awards set the finest example and demonstrate dedication to improving their communities and the Nation as a whole.

Gabriela Abadia, Lincoln Abbott, Biraspati Adhikari, Radhika Adhikari, Seth Alicea, Naomi Allen, Michael Alvaro, Maria Alverio, Julie Ambo, Griffin Armstorff, Kobi Axelrod, Atalie Bale, Zoe Barbeau, J. Aaren Barge, Mackenzie Batten, Hunter Benkoski, Rajat Bhageria, Jamuna Bista, Michael Boyson, Olivia Brophy, Camden Brown, Rachel Bugge, Ryan Buraus, William Buster, Mary Ann Cahoon.

Victoria Cannon, Matthew Cha, Wing Kay Joyce Chan, Corbin Chance, Jacob Chasan, Michael Cheng, Emily Chiles, Alexander Cho, Daniel Cho, Justin Cho, Bogeun Choi, Noah Choi, Siri Choragudi, Joshua Chung, Daniel Cieply, Melody Colliatie, Brandon Colling, Matthew Connell, Patrick Connell, James Cook, Virginia Cook, Phillip Costello, Hannah Crane, Kamila Czachorowski, John Dadouris, Juhi Dalal.

Maria Dattolo, Nolan Dexter-Brown, Nielsen Dias, Randell Doane, Rupa Dulal, Maxwell Durtschi, Caroline Dutzi, Casey Eble, Edison Elder, Michael Epperly, Michaela Fallon, James Fantin, Nicole Farese, Carianna Farrell, Frank Faverzani, Lesli Fernandez.

Catherine Fisher, Bri Flaherty, Christina Flear, Alie Fordyce, Samuel Fordyce, Abbie Foster, Michael Frye, J. Parker Garrison, Jeremy Geiger, Tristana Giunta, Kyle Goggio, Alec Gonzales, Adan Gonzalez, Katherine Grabowsky, Matthew Grillo, Alana Gross, James Grubbs.

Felix Guo, Devika Gurung, Emma Hall, Matthew Halloran, Jacob (Jungwoo) Han, Robert Hapke, Katrina Hayes-Macaluso, Charlotte Heffelmire, Danielle Heins, Josh Heisey, Jordan Helfand, Jocelyn Hernandez, Noah Hicks, Matthew Higgs, Joseph Hinton, Joanna Hong, Ellen Ingwerson, Michael Ivkov, Avinash Iyer, Catherine Jessen, KeeGan Johnson.

Brister Jones, Jonathan Jow, Raghav Kalra, George Kanellitsas, Aaron Kang, Arjun Kapoor, Serhat Kariparduc, Karna Karki, Karishma Kashyap, Robynn-Emmanuelle Katzeff, Justin Kawaguchi, Sabrine Keane, Juliana Kemenosh, Reber Kennedy, Taylor Kennington, Arbab Khalid, Christopher Kim, Lucia Kim, Yoorhim Kim, Sara Knighton, Juliana Kochis.

Sarah Kopsa, Nikki Kothari, Isaac Kuo, Sam Kuster, Michelle Laker, Basanta Lamichhane, Taylor Lane, Jennifer Lang, Holly Laws, Jeff Lee, Ji Hye Lee, Sophia Lee, Shanley Lenart, Chester Leung, Brittany Levy, Erin Lewis, Jessica Li, Emilie Liu, Abigail Lockhart, Savannah Logan, Shivani Lokre.

Harrison Teague Loughman, Amanda Lu, Morgan Ludwig, Ferdinand Luhur, Tess Luman, Mason Magee, Jonathan Mak, Jordan Marino, Zachary Maxwell, Kailey McCormick, Gabriel McDonald, Hugh McGinley, Grace McGowan, Laura Mediorreal, Samuel Meyerson, Alexander Mietchen, Amrita Mojumdar, Emma Moon, Andrew Morgan, Olivia Morton, Taylor Murphy.

Nicole Nam, Michael Negraru, Kevin Ng, Jennifer Nicholas, Kirsten Norton, Jessica Ocampo, John Wesley Orton, Fernando Osornio, Zachary Panton, Ni Em Par, Eli Parker, Mili Patel, Brandon Paul, Avani Pavuluri, Henry Pawelczyk, John Peruzzi, John Peters, Marianna Pizzato, Rishi Prasad, Samantha Price, Jessica Pritchard.

Anne-Marie Prochaska, Rebecca Pulley, Stephanie Quinton, Morgan Redford, Casey Riggs, Micheal Riggs, Jose Andres Rocha, Anna Rogers, Ashley Royce, Ashley Ryan, Sabrina Saintil, Marisa Salvador, Suhani Sanghavi, Tara Santora, Aakanksha Saxena, Michael Schaja, Jericho Schroeder, Lauren Seckar, David Seo, Dae han Seong, Supreet Shah.

Jeremy Shockley, Ki Wan Sim, Samantha Singer, Austin Smith, Chelsea Smith, Dorothy Smith, Hunter Smith, Shelbi Smolak, Mollie Somers, Arjun Sridhar, Shimona Srivastava, Cassandra Steele, Annalise Stevenson, Rachel Stogner, Kyle Sukley, Thomas Sych, Kavya Tangella, Emma Taylor-Brill, Seth Taylor-Brill, Gopinath Thangada, Kabita Thapa.

Jacob Thiemann, Brooke Tobias, Vincent Tran, Mary Turney, Nihar Varanasi, Robert Vaughn, Ellie Vigurie, Samuel Vilchez, Patrick Vin, Stephen Waldrep, Samuel Walker, Merran Waller, Christopher Warburton, Lorne Wasserman, Tiffani Webb, Jaynie Welsh, Jessica Williams, Jessica Wilson, Rachel Wilson, Lyssa Winslow, Jacqueline Wong.

Jared Wong, Daniel Yang, Karen Yang, Nicolas Yang, Jonathan Ye, Joshua Yoo, Seung-Hee Yoo, GiHyeon Yoon, Daniel Yoon, Michael Youn, Nick Zamora, Andrew Zehner, Cameron Zetterlund, Sophie Zhang, Bradley Zhu.

HONORING SABRINA SAINTIL FOR RECEIVING THE 2015 CONGRESSIONAL AWARD GOLD MEDAL

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a young leader from Northeast Florida who has been selected as a winner of the 2015 Congressional Gold Medal Award. Sabrina Saintil has shown incredible dedication in completing the rigorous challenges that the Gold Medal demands. She has set and achieved goals in volunteer public service, personal development, physical fitness, and exploration. Ms. Saintil and her comrade, Jessica Ocampo, are the first two Gold Medal recipients from my district, and I could not be more proud to recognize both of them.

Ms. Saintil is a recent graduate from Fletcher High School who is planning on attending the University of South Florida to study international business in the fall. This promising young woman took on and directed the after school program at the Beaches Habitat Education Department. She has shown incredible passion, not only in her pursuit of education, but also in her work to better the greater Jacksonville community.

As a part of the exploration requirement for the Award, Ms. Saintil planned and went on a historical journey that began in Savannah, Georgia. From there, she ventured through the historic downtown section of the city and proceeded to Koinonia Farms, the birthplace of Habitat for Humanity. She then travelled to President Jimmy Carter's home in Plains, Georgia, followed by a trip to Global Village, a model village containing various types of homes built in Habitat for Humanity communities worldwide. Her last stop on the historical exploration was the Kingsley Plantation back in Jacksonville.

I am so proud of what this young woman has accomplished. When I look at all that she has done, I am not worried about the future of this great nation, for we will surely have great people to lead it. I would also like to take this time to recognize Kathy Christensen from Habitat for Humanity, who served as Ms. Ocampo's and Ms. Saintil's adult advisor and has been essential to the success of this program in Jacksonville. Thank you, Ms. Christensen, for all that you do and for your constant assistance and support.

I first met Ms. Saintil back in 2012, and since then she has grown both as an individual and as member of the Jacksonville community. I could not be happier with Ms. Saintil's success in receiving the Congressional Gold Medal Award, as it stands as proof of a culmination of years of hard work and sacrifice. Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating this young leader of Northeast Florida.

HONORING ROBERT L. AYERS ON HIS 90TH BIRTHDAY

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the life of a beloved leader in the Merced community, Robert L. Ayers on his 90th birthday. Bob was born in New York's most populous borough, Brooklyn, on June 14, 1925.

During his youth. Robert and his family lived in different parts of New York but eventually

settled in the town of Bellmore, Long Island. Growing up during the Great Depression his family was faced with daily struggles, despite the economic hardships, Robert continued to strive towards a better future.

On June 19, 1942, at the young age of seventeen, Robert left his hometown of Bellmore with the goal of enlisting in the Navy. As part of the Navy Squadron VPB–33, he was stationed in South America and also the South Pacific where his active duties involved chasing submarines, air sea rescue, and sinking enemy ships. In February of 1945, Robert returned to the states and was stationed at NAS, Jacksonville, Florida.

Shortly after his return, Bob was released from the Navy and immediately joined the Marine Corps. He spent two years as a Marine and then resigned to pursue service in the Army Air Corps where he gained experience from all over the world. Not only did he heroically fight in the Korean War but also his perseverance continued throughout the Vietnam War.

Upon returning to the homeland. Robert met his wife Yvonne and they were married on January 19, 1946. After bravely serving his country for twenty-eight years, Robert retired from the Air Force on July 31, 1970 and he and his wife moved to Merced, California.

For two years Robert sold insurance and then decided to try his luck in the title and escrow business at First Merced Title Co. Transamerica Title Company bought the company in March 1977 and by July, he was named the branch manager where he remained until 1985. It was then he decided to become a business owner when he purchased the company and formed TransCounty Title Co. After numerous years in the business, Bob made the decision to retire in 2010, turning the operation over to his daughter Peg, who is now the president. TransCounty Title Co. remains the only locally owned title company in Merced County.

In addition to being a business owner, Bob was a dynamic member of the Merced community. He was actively involved in Kiwanis and served on the capital campaign for Mercy Medical Center. Also, he has been an active contributor to the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce and both higher education facilities, UC Merced and Merced College.

During their nearly 70 years of marriage, Robert and Yvonne welcomed three children, sons Robert Jr. and John Ayers and daughter Peg Larson. Both sons followed in their father's footsteps by serving their country. Robert Jr. is a retired Lieutenant Colonel from the U.S. Army and a retired correctional warden of several California State prisons. Their son John pursued a career in medicine and served as a medic in the United States Navy. Currently, he works in the surgery center at Marin General Hospital.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring Robert Ayers for his unwavering leadership, and recognizing his accomplishments and contributions to this nation. As Bob celebrates his 90th birthday, he serves as an example of excellence to those in our community.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. EARL BLUMENAUER

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2596) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes:

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Chair, today I will vote against H.R. 2596, the Intelligence Authorization Act for FY2016, because this bill continues the expansion of our intelligence community and includes harmful policy riders that will only serve to make America less safe, not more.

While large portions of the intelligence budget are classified, publicly available estimates are as high as $80 billion a year. That's in addition to the more than $580 billion we're set to spend on defense in the next 12 months. If today's bill moves forward, funding will again rise by nearly $6 billion. Worse, it would do so by sidestepping Congressionally-imposed budget caps, while continuing to enforce these arbitrary rules for critical domestic programs, from education to medical research.

Efforts by the majority to undercut our president's ability to conduct foreign policy are nothing new, but for the first time this bill would put in place additional barriers to finally closing Guantanamo Bay, a recruiting tool available to terrorists so long as its doors remain open. It would also limit the types of information our intelligence community can share with our allies, a level of discretion best left to the President himself.

There are over 4.5 million federal employees and contractors with access to secret information, which is larger than the entire population of Los Angeles. I am concerned that the amount of information being reviewed by the intelligence community and number of people involved may actually be making us less safe.

Today's bill is a missed opportunity to reevaluate methods of domestic surveillance, the growing size of the intelligence bureaucracy, and ending programs, like Guantanamo Bay, that only harm our national security, not help it.

HONORING WILLIAM WALTER HOWARD

HON. JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR.

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. DUNCAN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, on Monday, June 8, William Walter Howard passed away in Johnson City, Tennessee, at the age of 87. Bill was one of the finest men I have ever known, and I knew him from my teenage years until his passing.

Bill was very accurately described in his obituary as being the ''epitome of sweetness,'' and he certainly was. He was a kind, soft-spoken man, and I never knew anyone who said anything but good things about Bill Howard.

He was married for 67 years to his wife Carolyn, who passed away just a short time ago. He was a devoted husband and father and loved God, family, and country.

He was proud of his service in the Navy and was very patriotic. He sometimes gave me conservative tapes and expressed similar views in our conversations. He worked very hard for me in several of my campaigns and had great concern about the direction of this Nation.

He was a successful banking and savings and loan executive and also did accounting work in the hotel-motel industry. He served the community through the Kiwanis club and also had me speak at the church where he was a Deacon.

Bill Howard was a great man, successful as a husband, father, businessman, community and church leader, and political activist. This country is a better place and many, many people are better because of the life Bill led and the example he set.

This Nation needs more people like Bill Howard. He was quite simply, a good man, and I will miss him greatly.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. COFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, on January 20, 2009, the day President Obama took office, the national debt was $10,626,877,048,913.08.

Today, it is $18,152,717,537,302.13. We've added $7,525,840,488,389.05 to our debt in 6 years. This is over $7.5 trillion in debt our nation, our economy, and our children could have avoided with a balanced budget amendment.

INTELLIGENCE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 16, 2015

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2596) to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for intelligence and intelligence-related activities of the United States Government, the Community Management Account, and the Central Intelligence Agency Retirement and Disability System, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise to express my opposition to H.R. 2596, the Intelligence Authorization Act of 2016. Though I have always appreciated the bipartisan spirit in which the Intelligence Committee members work to craft the annual authorization bill, and I acknowledge the many vital programs the bill support, I disagree with the way H.R. 2596 uses Overseas Contingency Operations funding and how it prevents the closure of the detainment facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. For those reasons, I cannot vote for the bill.

H.R. 2596 authorizes funding to support important research, information gathering and information sharing resources for decision makers at all levels of the federal government. The funding helps to maintain and support the intelligence infrastructure and it helps to strengthen our defenses against threats from around the world. This bill provides for cutting-edge counterintelligence technical analysis, cybersecurity, it protects Americans against the use of advanced weapons, and helps to arrest nuclear and other weapon proliferation threats. The funding in this bill is also the reason we were able to kill Nasir al Wuhayshi, al Qaida's number two leader.

However, the bill also continues Republican-led efforts to lock in sequestration and, as a result, fails to authorize sufficient funds for important intelligence community priorities. Instead, the bill uses OCO funding in ways that leaders of both parties have made clear are inappropriate. Just last year, House Republicans criticized the abuse of the OCO loophole in their budget report, stating that it ''undermines the integrity of the budget process.'' Moreover, in following the strategy of the Republican budget, this legislation begins the process of locking in sequestration for nondefense programs, which will have a devastating impact on investments critical to the nation.

We need to get back to the table to have an honest debate about our budget and renegotiate the funding caps for both defense and nondefense. Only then will we be able to provide the necessary resources for our national security needs and to ensure we keep the nation's commitments to education, research, infrastructure, and other crucial drivers of economic prosperity.

IN RECOGNITION OF NORCELL D. HAYWOOD

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life and legacy of a dear friend, Mr. Norcell D. Haywood who passed away on Monday, June 15, 2015. Mr. Haywood and I had a friendship that spanned forty years. We were introduced by another of my good friends, the late Congressman Mickey Leland who made significant contributions during his service to our country.

Norcell Haywood was a pioneer in his own right. He was among the first seven African American students to be admitted to the University of Texas at Austin in 1954, the period that preceded the protections guaranteed by the 1964 Civil Rights Act. He secured his spot by fighting against systematic discrimination and segregation. Despite the battle, he remained steadfast. He took on a gruesome 21-hour course load, fulfilled his obligations to the ROTC program and worked as a restaurant valet. His dedication and sacrifices paid off; he became the second African American to graduate from the University of Texas School of Architecture in 1960.

Upon graduation, he served as a positive role model and instructor at Prairie View A&M University's school of Engineering. He later gained employment with the City of Austin's Planning Department. He also published a local Newspaper, ''The East Side Reporter,'' which distributed 20,000 papers weekly in the eastern section of San Antonio.

In 1968, Norcell Haywood became the first licensed African-American Architect in San Antonio, Texas. He then founded a private architecture firm, Norcell D. Haywood & Associates (1968–71) and later in 1971, founded the firm of Haywood Jordan McCown SAT Inc. (''HJM''). He operated three offices throughout the state of Texas: San Antonio, Houston and Dallas. Under Norcell's leadership, HJM has been the recipient of the numerous prestigious Merit Design Awards. He received awards for his design of The University of Texas—Dallas's Student Union Center and numerous housing developments in Houston, Austin, Dallas and San Antonio areas, including the Texas Southern University Physical Education Building and Business Technology Building in Houston, Texas; Lincoln Magnet High School in Dallas, Texas; Alamo Dome Stadium and the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center both in San Antonio, Texas. He was the first African American to be appointed to the Texas Board of Architectural Examiners and served as Vice Chairman of the Board.

Mr. Haywood has received widespread acclaim for his exceptional accomplishments. He was chosen by President Clinton to serve as a delegate on the White House Sub-Committee on Small Business in 1995. Mr. Haywood is the recipient of the 1997 Bank of America—San Antonio, Black History Chronicles Trail Blazer Award and a 1997 Texas Legislative Black Caucus Outstanding Texans at Large Honoree.

Mr. Haywood used his life experiences, especially those that molded his tenacity at the University of Texas to direct his professional pursuits and community involvement. His most passionate interests lie in early child training and development. He actively supported the YMCA, Boy's and Girl's Club of San Antonio and many other local youth organizations. He established the National Association of Minority Architecture to encourage and mentor young African-American architects and is a life member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity.

IN HONOR OF MR. EDWIN D. HILL

HON. DONALD NORCROSS

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. NORCROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Mr. Edwin D. Hill on his retirement from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. Mr. Hill's nearly six decades of service will have a lasting impact for generations to come. I would like to join my IBEW brothers and sisters in applauding him for this lifetime of service.

Edwin Hill is a visionary leader whose legacy can best be seen in those who have joined the realm of public service because of Ed's encouragement and support. As the first Business Agent to serve in the People's House—the U.S. House of Representatives—his influence and legacy have impressed on me personally, but it does not end there.

Ed was a pioneer and activist in his field. Mr. Hill joined IBEW in 1956 as journeyman and a wireman. By 1964, he was elected Vice President of his local and became active in larger labor movement issues. Ed's success led the Brotherhood to elect him as president in January of 2001 and Ed easily won re-election for five consecutive terms. With his leadership, Mr. Hill laid the foundation for IBEW's future success and growth.

As President, Ed improved jobsite productivity, increased IBEW membership and oversaw an expansion of training programs. One of his many contributions was the ''Code of Excellence,'' which streamlined union contract language. The program was so successful that it eventually became the universal code used by the electrical industry.

An innovator, Ed was always in search of new ways for members to address the changing economic environment and for IBEW to raise the working standards and overall quality of electrical construction. I join my IBEW brothers and sisters in wishing him a happy retirement and thank him, once again, for his outstanding contributions to the industry.

CELEBRATING WEST VIRGINIA'S 152ND BIRTHDAY

HON. EVAN H. JENKINS

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. JENKINS of West Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate West Virginia Day, which will be celebrated on Saturday, June 20. On this special and historic day, West Virginians will join together to honor the 152nd anniversary of the founding of our great state and to recognize the history, culture, landmarks and most importantly, the people that make our state truly special.

West Virginia's Third Congressional District, which I am proud to represent, has some of the most beautiful scenery and tourism attractions found in our state, including Chief Logan State Park, Beechfork Lake, Hatfield McCoy Trails, New River Gorge, and so many more. People from all over the world travel to West Virginia to experience and enjoy all our state has to offer.

Our state has a rich culture, one that combines music, food, language and arts into a tradition that is unique to West Virginia. Glass blowing is a traditional art form that has thrived for more than a century in West Virginia and quilters make family heirlooms in the style made by their grandparents and great-grandparents, and musical instruments are passed down generation to generation.

While we are rich in natural resources and traditions, our greatest resource has always been and will continue to be our people. The people of West Virginia stand for the values of friendship, hard work and charity to others. West Virginians have a true sense of family and never hesitate to help a friend—or a stranger—in need.

West Virginia has the most hardworking and genuine people in the nation. I am proud to represent them in this House and look forward to working with them to make a better West Virginia for generations to come.

HONORING FORMER CERES POLICE CHIEF GAIL W. ''PETE'' PETERSON

HON. JEFF DENHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. DENHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge and honor the life of a leader in the Ceres community, former Ceres Police Chief Gail W. ''Pete'' Peterson. The beloved father, son and husband died peacefully at the age of 77 after a courageous eight month battle with bladder cancer.

Pete was born on November 28, 1937 to Milburn and Lucille Peterson in the charming town of Panton, Illinois. In his adult years, Pete found his calling in law enforcement when he became a reserve officer for the Newport Beach Police Department. Following his service in Newport Beach, he moved to the Laguna Beach department and then on to the City of Orange, known as a ''major city with small-town ambiance.''

During Pete's time at the Orange Police Department, he took many different positions. Initially, he started as a patrolman, but was quickly promoted to the first accident investigation officer. Not one to rest on his laurels, he became a motorcycle officer and continued to further his career by being promoted from Sergeant to Lieutenant. From there, Pete migrated to Idaho where he became the Chief of Police for the Moscow Police Department.

Chief Peterson began his distinguished career with the Ceres Department of Public Safety on June 30, 1983 where he spent sixteen years of his life being a local hero. Pete was involved in integrating the Ceres Police Department headquarters and the Ceres Fire Department into one department of Public Safety. He introduced new technology and instrumental programs into the police department such as mobile data terminals, the canine unit and a motorcycle unit which the department still utilizes today.

Admired by each member of the public safety family, Chief Peterson is fondly remembered for positively impacting the lives of his fellow officers by his concern, dedication and leadership. To honor him, his name will be put on the new Ceres Police Department building where his commitment to serving the Ceres community can be forever acknowledged.

Believing that community involvement is important, Chief Peterson was an active member of the Rotary Club of Ceres and the Ceres Lions Club. In addition, he was also the former president of the Stanislaus County Peace Officer Association.

After retiring in 1999, Pete and his loving wife of 27 years, Karen Peterson, spent time at their vacation homes but made their residence in Modesto, California. Together they have a large, loving family who were there at every opportunity to lend their love and moral support. Pete is survived by his daughter, Lisa Kermode and sons: Brett Peterson, Jeff Peterson, Steve Peterson, Ken Katz, Kim Katz, Khris Katz, and Kurt Katz as well as his grandchildren, Jeff Cravens, Jesse Peterson, Shaun Peterson, Tanner Peterson, Matthew Peterson, Jordan Katz, Rebecca Hailstones, Kelly Kermode, Abigale Kermode, Chelsea Hanneyer, Jo Lynn Peterson, Hannah Peterson, Erika Webber, Brittaney Da Branca, Kendra Katz, Tara Katz and six great grandchildren. Pete is preceded in death by his parents and oldest son, Chris Peterson.

Mr. Speaker, please join me in honoring and recognizing Gail W. ''Pete'' Peterson for his unwavering dedication to the Ceres Department of Public Safety and the community at large. He was a true hero to his family, fellow officers and the City of Ceres; he will be deeply missed by many. God bless him always.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. PETER WELCH

OF VERMONT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I would have voted 'Aye' on the Schiff of California Amendment No. 6 to H.R. 2596.

REMEMBERING JOAN MARIE DONNELLY

HON. ALAN GRAYSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. GRAYSON. Mr. Speaker, on July 16, 2010 at 2:45 p.m., an email was sent to proud grandparents to announce the birth of their seventeenth grandchild, born earlier that day, ''Mom and baby boy are both doing well''. Joan Marie Donnelly had given birth to her son, Max. Her parents, Bob and Rose Mary Donnelly, were overjoyed and her husband and daughter, Todd and Sofie Marie, were preparing for little Max's homecoming. What a spectacular moment in a family's life. Unfortunately, this abundance of happiness soon turned into tragedy. Joan suffered from eclampsia and died at their home just days after giving birth on August 6, 2010.

Worldwide, preeclampsia and other hypertensive disorders of pregnancy are a leading cause of maternal and infant illness and death. Thousands of women and babies die or get very sick each year from preeclampsia, a life-threatening disorder that occurs only during pregnancy and the postpartum period. Eclampsia is a variant of preeclampsia that causes seizures to occur. For Joan, this tragedy could have been prevented, but instead Joan succumbed to a perfect storm of neglected symptoms.

''The Donnelly Clan'', a Catholic, Irish and Italian Family from West Virginia included Bob, Rose Mary and their nine children. Joan was their eighth child, born on May 24, 1967. Joan had a wonderful smile and a laugh that was contagious and she had dreams to travel, start a career, fall in love, have children, save animals, and help her family. Her dreams came true when she moved to Florida and started her 22-year career with Walt Disney World. She met Todd in 2001 when the two became good friends while traveling. They were married in Florence, Italy in 2006.

Joan had three pregnancies with two births as did her youngest sister, Mia. Their mother similarly had twelve pregnancies with nine births. These three women were each diagnosed with preeclampsia, are diabetic, and suffered miscarriages. The death of a child is one of the hardest obstacles in life. The pain of having your child go before you is unspeakable.

Joan's life was celebrated at her funeral mass on August 12, 2010 with over 300 mourners. Joan will be remembered, not by her death, but by how she lived her life.

Joan's family has hope that changes can be made to federal law in honor of Joan to save women who are at high risk of preeclampsia from suffering as she did. The family advocates for a number of reforms to prevent eclampsia including better screening during pregnancy; proper testing; more education for patients and doctors on preeclampsia and eclampsia; and longer hospital stays. Joan's family will continue to educate the public about preeclampsia and eclampsia by talking about Joan to all that will listen so that her untimely death is not in vain.

RECOGNIZING KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

HON. MICHAEL G. FITZPATRICK

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, congratulations to Kiwanis International on the 100th anniversary of a global service organization of more than 600,000 members. Kiwanis club members contribute to their communities in countless ways through service projects and fundraising. Along with the recognition of this milestone day, Kiwanis clubs in Bucks County have carried on the Kiwanis mission of changing the world, one child and one community at a time. Each year, Kiwanis raises more than (U.S.) $100 million and acquires 18.5 million volunteer hours toward strengthening their communities and serving children. In addition to its community work, The Eliminate Project is a notable Kiwanis campaign that focuses on saving and protecting millions of mothers and their future children. In partnership with UNICEF, the clubs are working to eliminate a disease that kills one baby every 11 minutes and has pledged to raise (U.S.) $110 million toward this life-saving goal. Again, congratulations for 100 years of dedicated service to the worldwide and local communities and best wishes for future success.

HONORING CINDY HALEY

HON. JASON SMITH

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. SMITH of Missouri. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Cindy Haley on her 20th anniversary working at the Texas County Food Pantry in Houston, Missouri. The food pantry assists those in the community in need of food, clothing, health care, and shelter.

Mrs. Haley began her work at the food pantry in May of 1995 and has set a wonderful example of hard work and selflessness. Today she serves as the food pantry's patient advocate, bookkeeper and grant writer and has helped bring more than 3 million dollars to Texas County over the past two decades. The food pantry will be celebrating with a party for Mrs. Haley on June 17th.

Mrs. Haley has provided support to so many in the Texas County community, and I truly admire her strength and dedication to helping others. It is my pleasure to recognize her efforts and accomplishments before the House of Representatives.

HONORING TIM SPOHN

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. I would like to submit the following Proclamation:

Whereas, Tim Spohn has ably served the citizens of the City of Industry for eight years on the City Council (2007–2015) and served the citizens of the City of Industry as Mayor for two years; and

Whereas, Tim Spohn championed regional economic strength and stability for the entire San Gabriel Valley by promoting manufacturing, trade, retail, construction, and financial industries, to name just a few, as a public servant for the City of Industry; and

Whereas, Tim Spohn provided counsel and guidance for residents and fellow elected officials of the San Gabriel Valley with his commitment to regional government by serving as a representative on the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments; and

Whereas, Tim Spohn provided leadership on critical regional issues of mobility, air quality, transportation control measures, and communications as a member of the Southern California Association of Governments' Transportation Committee for five years; and championed the concerns of San Gabriel Valley residents while serving as a member of the Ad-Hoc Regional Transportation Plan Committee; and

Whereas, Tim Spohn served on the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments' Transportation Committee for eight years providing policy recommendations and technical expertise on transportation programs and infrastructure improvements; and was a delegate and Board Member of the Gateway Cities Council of Governments: Now, therefore, be it

Recognized, That Mayor Tim Spohn of the City of Industry has made enduring contributions to the State of California; and we applaud his sacrifice and commitment to the well-being of families and to neighborhoods; and we encourage all to honor the leadership and service he provided for San Gabriel Valley residents.

IRS BUREAUCRACY REDUCTION AND JUDICIAL REVIEW ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 11, 2015

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Trade Preferences Extension Act, which will extend important trade preferences to our partners around the world.

First, this bill extends the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) until September 2025. This will expand preferences and reduce trade barriers with African countries and foster U.S. investment in the region. It will also help to promote social and economic development and empower farmers and women through sustainable agriculture assistance.

The bill also retroactively renews and updates the General System of Preferences (GSP), which reduces trade barriers by allowing various products from developing countries to enter into the U.S. duty-free. This program expired in July 2013 and I am glad to see that it has finally been renewed.

It also extends trade preferences with Haiti and ensures that we continue to assist Haiti's recovery and support its economy. In addition, the bill will also help outerwear and footwear imports by reducing duty rates and creating a new category of product that will include protective active footwear.

I am also pleased that it strikes the Medicare pay-for found in the Trade Adjustment Assistance package and replaces it with a different offset that I helped identify. In addition, I am pleased that this bill will support community banks by reducing burdensome reporting requirements. These measures represent a significant effort to reduce trade barriers and support our partners around the world and I urge a YES vote. I hope that the Senate will pass this legislation expeditiously and send it to the President's desk.

HONORING JESSICA OCAMPO FOR RECEIVING THE 2015 CONGRESSIONAL AWARD GOLD MEDAL

HON. ANDER CRENSHAW

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. CRENSHAW. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize a young leader from North Florida who has been selected as a winner of the 2015 Congressional Gold Medal Award. Jessica Ocampo has shown incredible dedication in completing the rigorous challenges that the Gold Medal demands. She has set and achieved goals in volunteer public service, personal development, physical fitness, and exploration. Ms. Ocampo and her comrade, Sabrina Saintil, are the first two Congressional Gold Medal recipients from the 4th District of Florida and I could not be more proud to recognize both of them.

Ms. Ocampo is currently studying at Florida State College of Jacksonville and plans to attend the University of North Florida after her graduation. She tutors her fellow students in Spanish at FSCJ and despite the huge load of requirements the Gold Medal requires, she still finds time to work in a doctor's office during her free time. This inspiring young woman has shown incredible passion, not only in her pursuit of education, but also in her work to better the greater Jacksonville community.

As a part of their exploration requirement for the Award, Ms. Ocampo planned and went on a historical journey that began in Savannah, Georgia. From there, she ventured through the historic downtown section of the city and proceeded to Koinonia Farms, the birthplace of Habitat for Humanity. From there, she travelled to President Jimmy Carter's home in Plains, Georgia, followed by a trip to Global Village, a model village containing various types of homes built in Habitat for Humanity communities worldwide. Their last stop on the historical exploration was the Kingsley Plantation back in Jacksonville.

I am so proud of what this young woman has accomplished. When I look at all that she has done, I am not worried about the future of this great nation, for we will surely have great people to lead it. I would also like to take this time to recognize Kathy Christensen from Habitat for Humanity, who served as Ms. Ocampo's adult advisor and has been essential to the success of this program in Jacksonville. Thank you, Ms. Christensen, for all that you do and for your constant assistance and support.

I first met Ms. Ocampo back in 2012, and since then she has grown both as an individual and as member of the Jacksonville community. I could not be happier with Ms. Ocampo's success in receiving the Congressional Gold Medal Award, as it stands as proof of a culmination of years of hard work and sacrifice. Mr. Speaker, please join me in congratulating this young leader of Northeast Florida.

RECOGNIZING TERRY COLLINS FOR HER OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE WITHIN THE GRAND ISLAND AND BUFFALO COMMUNITY

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, I stand before you today to recognize and honor Mrs. Terry Lynn Collins for her hard work and commitment to the Grand Island community. Mrs. Collins is this year's recipient of Accu Theranostic's annual award and is being honored for her professional achievements as well as her active participation in many local groups.

Mrs. Collins lived on Grand Island before marrying her husband Tim. The couple moved back to Grand Island in 1992 and, shortly after, had their younger son Joe. Their older son Matt is 24 and works in finance in Manhattan, NY. Joe is now 23 and is in his first year of law school. She remains active in the Cub Scouts, the GI Soccer Club, the Parent Teacher Association, the Knights of Columbus, the Network in Aging, and WordPress meetup.

Furthermore, Mrs. Collins has made her mark in the business world. She received her BS in Electrical Engineering from the State University of NY at Buffalo as well as an MBA from Canisius College. Mrs. Collins serves as the president of Maroon Technology Ltd of Grand Island. She is also a Sales and Marketing professional with a strong background in Software Engineering. Mrs. Collins is a small business owner who serves many clients in Grand Island. Her firm is on the cutting edge of business marketing and web design.

Her professional affiliations include Beta Gamma Sigma Business Honor Society, Sandler Strategic Sales, President's Club, and Toastmasters. She also is a Director on the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce. Mrs. Collins will be joined by family and friends for the presentation of the award on June 24th. The event and dinner begins at 6PM at River Oaks on Grand Island.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to honor Mrs. Terry Lynn Collins. I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating Mrs. Collins on her professional success and local involvement. Her leadership in business and technology has enhanced opportunities in Western New York and positively impacted the community.

RECOGNIZING COMMANDER DAVID OVERCASH FOR RECEIVING THE REAR ADMIRAL EDWIN T. LAYTON LEADERSHIP AWARD

HON. BILL SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Commander David Overcash, a naval intelligence officer with Commander Submarine Group (COMSUBGRU) 7, for receiving the Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton Leadership Award.

A Chambersburg, Pennsylvania native, Commander Overcash currently serves our country as deputy chief of staff for Intelligence at Commander Submarine Group 7, which controls submarine activity from the Western Pacific to the Indian Ocean. I congratulate Commander Overcash on his receiving this award, which recognizes mid to senior active or reserve component intelligence officers, chief warrant officers, and enlisted personnel for outstanding leadership and mentorship in naval intelligence performance.

On behalf of the Ninth District of Pennsylvania, I want to thank Commander Overcash for his service, and moreover highlight the sense of purpose with which he serves. He has exemplified the selfless drive that is a hallmark of the brave men and women who defend our country, and this award is a well-deserved acknowledgment of that spirit of sacrifice.

It is my honor to recognize Commander Overcash and congratulate him for receiving the Rear Admiral Edwin T. Layton Leadership Award.

HONORING COLONEL J. MATTHEW LISSNER

HON. THOMAS MacARTHUR

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 17, 2015

Mr. MACARTHUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Colonel J. Matthew Lissner of the United States Army Reserve. Colonel Lissner has served in all three components of the Army (Active, National Guard, and Army Reserve) for over 28 years. Currently he serves as the Congressional Legislative Liaison for the 99th Regional Support Command, stationed at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Colonel Lissner will leave his post as a Legislative Liaison to join the faculty of the U.S. Army War College in August of this year. I am grateful for his life of service to the Army, and wish him well as he transitions into his new assignment in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

A career Infantry Officer, Colonel Lissner received his commission from the Officer Candidate School in 1988. His education includes a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education (Teaching) from Manhattan College in 1979, a Master of Arts in Exercise Physiology from Indiana State University in 1985, and a Master of Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College in 2007.

Prior to assignment as a Legislative Liaison, Colonel Lissner held a wide variety of infantry assignments through battalion level, and a number of staff positions at higher commands such as the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Third U.S. Army, U.S. Joint Forces Command, and I Corps. His combat deployments include Operation Just Cause (Panama), Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom (Kuwait), and Operation Iraqi Freedom (Iraq).

Although he is a highly decorated Soldier with more than 28 years of service to his credit, perhaps his most notable accomplishments have occurred off of the parade field. For example, prior to beginning his military service, Colonel Lissner worked with severely mentally and physically handicapped children, taught Physical Education, and coached a variety of sports at the scholastic and collegiate levels.

A diverse individual, Matt's interests include all sports, camping, and hunting with his five great kids—Kaitlyn, MariPat, Jessie, Lanie, and Robert—without whose love and support none of his accomplishments would have been possible. It is only fair and proper to acknowledge their tireless support as he worked tirelessly on his assigned duties. Let us thank them all for their sacrifices and wish them continued success in the future.

SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Title IV of Senate Resolution 4, agreed to by the Senate of February 4, 1977, calls for establishment of a system for a computerized schedule of all meetings and hearings of Senate committees, subcommittees, joint committees, and committees of conference. This title requires all such committees to notify the Office of the Senate Daily Digest—designated by the Rules Committee—of the time, place and purpose of the meetings, when scheduled and any cancellations or changes in the meetings as they occur.

As an additional procedure along with the computerization of this information, the Office of the Senate Daily Digest will prepare this information for printing in the Extensions of Remarks section of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD on Monday and Wednesday of each week.

Meetings scheduled for Thursday, June 18, 2015 may be found in the Daily Digest of today's RECORD.

MEETINGS SCHEDULED

JUNE 23

10 a.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016''.

SD–138

Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine the National Flood Insurance Program.

SD–538

Committee on the Budget

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

To hold hearings to examine measuring the true cost of regulations, focusing on lessons from Great Britain and Canada on implementing regulatory reforms.

SD–G50

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

To hold hearings to examine an update on the recalls of defective Takata air bags and NHTSA's vehicle safety efforts.

SR–253

11 a.m.

Committee on Foreign Relations

To hold hearings to examine the nominations of Atul Keshap, of Virginia, to be Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador to the Republic of Maldives, and Alaina B. Teplitz, of Illinois, to be Ambassador to the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal.

SD–419

2 p.m.

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Subcommittee on Clean Air and Nuclear Safety

To hold hearings to examine the impacts of EPA's proposed carbon regulations on energy costs for American businesses, rural communities and families, including S. 1324, to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to fulfill certain requirements before regulating standards of performance for new, modified, and reconstructed fossil fuel-fired electric utility generating units.

SD–406

3 p.m.

Committee on Appropriations

Subcommittee on Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies

Business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016''.

SD–138

JUNE 24

10 a.m.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

Business meeting to consider S. 742, to appropriately limit the authority to award bonuses to employees, S. 1411, to amend the Act of August 25, 1958, commonly known as the ''Former Presidents Act of 1958'', with respect to the monetary allowance payable to a former President, S. 1550, to amend title 31, United States Code, to establish entities tasked with improving program and project management in certain Federal agencies, S. 1073, to amend the Improper Payments Elimination and Recovery Improvement Act of 2012, including making changes to the Do Not Pay initiative, for improved detection, prevention, and recovery of

improper payments to deceased individuals, S. 1580, to allow additional appointing authorities to select individuals from competitive service certificates, S. 1090, to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide eligibility for broadcasting facilities to receive certain disaster assistance, S. 1115, to close out expired, empty grant accounts, S. 779, to provide for Federal agencies to develop public access policies relating to research conducted by employees of that agency or from funds administered by that agency, S. 310, to prohibit the use of Federal funds for the costs of painting portraits of officers and employees of the Federal Government, S. 991, to establish the Commission on Evidence-Based Policymaking, H.R. 1626, to reduce duplication of information technology at the Department of Homeland Security, H.R. 1640, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit to Congress a report on the Department of Homeland Security headquarters consolidation project in the National Capital Region, H.R. 728, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 7050 Highway BB in Cedar Hill, Missouri, as the ''Sergeant First Class William B. Woods, Jr. Post Office'', H.R. 891, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 141 Paloma Drive in Floresville, Texas, as the ''Floresville Veterans Post Office Building'', H.R. 1326, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 2000 Mulford Road in Mulberry, Florida, as the ''Sergeant First Class Daniel M. Ferguson Post Office'', H.R. 1350, to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 442 East 167th Street in Bronx, New York, as the ''Herman Badillo Post Office Building'', an original bill entitled, ''District of Columbia Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency Act of 2015'', an original bill entitled, ''EINSTEIN Act of 2015'', an original bill entitled, ''Representative Payee Fraud Prevention Act of 2015'', an original bill entitled, ''Saving Federal Dollars Through Better Use of Government Purchase and Travel Cards Act of 2015'', and an original to actively recruit members of the Armed Forces who are separating from military service to serve as Customs and Border Protection Officers, and the nominations of Carol Fortine Ochoa, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, General Services Administration, and Steven M. Wellner, and William Ward Nooter, both to be an Associate Judge of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

SD–342

2:15 p.m.

Committee on Indian Affairs

To hold an oversight hearing to examine demanding results to end Native youth suicides.

SD–628

2:30 p.m.

Committee on Veterans' Affairs

To hold hearings to examine pending health care and benefits legislation.

SR–418

JUNE 25

10 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine country of origin labeling and trade retaliation, focusing on what's at stake for America's farmers, ranchers, businesses, and consumers.

SD–G50

JULY 7

10 a.m.

Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

To hold hearings to examine highly pathogenic avian influenza, focusing on the impact on the United States poultry sector and protecting United States poultry flocks.

SR–328A

JULY 8

2:15 p.m.

Committee on the Judiciary

Subcommittee on Crime and Terrorism

To hold hearings to examine cyber crime, focusing on modernizing our legal framework for the information age.

SD–226

JULY 9

10 a.m.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

To hold hearings to examine the back-end of the nuclear fuel cycle and related legislation, including S. 854, to establish a new organization to manage nuclear waste, provide a consensual process for siting nuclear waste facilities, ensure adequate funding for managing nuclear waste.

SD–366

Daily Digest

Senate

Chamber Action

Routine Proceedings, pages S4213–4254.

Measures Introduced: Fourteen bills and one resolution were introduced, as follows: S. 1590–1603, and S. Res. 203. **Pages S4249–50**

Measures Reported:

S. 697, to amend the Toxic Substances Control Act to reauthorize and modernize that Act, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. **Page S4249**

Measures Passed:

American Eagle Day: Senate agreed to S. Res. 203, designating June 20, 2015, as ''American Eagle Day'' and celebrating the recovery and restoration of the bald eagle, the national symbol of the United States. **Page S4254**

Measures Considered:

National Defense Authorization Act—Agreement: Senate continued consideration of H.R. 1735, to authorize appropriations for fiscal year 2016 for military activities of the Department of Defense, for military construction, and for defense activities of the Department of Energy, to prescribe military personnel strengths for such fiscal year, taking action on the following amendments proposed thereto: **Pages S4222–47**

Adopted:

McCain (for Hatch/Inhofe) Further Modified Amendment No. 1911 (to Amendment No. 1456), to study the impact of commissary privatization prior to initiating a pilot program and to require a report on the Department of Defense definition of and policy regarding software sustainment. **Pages S4222, S4240–41, S4244–45, S4246–47**

McCain Amendment No. 1456 (to Amendment No. 1463), to require additional information supporting long-range plans for construction of naval vessels. **Pages S4222, S4247**

McCain Amendment No. 1463, in the nature of a substitute. **Pages S4222, S4247**

Chair sustained a point of order that the following amendments were not germane post-cloture, and the amendments thus fell: **Page S4247**

Reed (for Blumenthal) Modified Amendment No. 1564 (to Amendment No. 1463), to enhance protections accorded to servicemembers and their spouses. **Pages S4222, S4247**

Fischer/Booker Amendment No. 1825 (to Amendment No. 1463), to authorize appropriations for national security aspects of the Merchant Marine for fiscal years 2016 and 2017. **Pages S4222, S4247**

Reed (for Durbin) Modified Amendment No. 1559 (to Amendment No. 1463), to prohibit the award of Department of Defense contracts to inverted domestic corporations. **Pages S4222, S4247**

McCain (for Paul) Modified Amendment No. 1543 (to Amendment No. 1463), to strengthen employee cost savings suggestions programs within the Federal Government. **Pages S4222, S4247**

Markey Amendment No. 1645 (to Amendment No. 1463), to express the sense of Congress that exports of crude oil to United States allies and partners should not be determined to be consistent with the national interest if those exports would increase energy prices in the United States for American consumers or businesses or increase the reliance of the United States on imported oil. **Pages S4222, S4247**

Cornyn Amendment No. 1486 (to Amendment No. 1463), to require reporting on energy security issues involving Europe and the Russian Federation, and to express the sense of Congress regarding ways the United States could help vulnerable allies and partners with energy security. **Pages S4222, S4247**

During consideration of this measure today, Senate also took the following action:

By 84 yeas to 14 nays (Vote No. 214), three-fifths of those Senators duly chosen and sworn, having voted in the affirmative, Senate agreed to the motion to close further debate on the bill. **Page S4247**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that notwithstanding rule XXII, the time count as if cloture was invoked at 10 p.m., on Wednesday, June 17, 2015. **Page S4242**

A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that all time during morning business and the adjournment of the Senate count post-cloture on the bill. **Page S4254**

PORTS Act Referral—Agreement: A unanimous-consent agreement was reached providing that S. 1519, to amend the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947 to address slowdowns, strikes, and lockouts occurring at ports in the United States, be discharged from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and be referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Page S4249

Messages from the House: Page S4249

Measures Referred: Page S4249

Additional Cosponsors: Pages S4250–51

Statements on Introduced Bills/Resolutions: Pages S4251–53

Additional Statements: Page S4249

Amendments Submitted: Page S4253

Authorities for Committees to Meet: Pages S4253–54

Record Votes: One record vote was taken today. (Total—214) Page S4247

Adjournment: Senate convened at 9:30 a.m. and adjourned at 5:05 p.m., until 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, June 18, 2015. (For Senate's program, see the remarks of the Acting Majority Leader in today's Record on page S4254.)

Committee Meetings

(Committees not listed did not meet)

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FISCAL CHALLENGES

Committee on the Budget: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the Congressional Budget Office's analysis of the Federal government's deepening fiscal challenges, after receiving testimony from Keith Hall, Director, Congressional Budget Office.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION OVERSIGHT

Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation: Subcommittee on Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance, and Data Security concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Consumer Product Safety Commission, after receiving testimony from Elliot F. Kaye, Chairman, and Robert S. Adler, Ann Marie Buerkle, Joseph P. Mohorovic, and Marietta S. Robinson, each a Commissioner, all of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY OVERSIGHT

Committee on Environment and Public Works: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine the Environmental Protection Agency's final rule to regulate disposal of coal combustion residuals from electric utilities, after receiving testimony from Danny Gray, Charah, Inc., Louisville, Kentucky; Michael Kezar, South Texas Electric Cooperative, Nursery, on behalf of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association; Alexandra Dapolito Dunn, Environmental Council of the States, Washington, D.C.; Nancy Cave, South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, Georgetown; and Frank Holleman, Southern Environmental Law Center, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

NOMINATION

Committee on Foreign Relations: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Gayle Smith, of Ohio, to be Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, after the nominee testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

GOVERNING THROUGH GOAL SETTING

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine governing through goal setting, focusing on enhancing the economic and national security of America, including S. Res. 199, expressing the sense of the Senate regarding establishing a National Strategic Agenda, after receiving testimony from former Senator Joe Lieberman, former Utah Governor Jon Huntsman, Mclean, Virginia, Andrew Tisch, Loews Corporation, New York, New York, and Andrea Hogan, Merchants Metals LLC, Atlanta, Georgia, all on behalf of No Labels.

NOMINATION

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the nomination of Carol Fortine Ochoa, of Virginia, to be Inspector General of the General Services Administration, after the nominee testified and answered questions in her own behalf.

HIGHER EDUCATION ACT REAUTHORIZATION

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions: Committee concluded a hearing to examine reauthorizing the Higher Education Act, focusing on evaluating accreditation's role in ensuring quality, after receiving testimony from Peter T. Ewell, National Center for Higher Education Management Systems, Boulder, Colorado; George Pruitt, Thomas Edison State College, Trenton, New Jersey; and Albert C. Gray, Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools, and Anne D. Neal, American Council of Trustees and Alumni, both of Washington, D.C.

ACCESSING CAPITAL IN INDIAN COUNTRY OVERSIGHT

Committee on Indian Affairs: Committee concluded an oversight hearing to examine accessing capital in Indian Country, after receiving testimony from Alejandra Y. Castillo, National Director, Minority Business Development Agency, Department of Commerce; Derrick Watchman, The National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development, Mesa, Arizona; Ross Alan Hill, Bank2, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Dante Desiderio, NAFOA, Washington, D.C.

House of Representatives

Chamber Action

Public Bills and Resolutions Introduced: 20 public bills, H.R. 2798–2817; and 4 resolutions, H. Res. 322–325, were introduced. **Pages H4490–91**

Additional Cosponsors: **Pages H4492–93**

Reports Filed: Reports were filed today as follows:

H.R. 1626, to reduce duplication of information technology at the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–162);

H.R. 1633, to provide for certain improvements relating to the tracking and reporting of employees of the Department of Homeland Security placed on administrative leave, or any other type of paid non-duty status without charge to leave, for personnel matters, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–163);

H.R. 2200, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to establish chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear intelligence and information sharing functions of the Office of Intelligence and Analysis of the Department of Homeland Security and to require dissemination of information analyzed by the Department to entities with responsibilities relating to homeland security, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–164);

H.R. 2206, to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to require recipients of State Homeland Security Grant Program funding to preserve and strengthen interoperable emergency communications capabilities, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–165);

H.R. 1640, to direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to submit to Congress a report on the Department of Homeland Security headquarters consolidation project in the National Capital Region, and for other purposes, with an amendment (H. Rept. 114–166); and H. Res. 321, providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2146) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow Federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, and air traffic controllers to make penalty-free withdrawals from governmental plans after age 50, and for other purposes (H. Rept. 114–167). **Page H4490**

Speaker: Read a letter from the Speaker wherein he appointed Representative Farenthold to act as Speaker pro tempore for today. **Page H4435**

Recess: The House recessed at 10:19 a.m. and reconvened at 12 noon. **Page H4437**

Reception in the House Chamber of Former Members of Congress: Agreed by unanimous consent that the proceedings had during the former Members program held earlier in the day be printed in the Congressional Record and that all Members and former Members who spoke during the proceedings have the privilege of revising and extending their remarks. **Page H4449**

Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2015: The House began consideration of H.R. 160, to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the excise tax on medical devices. Consideration is expected to resume tomorrow, June 18th. **Pages H4449–55, H4471–72**

Pursuant to the Rule, an amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means now printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in part A of H. Rept. 114–157, shall be considered as adopted. **Page H4472**

H. Res. 319, the rule providing for consideration of the bills (H.R. 160) and (H.R. 1190) was agreed to by a recorded vote of 241 ayes to 186 noes, Roll No. 372, after the previous question was ordered by a yea-and-nay vote of 241 yeas to 186 nays, Roll No. 371. **Pages H4471–72**

Directing the President, pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, to remove United States Armed Forces deployed to Iraq or Syria on or after August 7, 2014: The House failed to agree to H. Con. Res. 55, directing the

President, pursuant to section 5(c) of the War Powers Resolution, to remove United States Armed Forces deployed to Iraq or Syria on or after August 7, 2014, other than Armed Forces required to protect United States diplomatic facilities and personnel, from Iraq and Syria, by a yea-and-nay vote of 139 yeas to 288 nays with one answering "present", Roll No. 370. **Pages H4455–71**

H. Con. Res. 55 was considered pursuant to the order of the House of June 16, 2015.

Suspensions: The House agreed to suspend the rules and pass the following measures:

VBID for Better Care Act of 2015: H.R. 2570, amended, to establish a demonstration program requiring the utilization of Value-Based Insurance Design to demonstrate that reducing the copayments or coinsurance charged to Medicare beneficiaries for selected high-value prescription medications and clinical services can increase their utilization and ultimately improve clinical outcomes and lower health care expenditures; **Pages H4479–81**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to the treatment of patient encounters in ambulatory surgical centers in determining meaningful EHR use, establish a demonstration program requiring the utilization of Value-Based Insurance Design to demonstrate that reducing the copayments or coinsurance charged to Medicare beneficiaries for selected high-value prescription medications and clinical services can increase their utilization and ultimately improve clinical outcomes and lower health care expenditures, and for other purposes.". **Page H4481**

Increasing Regulatory Fairness Act of 2015: H.R. 2507, amended, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to establish an annual rulemaking schedule for payment rates under Medicare Advantage; **Pages H4481–83**

Medicare Advantage Coverage Transparency Act of 2015: H.R. 2505, amended, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to require the annual reporting of data on enrollment in Medicare Advantage plans; and **Pages H4483–85**

Securing Seniors' Health Care Act of 2015: H.R. 2582, amended, to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to improve the risk adjustment under the Medicare Advantage program, and to delay the authority to terminate Medicare Advantage contracts for MA plans failing to achieve minimum quality ratings. **Pages H4485–87**

Agreed to amend the title so as to read: "To amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to delay the authority to terminate Medicare Advantage contracts for MA plans failing to achieve minimum quality ratings, to make improvements to the Medicare Adjustment risk adjustment system, and for other purposes.". **Page H4487**

Meeting Hour: Agreed by unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow, June 18. **Page H4489**

Quorum Calls—Votes: Two yea-and-nay votes and one recorded vote developed during the proceedings of today and appear on pages H4470, H4471, and H4471–72. There were no quorum calls.

Adjournment: The House met at 10 a.m. and adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

Committee Meetings

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on Agriculture: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 2647, the "Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015"; and H.R. 2620, to amend the United States Cotton Futures Act to exclude certain cotton futures contracts from coverage under such Act. H.R. 2647 and H.R. 2620 were both ordered reported, as amended.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Appropriations: Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education held a markup on the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill, FY 2016. The Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Bill, FY 2016, was forwarded to the full committee, without amendment.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Appropriations: Full Committee held a markup on the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill for FY 2016. The Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill for FY 2016 was ordered reported, as amended.

U.S. POLICY AND STRATEGY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Committee on Armed Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled "U.S. Policy and Strategy in the Middle East". Testimony was heard from Ashton B. Carter, Secretary, Department of Defense; and General Martin E. Dempsey, USA, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

CAPACITY OF U.S. NAVY TO PROJECT POWER WITH LARGE SURFACE COMBATANTS

Committee on Armed Services: Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces held a hearing entitled ''Capacity of U.S. Navy to Project Power with Large Surface Combatants''. Testimony was heard from Rear Admiral Victorino G. ''Vic'' Mercado, USN, Director, Assessment Division (N81); and Rear Admiral Peter Fanta, USN, Director, Surface Warfare (N96).

WHY CONGRESS MUST BALANCE THE BUDGET

Committee on the Budget: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Why Congress Must Balance the Budget''. Testimony was heard from Ryan Silvey, Senator, Missouri State Senate; and public witnesses.

RESTRICTING ACCESS TO FINANCIAL ADVICE: EVALUATING THE COSTS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR WORKING FAMILIES AND RETIREES

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions held a hearing entitled ''Restricting Access to Financial Advice: Evaluating the Costs and Consequences for Working Families and Retirees''. Testimony was heard from Thomas E. Perez, Secretary, Department of Labor; and public witnesses.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURE

Committee on Energy And Commerce: Full Committee concluded a markup on H.R. 805, the ''Domain Openness Through Continued Oversight Matters Act of 2015''. H.R. 805 was ordered reported, as amended.

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL STABILITY OVERSIGHT COUNCIL

Committee on Financial Services: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The Annual Report of the Financial Stability Oversight Council''. Testimony was heard from Jacob J. Lew, Secretary, Department of the Treasury.

THE IMPACT OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND: ECONOMIC STABILITY OR MORAL HAZARD?

Committee on Financial Services: Subcommittee on Monetary Policy and Trade held a hearing entitled ''The Impact of the International Monetary Fund: Economic Stability or Moral Hazard?''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

ASSAD'S ABHORRENT CHEMICAL WEAPONS ATTACKS

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Assad's Abhorrent Chemical Weapons Attacks''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

CHINA'S RISE: THE STRATEGIC IMPACT OF ITS ECONOMIC AND MILITARY GROWTH

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific held a hearing entitled ''China's Rise: The Strategic Impact of its Economic and Military Growth''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE IRAN, NORTH KOREA, AND SYRIA NONPROLIFERATION ACT: STATE DEPARTMENT'S NON-COMPLIANCE

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on the Middle East and North Africa held a hearing entitled ''The Iran, North Korea, and Syria Nonproliferation Act: State Department's Non-Compliance''. Testimony was heard from Thomas Melito, Director, International Affairs and Trade, Government Accountability Office.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES

Committee on Foreign Affairs: Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations held a hearing entitled ''Human Rights Abuses by Vietnamese Authorities''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

THE STATE OF THE SMITHSONIAN

Committee on House Administration: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''The State of the Smithsonian''. Testimony was heard from Albert G. Horvath, Acting Secretary of the Smithsonian.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Committee on the Judiciary: Full Committee held a markup on H.R. 2315, the ''Mobile Workforce State Income Tax Simplification Act of 2015''; H.R. 1643, the ''Digital Goods and Services Tax Fairness Act of 2015''; and H.R. 2584, the ''Business Activity Tax Simplification Act of 2015''. The following bills were ordered reported, without amendment: H.R. 2315 and H.R. 2584. The following bill was ordered reported, as amended: H.R. 1643.

LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

Committee on Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs held a hearing on H.R. 1157, the ''Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Mission Indians Land Transfer Act of 2015''; H.R. 2386, the ''Unrecognized Southeast

Alaska Native Communities Recognition and Compensation Act''; and H.R. 2538, the ''Lytton Rancheria Homelands Act of 2015''. Testimony was heard from Michael Black, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior; Mona Miyasato, Executive Officer, County of Santa Barbara, on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors; Steve Lavagnino, County Supervisor, Fifth District, Santa Barbara County; and public witnesses.

DRONES: THE NEXT GENERATION OF COMMERCE?

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Drones: The Next Generation of Commerce?''. Testimony was heard from Michael Whitaker, Deputy Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Transportation; John Cavolowsky, Director of the Airspace Systems Program Office, National Aeronautics and Space Administration; and public witnesses.

A REVIEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S EXECUTIVE ACTIONS ON IMMIGRATION

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform: Subcommittee on National Security; and Subcommittee on Health Care, Benefits, and Administrative Rules, held a joint hearing entitled ''A Review of the President's Executive Actions on Immigration''. Testimony was heard from Sarah R. Saldaña, Director, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; León Rodríguez, Director, Citizenship and Immigration Services; and John Roth, Inspector General, Department of Homeland Security.

SENATE AMENDMENT TO THE DEFENDING PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT ACT

Committee on Rules: Full Committee held a hearing on the Senate Amendment to H.R. 2146, the ''Defending Public Safety Employees' Retirement Act''. The committee granted, by record vote of 7–3, a rule that provides for the consideration of the Senate amendment. The rule makes in order a motion offered by the chair of the Committee on Ways and Means or his designee that the House concur in the Senate amendment with the amendment printed in the Rules Committee report. The rule waives all points of order against consideration of the motion and provides that the motion is not subject to a demand for division of the question. The rule provides that the Senate amendment and the motion shall be considered as read. The rule provides one hour of debate on the motion equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Ways and Means.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY OVERSIGHT: ENERGY INNOVATION HUBS

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology: Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing entitled ''Department of Energy Oversight: Energy Innovation Hubs''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

CRUDE INTENTIONS: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE BAN, THE OIL INDUSTRY, AND AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESSES

Committee on Small Business: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Crude Intentions: The Untold Story of the Ban, the Oil Industry, and America's Small Businesses''. Testimony was heard from public witnesses.

LONG-TERM FINANCING OF THE HIGHWAY TRUST FUND

Committee on Ways and Means: Full Committee held a hearing entitled ''Long-Term Financing of the Highway Trust Fund''. Testimony was heard from Chad Shirley, Deputy Assistant Director, Microeconomic Studies Team, Congressional Budget Office; and public witnesses.

Joint Meetings

FEDERAL CREDIT PROGRAMS

Joint Economic Committee: Committee concluded a hearing to examine the economic exposure of Federal credit programs, after receiving testimony from Douglas Holtz-Eakin, American Action Forum, Jason Delisle, New America Federal Education Budget Project, Douglas J. Elliott, Brookings Institution, and Paul Van de Water, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, all of Washington, D.C.

NEW PUBLIC LAWS

(For last listing of Public Laws, see DAILY DIGEST, *p. D704)*

S. 1568, to extend the authorization to carry out the replacement of the existing medical center of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Denver, Colorado, to authorize transfers of amounts to carry out the replacement of such medical center. Signed on June 15, 2015. (Public Law 114–25)

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2015

(Committee meetings are open unless otherwise indicated)

Senate

Committee on Appropriations: business meeting to markup an original bill entitled, ''Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2016'', and an original bill entitled ''Interior,

Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2016'', 10 a.m., SD–106.

Committee on Energy and Natural Resources: Subcommittee on Water and Power, to hold hearings to examine S. 593, to require the Secretary of the Interior to submit to Congress a report on the efforts of the Bureau of Reclamation to manage its infrastructure assets, S. 982, to prohibit the conditioning of any permit, lease, or other use agreement on the transfer of any water right to the United States by the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture, and to require the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to develop water planning instruments consistent with State law, S. 1305, to amend the Colorado River Storage Project Act to authorize the use of the active capacity of the Fontenelle Reservoir, S. 1365, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to use designated funding to pay for construction of authorized rural water projects, S. 1291, to authorize early repayment of obligations to the Bureau of Reclamation within the Northport Irrigation District in the State of Nebraska, S. 1552, to authorize the Dry-Redwater Regional Water Authority System and the Musselshell-Judith Rural Water System in the State of Montana, and S. 1533, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to coordinate Federal and State permitting processes related to the construction of new surface water storage projects on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture and to designate the Bureau of Reclamation as the lead agency for permit processing, 2 p.m., SD–366.

Committee on Finance: to hold hearings to examine challenges to the future of highway funding, 10 a.m., SD–215.

Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs: Subcommittee on Regulatory Affairs and Federal Management, to hold hearings to examine the EPA's management of the renewable fuel standard program, 9 a.m., SD–342.

Select Committee on Intelligence: to hold closed hearings to examine certain intelligence matters, 2:30 p.m., SH–219.

House

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies, markup on the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 2016, 10:30 a.m., 2362–A Rayburn.

Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Health, hearing entitled ''A National Framework for the Review and Labeling of Biotechnology in Food'', 10 a.m., 2123 Rayburn.

Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere, hearing entitled ''The Future of Property Rights in Cuba'', 10 a.m., 2172 Rayburn.

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security, and Investigations, hearing on H.R. 320, the ''Rapid DNA Act'', 10 a.m., 2141 Rayburn.

Next Meeting of the SENATE

9:30 a.m., Thursday, June 18

Senate Chamber

Program for Thursday: After the transaction of any morning business (not to extend beyond one hour), Senate will continue consideration of H.R. 1735, National Defense Authorization Act, post-cloture.

Following disposition of H.R. 1735, National Defense Authorization Act, Senate will vote on the motion to invoke cloture on the motion to proceed to consideration of H.R. 2685, Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

9 a.m., Thursday, June 18

House Chamber

Program for Thursday: Complete consideration of H.R. 160—Protect Medical Innovation Act of 2015. Consideration of H.R. 1190—Protecting Seniors' Access to Medicare Act of 2015 (Subject to a Rule).

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