

will dramatically reduce the amount of pollution we are sending up into the world but simultaneously spread these technologies across the planet.

In the 1990s, we invented new digital technologies. It was first just a very plain phone, but no one had one in their pocket until 1995 and 1996 because the phone was the size of a brick and it cost 50 cents a minute. No one had one. It was too expensive. But then this Congress moved over 200 megahertz of spectrum. It incentivized the private sector to begin to move. Within 3 years, everyone had one of these phones in their pocket. Within another 8 years, it moved to a smartphone because we had begun the revolution. Where was the smartphone invented? Right here in the United States.

Let's take Africa, for example. Twenty years ago did anyone believe that 700 million people in Africa would have a wireless device in their pocket? No. Why do they? Because the United States invented—the United States put the policies on the books that generated this revolution. They skipped telephone poles. They went right to wireless, right to cell phone towers. We did that. We gave the leadership.

That is leading to a lot of economic development in Africa and in continents around this world. We have to do the same thing in energy technology. They can envision a day where they bypass having to put wires down the street for electricity as well and solar panels could be on their roofs, providing electricity to power their cell phones, their refrigerators, their stoves, their air-conditioning.

We can do this. We have the capacity to do it, but we have to set our mind to doing it because there is an economic incentive for us. Oh, yes, there is a national security incentive for us. Oh, yes, we can tell the Middle East we don't need their oil anymore than we need their sand. We are going to provide our own power, and we are going to give other countries in the world the capacity to produce their own power. But we can do it as well because it is a moral imperative, because God's Earth, his creation is, in fact, now in jeopardy.

We have to be the leaders. We have to answer this moral cause. We cannot say we can't do it. We can't say we can't invent our way out of this potential catastrophe for the entire planet. The Pope is calling upon us to be the world's leader, morally and economically. We can do it.

Today is an important day, I think a watershed moment. I am a Catholic. The Pope is a Jesuit who is trained as a chemist. For those who say the Pope has no business talking about climate, he is a chemist. There are many people who say: Well, I don't have a view on climate because I am not a scientist.

The Pope is a scientist. He has looked at the evidence. He has asked the Vatican academy of arts and sciences to study this issue. They have come back with their conclusions. Man

is creating the problem and mankind now must solve the problem, but it is those who have created the pollution that the greatest responsibility falls.

You cannot preach temperance from a barstool. You cannot tell people to reduce what they are doing—smoking or drinking or engaging in dangerous activities—if you, too, are engaging in them. The leadership must come from this Chamber. The leadership must come from the United States of America. Pope Francis's message must resonate throughout this Chamber in the months and years ahead. If we do it, we will have been doing—as President Kennedy said in his inaugural address—truly God's work here on Earth.

I yield back the remainder of my time.

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. 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.

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.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I hope we are in the final hours of a 2½-week consideration of the Defense authorization bill. Not all amendments were debated and not as many were reported yet. We still have hopes that there could be a managers' package, which is composed of agreed-upon amendments by both sides, equally divided by both sides of the aisle, both Republican and Democratic. There are some important amendments, so I hope we are able to get approval of at least some of them prior to the votes that I believe will be scheduled for this afternoon in order to conclude debate and consideration of the Defense authorization act.

As we enter the final throes—and there are Members on the other side of the aisle and maybe even on this side of the aisle who are deeply concerned about the OCO funding for this authorization—I repeat again to my colleagues, I don't like the use of OCO. I

would like to follow the advice of every one of our military leaders who say that continued sequestration puts the lives of the men and women who are serving in the military in greater danger. I am not sure we have a greater obligation than to do everything possible to prevent the lives of our men and women serving in uniform from being put in greater danger. To get hung up on the method of funding, which many will use as a rationale for opposing this bill, seems to me an upside down set of priorities—badly upside down.

If we don't fund, if we don't authorize, if we don't make possible for us to equip and train and retain the finest military force in the world, why is it a higher priority to object to the method of funding? As I said, in a perfect world, I would argue vigorously—and have continued to—about the harmful effects of sequestration.

I am not talking about a political opinion. I am talking about the view of the uniformed leaders of our Nation who have the respect and admiration of all of us. They are telling us that if we continue sequestration, which would be the effect of not including the additional funding of the overseas contingency operations, then obviously in this world that becomes more and more dangerous as we speak—and I continue to quote probably the most respected man in America, in many respects, Henry Kissinger, who testified before our committee that he has never seen more crises around the world since World War II, as is the case today.

I would entreat my colleagues who may be contemplating voting against this legislation on the grounds that the funding is a disqualifying factor—it is a troubling factor and it is troubling to me—but shouldn't we care more about the men and women who are serving in the military than the problem you might have with a certain process that was followed in order to get there? I would think not.

If you look at the world in 2011, when the unthinkable happened; that is, that sequestration automatically kicked in because both sides were unable to agree on a process that would reduce the deficit and put us on a path to a balanced budget. Everyone said sequestration will not happen because they will come to an agreement. Obviously, sequestration did happen. But if you look at the world in the year of 2011, when sequestration kicked in, and the world today, I think—I think—there is a compelling argument that national security and national defense is far more important than it was then. Because of a series of events that began in 2011—including an incredibly misguided decision by the President of the United States to withdraw all forces from Iraq, which then, inevitably, as some of us predicted, led to the situation as it exists today—the world is now and the Middle East is now literally on fire.

What are the results of the misguided policies and the commitment on the

part of the President to get us out of wars? The President ignored one reality; that is, that we may get Americans out of wars, but that doesn't mean the wars are over. What we have seen is the spread of ISIS. We have seen Iran on the move in nations throughout the region, including the latest information we have that Iran is supplying weapons to the Taliban in Afghanistan, not to mention Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon, where they are basically in control. Our Sunni Arab—Middle Eastern Arab nations are now going their own way because they have no confidence in the United States.

What has been the result? All you have to do is pick up this morning's copy of the Washington Post. "Refugee crisis hits tipping point. U.N. ranks 2014 as worst year on record, cites dire need for aid."

London—The number of people uprooted from their homes by war and persecution in 2014 was larger than in any year since detailed record-keeping began, according to a comprehensive report released early Thursday by the U.N. refugee agency that will add to the evidence of a global exodus unlike any in modern times.

Just a year after the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and people forced to flee within their own countries surpassed 50 million for the first time since World War II, it surged to nearly 60 million in 2014—"a nation of the displaced" that is roughly equal to the population of the United Kingdom.

The rapidly escalating figures reflect a world of renewed conflict, with wars in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe driving families and individuals from their homes in desperate flights for safety. But the systems for managing those flows are breaking down, with countries and aid agencies unable to handle the strain as an average of nearly 45,000 people a day join the ranks of the displaced.

I urge my colleagues to understand two things: One, a lot of these things didn't have to happen. The absence of American leadership and involvement is largely responsible for a great deal of this. Second of all, it is of vital importance, in my view, given the situation throughout the world, that we pass the Defense authorization bill, reconcile our differences with the legislation with the House and the administration, and take into account that this is probably the greatest piece of reform legislation in recent history, perhaps in the last 30 years, since the then-well-known Goldwater-Nichols Act was passed.

In Reuters today, it says: "World's displaced hits record high of 60 million, half of them children."

Of the 60 million people who are displaced, half of them are children. They are the ones who always suffer the most.

The article says:

... at the end of last year, the highest ever recorded number, the U.N. refugee agency said on Thursday.

More than half the displaced from crises including Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia were children, UNHCR said in its Annual Global Trends Report.

In 2014, an average of 42,500 people became refugees, asylum seekers, or internally dis-

placed every day, representing a four-fold increase in just four years.

In 4 years, there was a fourfold increase in the number of refugees. Again, that is not an accident.

"We are witnessing a paradigm change, an unchecked slide into an era in which the scale of global forced displacement as well as the response required is now clearly dwarfing anything seen before," said U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres in a statement.

UNHCR said Syria, where conflict has raged since 2011, was the world's biggest source of internally displaced people and refugees.

There were 7.6 million displaced people in Syria by the end of last year and almost 4 million Syrian refugees, mainly living in the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey.

For the information of my colleagues, there are now more Syrian children in school in Lebanon than there are Lebanese children in school in Lebanon.

UNHCR said there were 38.2 million displaced by conflict within national borders, almost five million more than a year before, with wars in Ukraine, South Sudan, Nigeria, Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo swelling the figures.

It also noted that more than 1.6 million people sought political asylum in a foreign country last year, a jump of more than 50 percent compared to the previous year—largely due to the 270,000 Ukrainians who submitted asylum claims in Russia.

While many conflicts have erupted or reignited in the past five years, few have been conclusively resolved. Just 126,800 refugees were able to return home in 2014, the lowest number in 31 years, UNHCR said.

I say to my colleagues, I have been to refugee camps, and I have seen the suffering and pain and the hopelessness there. I was taken around by a teacher at a refugee camp where there were about 175,000 people, as I recall, in Jordan, and there were a large number of children around in this camp.

The teacher said to me: Senator MCCAIN, do you see all of these children here?

I said: Yes, I do.

She said: They believe you Americans have abandoned them, and when they grow up, they are going to take revenge on you.

My friends, we are sowing the wind, and we will reap the whirlwind. It is time that the United States assumed again a leadership role in the world.

Now many of the critics who call me "Defense Hawk" MCCAIN—I am not sure why the opponents are not called "Defense Doves," fill in the blank—seem to believe I am advocating that a large number of American troops be dispatched to the region. I am not, but I am saying we should listen to the successful military leaders who succeeded in the surge in Iraq and to a large degree succeeded in Afghanistan. I am speaking of General Petraeus, General Keane, and Admiral McRaven. There are a number of people, both military and civilian, we should listen to. Ryan Crocker, to me, is the most respected member of the diplomatic

corps I have ever seen. Those people ought to be brought together and asked for their views to see if we can develop a strategy—a strategy, by the way, which the President of the United States just a few days ago stated is nonexistent. They should be called, and we need to develop a strategy. There is no strategy. If we had a strategy—and these numbers of a record high of the world's displaced of 60 million people, half of them children—perhaps we could turn this situation around.

No one believes we are winning in the struggle against ISIS. We are at the negotiating table in various luxuriant hotels and resorts in Europe, negotiating with the Iranians over a nuclear deal while they are moving and controlling four nations, and the latest, of course, is that they are supplying weapons to the Taliban.

We need to have a strategy that is inclusive, and we need to draw on the experience and knowledge from some of the most respected men we have in this country with a military, political, diplomatic, and economic background and come up with a strategy.

I will tell my colleagues there is no good answer. There is the least of bad options. But we have to exercise an option rather than run in place for the next year and a half until we have a new President of the United States.

This legislation is not going to solve those problems. This legislation has certain policy implications. This legislation does not achieve the goals I was just speaking about. But this legislation does do the things we need to do—we, as the people's elected representatives whose first obligation is the defense of this Nation. This legislation addresses many issues that will make our defense establishment more responsive, more responsible, more efficient, and most of all will provide the equipment and the capabilities for the men and women who are serving in the military, many of them still in harm's way, so that they can defend this Nation. Anybody who believes ISIS would be content to remain in the Middle East and not export that terror to the United States of America has not listened to the Director of the CIA, the head of the FBI, and every other military expert. ISIS is bent on harming America.

When Mr. Baghdadi left Camp Bucca, where he spent 4 years—Mr. Baghdadi, obviously, as we know, is the leader of ISIS. He spent 4 years at Camp Bucca in Iraq. When he left, he said: I will see you in New York. Mr. Baghdadi wasn't kidding. ISIS is bent on attacking us. Can they destroy us? No. But the ability of ISIS to be able to launch some attacks on the United States of America grows every time there are thousands of young men and some young women who go to Syria and Iraq and are radicalized even more and return, sooner or later, to the country from which they came.

I ask that my colleagues on both sides of the aisle put aside the smaller

differences we have. And there are differences with my colleagues on this side of the aisle concerning, for example, the sage-grouse and a number of other provisions in this bill.

I urge my colleagues to put aside those differences—and in the view of many, there are significant differences—and vote in favor of this legislation and send a message that at least on the issue of defending the Nation, we will provide the men and women who are putting their lives on the line on our behalf the best possible capabilities we can possibly provide for them.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article entitled “Refugee crisis hits tipping point” in the Washington Post this morning be printed in the RECORD.

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

[From the Washington Post, June 18, 2015]

REFUGEE CRISIS HITS TIPPING POINT
(By Griff Witte)

LONDON.—The number of people uprooted from their homes by war and persecution in 2014 was larger than in any year since detailed record-keeping began, according to a comprehensive report released early Thursday by the U.N. refugee agency that will add to the evidence of a global exodus unlike any in modern times.

Just a year after the number of refugees, asylum-seekers and people forced to flee within their own countries surpassed 50 million for the first time since World War II, it surged to nearly 60 million in 2014—“a nation of the displaced” that is roughly equal to the population of the United Kingdom.

The rapidly escalating figures reflect a world of renewed conflict, with wars in the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe driving families and individuals from their homes in desperate flights for safety. But the systems for managing those flows are breaking down, with countries and aid agencies unable to handle the strain as an average of nearly 45,000 people a day join the ranks of those either on the move or stranded far from home.

“We are witnessing a paradigm change, an unchecked slide into an era in which the scale of global forced displacement as well as the response required is now clearly dwarfing anything seen before,” U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres said in a statement. “It is terrifying that on the one hand there is more and more impunity for those starting conflicts, and on the other there is seeming utter inability of the international community to work together to stop wars and build and preserve peace.”

The annual report on global trends in displacement, issued by the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNHCR, offers perhaps the most authoritative look at who is being uprooted by conflict, where they come from and where they go. The agency, created in 1950 to support Europeans displaced by World War II, said the figures for 2014 were higher than it has ever recorded.

The overall number, which does not include those displaced by natural disasters or economic migrants in search of a better life, had been relatively stable, at around 40 million, since the start of the 21st century.

But it abruptly shot up in 2013, and the pace accelerated last year. Although the report does not cover 2015, there is no indication that the trajectory has changed.

The four-year-old war in Syria has been the single biggest driver of the surging numbers. Last year, 1 in 5 displaced persons worldwide was Syrian. The country in 2014 became the planet’s largest source of refugees, displacing Afghanistan, which had held that dubious distinction for three decades.

The impact of a Syrian population on the move has been felt across the Middle East. Neighboring Turkey now hosts more refugees than any other nation, knocking Pakistan to No. 2. Lebanon has the world’s highest concentration, at nearly a quarter of those living in the tiny Mediterranean nation.

The vast majority of refugees last year were hosted by poor countries that can least afford the added strain. Nearly 9 out of 10 refugees were living in the developing world—a figure that hit a two-decade high.

Meanwhile, with nations across the developing world either at war or in crisis, some of the world’s wealthiest nations have focused on how to beat back the rising tide of those seeking escape.

France and Austria have stepped up police checks at crossings with Italy, leaving migrants to camp out at train stations in Rome and Milan. Hungary on Wednesday announced plans to build a 12-foot fence along its border with Serbia. Nations across Europe have balked at proposals to more equitably share the burden of asylum-seekers while rushing to approve plans to blow up smuggler ships in the Mediterranean.

The tough response has been largely due to political pressure among populations hostile to the influx of migrants. But it prompted Pope Francis on Wednesday to suggest that those “who close the door” to migrants seeking protection should ask forgiveness from God.

The UNHCR and other aid groups have pleaded for more assistance to keep pace with the ever-growing numbers, but to little avail.

“There’s a real risk that we’re seeing the unraveling of the refugee regime that was created in the aftermath of the Second World War on the basis of cooperation and reciprocity,” said Alexander Betts, director of the Refugee Studies Center at Oxford University.

Betts said that unlike during other conflicts, including those in Southeast Asia, the Balkans and Central America, governments are not stepping up to offer assistance commensurate with the scale of a problem that now touches virtually every corner of the globe.

“This isn’t a regional problem,” he said. “It’s a global challenge.”

The UNHCR’s report identifies at least 15 wars across three continents that have either erupted or reignited in the past five years, and that together have forced millions to abandon their homes. A total of 13.9 million people were displaced in 2014 alone.

About a third of those were in sub-Saharan Africa, where wars in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria and Congo all flared. Somalia alone is the source of more than a million refugees, the world’s third-highest total.

Europe experienced the biggest proportional increase in displaced persons last year, with a staggering 51 percent increase over 2013.

While much of that was due to Syrian refugees streaming into Turkey, it also reflected the 219,000 people who entered the continent via the perilous journey across the Mediterranean. And as Russian-backed rebels brought war back to European soil, more than 800,000 people were left internally displaced in Ukraine. About 200,000 Ukrainians applied for asylum in Russia.

Worldwide, the number of internally displaced people vastly outstripped the number

of refugees. Once people fled their home countries, they had little hope of returning. Just 126,800 refugees went back to their home countries in 2014 out of a global refugee population of 14.4 million. That marked the lowest level of return since 1983.

Mr. MCCAIN. 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 (Mr. RUBIO). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would note for my colleagues the presence of General Dunford, Commandant of the Marine Corps, a great combat leader and leader of our military and considered to be the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a man we all admire a great deal.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

TRAGEDY AT EMANUEL AME CHURCH

Mr. ROBERTS. Madam President, like many have said here today, I would like to express my deepest condolences to the victims of the shooting at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, SC, last night. This was a senseless act of violence. My thoughts and prayers are with the victims, their families, and all affected by this horrible tragedy.

I know we all hope the perpetrator is swiftly brought to justice. I pray for the safety of the entire Charleston community. This was an act of senseless violence, to be sure. But as I understand it, the perpetrator saved one woman and told her: “I want you to tell everyone what happened here.” That is beyond sinister. That is evil. That evil must be stopped and must be dealt with.

OBAMACARE

What I would like to talk about now is the Supreme Court’s critical ruling on the most recent review of the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare. It is important to highlight many of the ways this law is negatively impacting our health care system as a whole, my constituents in Kansas, the Presiding Officer’s constituents in her neighboring State of Nebraska—all over the country.

Trying to list all of the problems with this law is nearly impossible. Perhaps the best way is to review the promises of the President of the United States. The crafting of this law was supposed to follow his promise of being the most transparent administration in

history. The problem is that there has been a lack of transparency—not to mention the oversight of this law since it was originally being crafted and throughout its implementation.

Despite hearing the contrary from our docs and nurses about practices and hospitals closing and premiums and copays increasing, the administration continues to turn a blind eye. The administration continually moves the goal posts to which they measure success and have claimed victory.

In 2012, the Congressional Budget Office projected there would be 14 million people enrolled in exchange plans this year. Then late last year, the administration back-pedaled on its projections for the second year of enrollment, moving the goal posts. The most recent data out of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the infamous CMS, shows that when you look at how many individuals had effectual coverage or actually paid their first month's premium and continued to have an active policy, that number is 10 million. Madam President, that is nearly 30 percent below the 2012 enrollment projections—30 percent. That is not transparency. That is not victory.

So why is this number lower? Why aren't folks signing up? First, we had a Web site that crashed and that didn't work. Then Americans tried to shop around and view the policies available to them. But as it turns out, the law didn't lower premiums for the average family by \$2,500—remember that promise—as the President promised. This didn't happen. Premiums are increasing.

The President also promised you could keep your same health care plan and your doctor. We have known for some time that is just not true. It didn't happen.

Yet just last week the President responded to questions regarding his signature law—his legacy law, if you will—at a press conference following the G-7 summit. He said: “The thing is working.” Now, one might add that the “thing” is a pretty good term for the Affordable Care Act.

The President also said: “I mean, part of what's bizarre about this whole thing is we haven't had a lot of conversation about the horrors of ObamaCare because none of them have really come to pass.”

Really?

President Obama concluded: “It hasn't had an adverse effect on people who already had health insurance.”

Well, I am not sure what data has been presented to the President or which American family he has been listening to, but it is certainly not the reality that I have experienced and that Kansans are experiencing. The real-life threats of this law we hear from Kansans back home have not stopped. They are increasing.

A small business owner in Cummings, KS, called my office to inform me his premium this year went up over \$500 a month—more than double last year's.

Eddy, in Spring Hill, says his premium has doubled and his deductible has doubled. He is being forced to choose between running his company and buying health insurance. He says he can't do both.

Let's go back to the President's comments about this “thing” having no adverse effect. Just a couple of weeks ago his own administration published the proposed double-digit—double-digit—premium increases for 2016—next year. The plans on the list affect more than 6 million people across the country and are seeking an average increase of 21 percent.

The Kansas Insurance Department tells us that premiums for some individual and small group health care plans are likely to increase by as much as 38 percent.

According to the administration's list, 14 insurance plans are seeking premium increases above 10 percent for next year. That covers 100,000 Kansans. When you look at just two insurance plans, those two insurance plans have increases of 28 and 38 percent. Perhaps the President does not categorize these 100,000 Kansans as being adversely affected by this “thing.”

Simply put, premiums will continue to spiral upward if we do not act. Facts and reality are really very stubborn things. Even ObamaCare's chief architect, Jonathan Gruber—we all remember Jonathan Gruber—was quoted last year as saying if “you made it explicit that healthy people pay in and sick people get money, it would not have passed. Lack of transparency is a huge political advantage.” So said Mr. Gruber.

Still quoting Mr. Gruber: “And basically, call it the stupidity of the American voter or whatever, but basically that really was really, really critical for the thing to pass.” That is his quote.

Those comments belittle the American people and try to rationalize why, when you have an agenda, the government should not be transparent. The President and proponents of ObamaCare all said publicly this was the first step to nationalized health insurance. That certainly has become transparent.

Now, not only are individuals adversely affected in terms of their own insurance coverage, but also due to the law's mandate on employers, many are seeing the law's negative repercussions at their jobs. The law's employer mandate hinders job creation and growth. Its new definition of full-time employment at 30 hours a week has been a real problem. According to one estimate, 2.6 million workers—2.6 million workers—could potentially have their hours and therefore their paychecks reduced as a result of this provision.

Most concerning is that this new definition of full-time employment hits low-wage earners who work in the service industries. Of the individuals at risk, about half work in retail and half in restaurants. If these folks were pre-

viously working the traditional 40 hours per week, you are not just taking 10 hours from them, but you are reducing their paycheck by 25 percent a week. That is why they work in two different jobs. That is a very noticeable adverse effect.

The concerns I have outlined today are only a few of the many reasons why we need to repeal this law, both the individual and employer mandates. We need to fix health care. Everybody knows that. But we don't need to fix ObamaCare. We need to give peace of mind to the families hurt by ObamaCare.

Now, no one is saying go back to the system we had before. We need reforms to our health care system every day. ObamaCare is costing millions of dollars. But with this law—what the President has called “this thing”—we may have mandated greater coverage for all but not access to care and at a cost that is unaffordable. Let me repeat that. We may have mandated greater coverage for all—if that was the goal of my friends across the aisle—but not access to care and at a cost that is unaffordable. That is not a health care plan.

Perhaps some can afford the rising premiums, but can you actually go see your doctor and receive treatment or is your deductible too high? And is your doctor still available to you? Will your doctor spend at least 5 minutes with you—5 minutes with you—or more time filling out forms or electronic medical records? And are those records secure?

Any day now the Supreme Court will hand down its decision in *King v. Burwell*. This is the case that will determine the legality of the administration's regulation extending health insurance subsidies to people in States that use the Federal insurance exchange. And we will see—we will see—if the Court decides that the law should be implemented as written by this Congress—with all of us on this side of the aisle voting no—or implemented as interpreted by the administration.

This is similarly troubling for Kansas, where we have a federally facilitated exchange. If these tax subsidies go away, 77,000 Kansans and millions of Americans, will be affected. These individuals would be confronted with ObamaCare's true cost—true cost—and would face much higher premiums, with only the administration to blame for recklessly offering tens of billions of dollars in subsidies they had no authority to offer, if the Court rules that way.

A ruling against the administration would also free many of these Kansans from the individual mandate penalty if that coverage is too expensive for them and they, therefore, would qualify for an affordability exemption.

The employer mandate penalties would also be unenforceable. Employers can then add employees above the 50 threshold without fear of penalty and increase workers' hours to more than 30 hours per week.

If the Court invalidates the subsidies, we will be ready. We will be ready on this side of the aisle with our solutions to help mitigate the pain for those individuals harmed by the administration and provide States greater flexibility and build a bridge away from ObamaCare.

However the Court rules, I know that I and everybody on this side of the aisle will continue fighting to repeal this harmful law and replace it with true health care reforms that lower costs, lift the burden on our job creators, and restore the all-important relationship between a doctor and a patient.

The test to fix health care, not ObamaCare, is coming soon. Let's fix health care.

I yield the floor.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, on June 4, I was not present to vote on Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN's amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2016, amendment No. 1494 to H.R. 1735. I would have voted against this measure.

Madam President, as well, had I been present for the vote on amendment No. 1889, I would have voted no on this amendment. I do not support telegraphing to the enemy what interrogation techniques we will or won't use and denying future Commanders in Chief and intelligence professionals important tools for protecting the American people and the U.S. homeland.

MARITIME PARTNER CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, in the interests of moving the defense bill forward I withdraw my amendments, Nos. 2038 and 2056.

These amendments were intended address a set of issues where I share a concern with the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee that the U.S. needs to make additional concerted effort and provide additional focus to our maritime partner capacity building efforts in the Asia-Pacific region. Indeed, the chairman included a significant provision in this bill for a South China Sea initiative which I support. My efforts were intended to compliment the work of the chairman and assure that we have a fully articulated and whole-of-government approach to this issue, with both the Department of Defense and the Department of State fully and appropriately engaged.

The chairman and I have had some positive discussions on this issue in recent days, and I have received his assurances that my concerns will be addressed as this legislation moves forward. And I also intend to make sure that other aspects of this issue are addressed in legislation that the Foreign Relations Committee will take up, and where I look to the chairman for his partnership and continued leadership on this issue.

With those assurances—and given the deep and shared commitment the

chairman and I have on this issue—I do not see a need to press forward for a vote on my amendments at this time.

Mr. MCCAIN. I thank the Senator from Maryland for his consideration. I can assure him that we share a common set of concerns and common set of goals on this issue. We have discussed a pathway forward that addresses the questions raised by his proposed amendments, and I look forward to working with him going forward. And I very much look forward to continuing to work with him on this issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I rise today to thank colleagues on both sides of the aisle for the debate and votes we will be casting today on the National Defense Authorization Act. We have come together in a bipartisan fashion, and we have spent significant time in committee and now on the floor to deal with countless provisions. This act is nothing if not detailed with countless provisions that are critical to the defense of the Nation.

We have a long tradition of bipartisanship in this body on the NDAA. The Senate passes an NDAA in one form or another every year, and that can't be said about any other piece of legislation. I want to congratulate the new chairman, Senator MCCAIN, and the new ranking member, Senator REED, and I want to congratulate my colleagues who serve together on the committee, including our Presiding Officer, and also all of our staff, both our personal staff and committee staff—I see some committee staff here—because this is a significant amount of work.

There are many important provisions in the NDAA that affect our national security, and my Commonwealth of Virginia is deeply connected to the American military. In addition to grand items, the NDAA also examines in some excruciating detail some very, very fine points.

Just to give a few examples, the NDAA includes a provision dealing with storage facilities that are needed to help us combat rust on military vehicles, the transmission systems that are used in some army land vehicles, the reflective markings and lights that are used on military air fields, one particular military barracks that has sewage, mold, hot water, and rodent problems, and we even deal in the NDAA with some details of West Point's football program—some of the athletic programs at West Point.

But after all this minute analysis and debate and discussion over the past weeks, both in committee and on the floor, I do notice something a little bit strange. While Congress is very willing to debate and vote on all things great and small concerning our military, there is one thing we don't want to debate or vote on—whether the United States should be at war, whether we should be at war with ISIL. We will vote on shipbuilding, we will vote on military pensions, we will vote on vehi-

cle rust, and we will vote on barracks mold. But we don't want to vote on whether the Nation should be at war.

I proposed an amendment to the NDAA with Senator FLAKE and Senator MANCHIN expressing the sense of the Senate that we should have an authorization debate about whether we should be at war with ISIL, and the amendment that I proposed was ruled nongermane—so barracks mold, yes; vehicle rust, yes; the athletic programs at West Point, yes; whether we should be at war, nongermane to the Defense authorization act.

Interestingly, we even took a vote on the floor of the Senate in the NDAA about whether we should arm the Kurds in a war that Congress has not authorized that we could debate and vote on; but whether we should be at war we have not debated and voted upon.

So I went back and looked at article I of the Constitution. I found that there is no requirement that Congress vote on barracks mold or rust prevention or military airfield lighting. Certainly we can and should take up those matters—even if they just affect one barracks or one airfield—is about the safety of our troops and military personnel. Of course we should take them up. But there is nothing in the Constitution that requires that we take them up and debate and vote on them. But we are required to debate and vote to authorize war. Article I, section 8, clearly declares that Congress shall have the power to declare war—not the President; Congress. Yet, on this item, on this large item, on this largest of items, we are unwilling to debate and vote.

The war against ISIL is now in its 11th month; more than 3,500 U.S. airstrikes, more than 3,000 U.S. forces now in Iraq. U.S. servicemembers and American hostages have lost their lives in the battle against ISIL. The cost of the war to the American taxpayer is now more than \$2.5 billion—an average cost of \$9 million a day. The ISIL threat is spreading, the mission expanding.

In response to ISIL advances in the Anbar Province, the administration recently announced that an additional 450 trainers would be deployed to train and support Iraqi security forces.

So my question as a strong supporter of the NDAA is a simple one: How much longer will we allow war to be waged without Congress even being willing to have a debate about the strategy and scope of the mission? How much longer will we keep asking servicemembers to risk their lives without Congress doing the basic job of authorizing this war?

U.S. airstrikes started on August 8—313 days ago. Let me put this in a historic perspective. The 1-year anniversary of this war is approaching quickly. Congressional inaction on it is already of historic proportions.

World War I: It took President Wilson 33 days to bring an authorization to Congress. Congress acted in 4 days.

World War II: It took President Roosevelt 1 day to bring a request to Congress. Congress acted on the same day.

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution: President Johnson brought a resolution to Congress within 3 days. Congress acted 5 days thereafter.

The invasion of Kuwait in gulf war 1: It took 160 days for the President to bring an authorization to Congress, but Congress acted within 4 days in approving an authorization.

The 9/11 attacks: President Bush came the same day to Congress. It took 3 days for Congress to act.

In this war against ISIL, it took the President nearly 6 months to bring an authorization to Congress, and it is now more than 4 months since that happened—313 days—and Congress has said virtually nothing.

I appreciate that Chairman CORKER and Ranking Member CARDIN have made a recent commitment to discuss an ISIL authorization in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which is the committee of jurisdiction. I understand that. Senator FLAKE and I have introduced a bipartisan proposal to show that there is bipartisan support for this mission, and we have been pushing to have the matter heard.

Yesterday, in a debate on the House floor, the chairman of the HASC committee stated plainly that it is time that we “ought to have a real AUMF debate.”

So I am here to support the NDAA and the good work our chair and ranking member and all the members have done. But I am here to point out that on day 313, if we are willing to deal with important, narrow, small issues, we should be finally willing to address the most important issue we have before us. I challenge my colleagues to do this and to bring the same amount of attention and bipartisanship to debating whether we should send American troops to war as we are willing to apply to barracks mold and vehicle rust.

With that, Madam President, I yield the floor.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, with the bill managers' permission, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

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

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I know the bill managers are working on a final agreement, and I would defer to them at this point.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 1974, AS MODIFIED; 2030; 1472, AS MODIFIED; 1890; 1705; 1720; 1708; 1908; 1678; 1811; 1825; 2020; 2050, AS MODIFIED; 1474; 1901; 1902; 1563; 1703; 1944, AS MODIFIED; 1747; 2006; 1931; 2011; AND 1916 TO AMENDMENT NO. 1463

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, the ranking member and I have a small package of amendments that have been cleared by both sides.

Notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII and adoption of the McCain substitute, I ask unanimous consent that the following amendments be called up and agreed to en bloc: McCain No. 1974, as modified; Murkowski No. 2030; Vitter No. 1472, as modified; Daines No. 1890; Coats No. 1705; Flake No. 1720; Gardner No. 1708; Enzi No. 1908; Paul No. 1678; Hatch No. 1811; Fischer No. 1825; King No. 2020; Menendez No. 2050, as modified; Coons No. 1474; Murphy No. 1901; Warren No. 1902; Blumenthal No. 1563; Durbin No. 1703; Tester No. 1944, as modified; Casey No. 1747; Schatz No. 2006; Leahy No. 1931; Ayotte No. 2011; and Bennet No. 1916.

These have been agreed to by both sides, and I thank all Members for the agreement of this package. I am sorry it is not larger, but it is equally divided between both sides of the aisle.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendments are called up and agreed to en bloc.

The amendments (Nos. 1974, as modified; 2030; 1472, as modified; 1890; 1705; 1720; 1708; 1908; 1678; 1811; 1825; 2020; 2050, as modified; 1474; 1901; 1902; 1563; 1703; 1944, as modified; 1747; 2006; 1931; 2011; and 1916) agreed to en bloc are as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 1974, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To express the sense of Congress on the security and protection of Iranian dissidents living in Camp Liberty, Iraq)

At the end of subtitle B of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 1230. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON THE SECURITY AND PROTECTION OF IRANIAN DISSIDENTS LIVING IN CAMP LIBERTY, IRAQ.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The residents of Camp Liberty, Iraq, renounced violence and unilaterally disarmed more than a decade ago.

(2) The United States recognized the residents of the former Camp Ashraf who now reside in Camp Liberty as “protected persons” under the Fourth Geneva Convention and committed itself to protect the residents.

(3) The deterioration in the overall security situation in Iraq has increased the vulnerability of Camp Liberty residents to attacks from proxies of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps and Sunni extremists associated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

(4) The increased vulnerability underscores the need for an expedited relocation process and that these Iranian dissidents will neither be safe nor secure in Camp Liberty.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the United States should—

(1) take prompt and appropriate steps in accordance with international agreements to promote the physical security and protection of Camp Liberty residents;

(2) urge the Government of Iraq to uphold its commitments to the United States to en-

sure the safety and well-being of those living in Camp Liberty;

(3) urge the Government of Iraq to ensure continued and reliable access to food, clean water, medical assistance, electricity and other energy needs, and any other equipment and supplies necessary to sustain the residents during periods of attack or siege by external forces;

(4) oppose the extradition of Camp Liberty residents to Iran;

(5) implement a strategy to provide for the safe, secure, and permanent relocation of Camp Liberty residents that includes a relocation plan, including a detailed outline of the steps that would need to be taken by recipient countries, the United States, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and Camp residents to relocate the residents to other countries;

(6) encourage continued close cooperation between the residents of Camp Liberty and the authorities in the relocation process; and

(7) assist the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in expediting the ongoing resettlement of all residents of Camp Liberty to safe locations outside Iraq.

AMENDMENT NO. 2030

(Purpose: To express the sense of Congress on the coordination of hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities on military land)

At the end of subtitle B of title XXVIII, add the following:

SEC. 2815. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON COORDINATION OF HUNTING, FISHING, AND OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON MILITARY LAND.

It is the sense of Congress that, in situations where military lands are open to public access for hunting, fishing, and other recreational activities, the Department of Defense should seek to ensure that coordination with State fish and wildlife managers, tribes, and local governments occurs sufficiently in advance of traditional hunting, fishing, and recreational use seasons to facilitate communication with hunting, fishing, and recreational user groups.

AMENDMENT NO. 1472, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To exclude AbilityOne goods from the authority to acquire goods and services manufactured in Afghanistan, central Asian states, and Djibouti)

At the end of subtitle E of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 884. EXCEPTION FOR ABILITYONE GOODS FROM AUTHORITY TO ACQUIRE GOODS AND SERVICES MANUFACTURED IN AFGHANISTAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STATES.

(a) EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN ITEMS NOT MANUFACTURED IN AFGHANISTAN.—Section 886 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (10 U.S.C. 2302 note) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting “and except as provided in subsection (d),” after “subsection (b).”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(d) EXCLUSION OF ITEMS ON THE ABILITYONE PROCUREMENT CATALOG.—The authority under subsection (a) of this section shall not be available for the procurement of any good that is contained in the procurement catalog described in section 8503(a) of title 41 in Afghanistan if such good can be produced and delivered by a qualified nonprofit agency for the blind or a nonprofit agency for other severely disabled in a timely fashion to support mission requirements.”.

(b) EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN ITEMS NOT MANUFACTURED IN CENTRAL ASIAN STATES.—Section 801 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010 (Public Law 111-84; 123 Stat. 2399) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a), by inserting “and except as provided in subsection (h),” after “subsection (b).”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(h) EXCLUSION OF ITEMS ON THE ABILITYONE PROCUREMENT CATALOG.—The authority under subsection (a) shall not be available for the procurement of any good that is contained in the procurement catalog described in section 8503(a) of title 41 if such good can be produced and delivered by a qualified nonprofit agency for the blind or a nonprofit agency for other severely disabled in a timely fashion to support mission requirements.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 1890

(Purpose: To modify the immediate applicability of basic allowance for housing for married members assigned for duty within normal commuting distance)

On page 213, between lines 9 and 10, insert the following:

(3) PRESERVATION OF CURRENT BAH FOR CERTAIN OTHER MARRIED MEMBERS.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), the amount of basic allowance for housing payable to a member of the uniformed services under section 403 of title 37, United States Code, as of September 30, 2015, shall not be reduced by reason of the amendment made by subsection (a) unless—

(A) the member and the member’s spouse undergo a permanent change of station requiring a change of residence;

(B) the member and the member’s spouse move into or commence living in on-base housing; or

AMENDMENT NO. 1705

(Purpose: To provide for military exchanges between senior officers and officials of the United States and Taiwan)

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 1264. MILITARY EXCHANGES BETWEEN SENIOR OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS OF THE UNITED STATES AND TAIWAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense should carry out a program of exchanges of senior military officers and senior officials between the United States and Taiwan designed to improve military to military relations between the United States and Taiwan.

(b) EXCHANGES DESCRIBED.—For the purposes of this section, an exchange is an activity, exercise, event, or observation opportunity between members of the Armed Forces and officials of the Department of Defense, on the one hand, and armed forces personnel and officials of Taiwan, on the other hand.

(c) FOCUS OF EXCHANGES.—The exchanges under the program carried out pursuant to subsection (a) shall include exchanges focused on the following:

- (1) Threat analysis.
- (2) Military doctrine.
- (3) Force planning.
- (4) Logistical support.
- (5) Intelligence collection and analysis.
- (6) Operational tactics, techniques, and procedures.
- (7) Humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

(d) CIVIL-MILITARY AFFAIRS.—The exchanges under the program carried out pursuant to subsection (a) shall include activities and exercises focused on civil-military relations, including parliamentary relations.

(e) LOCATION OF EXCHANGES.—The exchanges under the program carried out pursuant to subsection (a) shall be conducted in both the United States and Taiwan.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “senior military officer”, with respect to the Armed Forces, means a general or flag officer of the Armed Forces on active duty.

(2) The term “senior official”, with respect to the Department of Defense, means a civilian official of the Department of Defense at the level of Assistant Secretary of Defense or above.

AMENDMENT NO. 1720

(Purpose: To authorize transportation to transfer ceremonies for the family and next of kin of members of the Armed Forces who die overseas during humanitarian operations)

At the end of subtitle C of title VI, add the following:

SEC. 622. TRANSPORTATION TO TRANSFER CEREMONIES FOR FAMILY AND NEXT OF KIN OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO DIE OVERSEAS DURING HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS.

Section 481f(e)(1) of title 37, United States Code, is amended by inserting “(including during a humanitarian relief operation)” after “located or serving overseas”.

AMENDMENT NO. 1708

(Purpose: To require a strategy to promote United States interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region)

At the end of subtitle E of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 1264. STRATEGY TO PROMOTE UNITED STATES INTERESTS IN THE INDO-ASIA-PACIFIC REGION.

(a) STRATEGY.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall develop an overall strategy to promote United States interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Such strategy shall be informed by the following:

(1) The national security strategy of the United States for 2015 set forth in the national security strategy report required under section 108(a)(3) of the National Security Act of 1947 (50 U.S.C. 5043(a)(3)), as such strategy relates to United States interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

(2) The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR), as it relates to United States interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

(3) The 2015 Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review (QDDR), as it relates to United States interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

(4) The strategy to prioritize United States defense interests in the Asia-Pacific region as contained in the report required by section 1251(a) of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113-291; 128 Stat. 3570).

(5) The integrated, multi-year planning and budget strategy for a rebalancing of United States policy in Asia submitted to Congress pursuant to section 7043(a) of the Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2014 (division K of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014 (Public Law 113-76)).

(b) PRESIDENTIAL POLICY DIRECTIVE.—The President shall issue a Presidential Policy Directive to appropriate departments and agencies of the United States Government that contains the strategy developed under subsection (a) and includes implementing guidance to such departments and agencies.

(c) RELATION TO AGENCY PRIORITY GOALS AND ANNUAL BUDGET.—

(1) AGENCY PRIORITY GOALS.—In identifying agency priority goals under section 1120(b) of title 31, United States Code, for each appropriate department and agency of the United States Government, the head of such department or agency, or as otherwise determined by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, shall take into consideration the strategy developed under subsection (a) and the Presidential Policy Directive issued under subsection (b).

(2) ANNUAL BUDGET.—The President shall, acting through the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, ensure that the annual budget submitted to Congress under section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, includes a separate section that clearly highlights programs and projects that are being funded in the annual budget that relate to the strategy developed under subsection (a) and the Presidential Policy Directive issued under subsection (b).

AMENDMENT NO. 1908

(Purpose: To provide for a small business procurement ombudsman)

At the end of subtitle E of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 884. SMALL BUSINESS PROCUREMENT OMBUDSMAN.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The small business offices in the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the military departments shall serve as intermediaries between small businesses and contracting officials prior to the award of contracts in cases where a small business prospective contractor notifies the small business office that it has reason to believe that the contracting process has been modified to preclude a small business from bidding on the contract or would give another contractor an unfair competitive advantage.

(b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to preclude a contractor from exercising the right to initiate a bid protest under a contract.

AMENDMENT NO. 1678

(Purpose: To provide for the more accurate and complete enumeration of members of the Armed Forces in any tabulation of total population by the Secretary of Commerce)

At the appropriate place, insert the following:

SEC. ____ . IMPROVED ENUMERATION OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES IN ANY TABULATION OF TOTAL POPULATION BY SECRETARY OF COMMERCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 141 of title 13, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (g) as subsection (h); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (f) the following:

“(g) Effective beginning with the 2020 decennial census of population, in taking any tabulation of total population by States, the Secretary shall take appropriate measures to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that all members of the Armed Forces deployed abroad on the date of taking such tabulation are—

“(1) fully and accurately counted; and
“(2) properly attributed to the State in which their permanent duty station or homeport is located on such date.”.

(b) CONSTRUCTION.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall not be construed to affect the residency status of any member of the Armed Forces under any provision of law other than title 13, United States Code.

AMENDMENT NO. 1811

(Purpose: To provide for sustainment enhancement)

On page 375, line 4, insert “, which includes a sustainment strategy,” after “strategy”.

On page 377, line 13, strike “(d) In this section” and insert the following:

“(9) A sustainment strategy which includes all aspects of the total life cycle management of the weapon system, including product support, logistics, product support engineering, supply chain integration, maintenance, acquisition logistics, and all aspects of software sustainment.

“(d) INDEPENDENT COST ESTIMATE.—The Director of Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation shall perform an evaluation of the

sustainment portion of the acquisition strategy required by subsection (c)(9) prior to the Milestone B decision.

“(e) In this section

On page 410, after line 21, add the following:

SEC. 852. SUSTAINMENT ENHANCEMENT.

(a) ASSESSMENT EXPANSION OF FUNCTIONS OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR LOGISTICS AND MATERIEL READINESS TO INCLUDE SUSTAINMENT FUNCTIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the congressional defense committees a report setting forth an assessment of the feasibility and advisability of—

(1) assigning to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Logistics and Materiel Readiness—

(A) functions relating to the sustainment strategy required under section 2431a(c)(9) of Title 10, United States Code, as added by section 841 of this Act; and

(B) functions relating to manufacturing and industrial base policy currently being carried out within the Office of the Secretary of Defense; and

(2) redesignating such Assistant Secretary (with such functions so assigned and together with the current logistics and materiel readiness functions of such Assistant Secretary) as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Sustainment.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) the Department of Defense does not place sufficient emphasis on sustainment of a weapon system during the entire acquisition process; and

(2) the Department of Defense should address this deficiency and ensure that all aspect of weapon system sustainment are carefully considered throughout the entire Integrated Defense Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics Life Cycle Management System.

AMENDMENT NO. 1825

(Purpose: To authorize appropriations for national security aspects of the Merchant Marine for fiscal years 2016 and 2017, and for other purposes.)

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of June 8, 2015, under “Text of Amendments.”)

AMENDMENT NO. 2020

(Purpose: To demonstrate the effects of a method to facilitate the disposal of excess Army property and management of underutilized and unutilized property by providing an exemption from certain requirements for off-site use and off-site removal only of non-mobile properties)

At the end of subtitle B of title XXVIII, add the following:

SEC. 2815. EXEMPTION OF ARMY OFF-SITE USE AND OFF-SITE REMOVAL ONLY NON-MOBILE PROPERTIES FROM CERTAIN EXCESS PROPERTY DISPOSAL REQUIREMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Excess or unutilized or underutilized non-mobile property of the Army that is situated on non-excess land shall be exempt from the requirements of title V of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11411 et seq.) upon a determination by the Secretary of the Army that—

(1) the property is not feasible to relocate;

(2) the property is located in an area to which the general public is denied access in the interest of national security; and

(3) the exemption would facilitate the efficient disposal of excess property or result in more efficient real property management.

(b) CONSULTATION.—Before making an initial determination under the authority provided under subsection (a), and periodically

thereafter, the Secretary of the Army shall consult with the Executive Director of the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness on types of non-mobile properties that may be feasible for relocation and suitable to assist the homeless.

(b) SUNSET.—The authority under subsection (a) shall expire on September 30, 2017.

AMENDMENT NO. 2050, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To require a report on the security relationship between the United States and the Republic of Cyprus)

At the end of subtitle F of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 1274. REPORT ON THE SECURITY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of State shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report on the security relationship between the United States and the Republic of Cyprus.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required under subsection (a) shall include the following elements:

(1) A description of ongoing military and security cooperation between the United States and the Republic of Cyprus.

(2) A discussion of potential steps for enhancing the bilateral security relationship between the United States and Cyprus, including steps to enhance the military and security capabilities of the Republic of Cyprus.

(3) An analysis of the effect on the bilateral security relationship of the United States policy to deny applications for licenses and other approvals for the export of defense articles and defense services to the armed forces of Cyprus.

(4) An analysis of the extent to which such United States policy is consistent with overall United States security and policy objectives in the region.

(5) An assessment of the potential impact of lifting such United States policy.

(c) DEFINITION.—In this section, the term “appropriate congressional committees” means—

(1) the congressional defense committees; and

(2) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.

AMENDMENT NO. 1474

(Purpose: To propose an alternative to section 1204, relating to the National Guard State Partnership Program)

Strike section 1204 and insert the following:

SEC. 1204. PERMANENCE AND MODIFICATION OF AUTHORITIES RELATING TO NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORITY.—Subsection (a)(1) of section 1205 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113-66; 127 Stat. 897; 32 U.S.C. 107 note) is amended by adding at the end before the period the following: “to support the national interests and security cooperation goals and objectives of the United States, including applicable policy and guidelines for United States security sector assistance”.

(b) LIMITATION.—Subsection (b) of such section is amended by inserting “that is not” after “an activity that the Secretary of Defense determines is a matter”.

(c) PROCEDURES.—Such section, as so amended, 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:

“(c) PROCEDURES.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief of the National Guard Bureau shall—

“(A) establish, maintain, and update as appropriate a list of core competencies to support each program established under subsection (a), collectively and for each State and territory, and shall submit for approval to the Secretary of Defense the list of core competencies and additional information needed to make use of such core competencies; and

“(B) designate a director for each State and territory who shall 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.

“(2) MILITARY-TO-CIVILIAN CORE COMPETENCIES.—The Secretary of Defense, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, may conduct an activity under a program established under subsection (a) relating to military-to-civilian core competencies.”.

(d) NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM FUND.—Subsection (e) of such section (as redesignated) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(3) NATIONAL GUARD STATE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM FUND.—

“(A) ESTABLISHMENT.—

“(i) BOOKS OF DOD.—Except as provided in clause (ii), the Secretary of Defense shall establish on the books of the Department of Defense a National Guard State Partnership Program Fund.

“(ii) BOOKS OF TREASURY.—If not later than February 1, 2016, the Secretary determines and reports to the appropriate congressional committees that in the opinion of the Secretary a fund such as the Fund described in clause (i) should be established on the books of the Department of the Treasury, the Secretary of the Treasury shall establish on the books of the Treasury on that date a Fund to be known as the National Guard State Partnership Program Fund.

“(B) CREDITS.—In administering the Fund established under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall, to the extent the Secretary determines it to be appropriate, provide for the following amounts to be credited to the Fund:

“(i) Amounts authorized and appropriated to carry out operations under this section.

“(ii) Amounts that the Secretary of Defense transfers, in such amounts as provided in appropriations Acts, to the Fund from amounts authorized and appropriated to the Department of Defense, including amounts authorized to be appropriated for the Army National Guard and the Air National Guard.

“(C) INCLUSION IN ANNUAL BUDGET.—The President shall include the Fund established under subparagraph (A) in the budget that the President submits to Congress under section 1105(a) of title 31, United States Code, for each fiscal year in which the authority under subsection (a) is in effect.”.

(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—Paragraph (2)(B) of subsection (f) of such section (as redesignated) 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).

“(vii) The list of core competencies required by subsection (c)(1) and any update to any changes to the list of core competencies required by subsection (c)(1).”.

(f) DEFINITIONS.—Subsection (h) of such section (as redesignated) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking subparagraphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following:

“(A) the congressional defense committees; and

“(B) the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate and the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives.”;

(2) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3);

(3) by inserting after paragraph (1) (as amended) the following:

“(2) CORE COMPETENCIES.—The term ‘core competencies’ means military-to-military and military-to-civilian skills and capabilities of the National Guard, consistent with the roles and missions of the Armed Forces as established by the Secretary of Defense.”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) STATE.—The term ‘State’ means each of the several States and the District of Columbia.

“(5) TERRITORY.—The term ‘territory’ means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.”.

(g) PERMANENT AUTHORITY.—Such section is further amended by striking subsection (i).

AMENDMENT NO. 1901

(Purpose: To require reporting on foreign procurements)

At the end of subtitle E of title VIII, add the following:

SEC. 884. ANNUAL REPORT ON FOREIGN PROCUREMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 137 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

“§ 2338. Reporting on foreign purchases

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the end of fiscal year 2016, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the appropriate congressional defense committees a report listing specific procurements by the Department of Defense in that fiscal year of articles, materials, or supplies valued greater than \$5,000,000, indexed to inflation, using the exception under section 8302(a)(2)(A) of title 41. This report may be submitted as part of the report required under section 8305 of such title.

“(b) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term ‘appropriate congressional committees’ means the congressional defense committees, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections at the beginning of chapter 137 of title 10, United States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 2337 the following new item:

“2338. Reporting on foreign purchases.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 1902

(Purpose: To require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on problem gambling among members of the Armed Forces)

At the end of subtitle C of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 738. COMPTROLLER GENERAL STUDY ON GAMBLING AND PROBLEM GAMBLING BEHAVIOR AMONG MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on gaming facilities at military installations and problem gambling among members of the Armed Forces.

(b) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The study conducted under subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) With respect to gaming facilities at military installations, disaggregated by each branch of the Armed Forces—

(A) the number, type, and location of such gaming facilities;

(B) the total amount of cash flow through such gaming facilities; and

(C) the amount of revenue generated by such gaming facilities for morale, welfare, and recreation programs of the Department of Defense.

(2) An assessment of the prevalence of and particular risks for problem gambling among members of the Armed Forces, including such recommendations for policies and programs to be carried out by the Department to address problem gambling as the Secretary considers appropriate.

(3) An assessment of the ability and capacity of military health care personnel to adequately diagnose and provide dedicated treatment for problem gambling, including—

(A) a comparison of treatment programs of the Department for alcohol abuse, illegal substance abuse, and tobacco addiction with treatment programs of the Department for problem gambling; and

(B) an assessment of whether additional training for military health care personnel on providing treatment for problem gambling would be beneficial.

(4) An assessment of the financial counseling and related services that are available to members of the Armed Forces and their dependents who are impacted by problem gambling.

(c) REPORT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report on the results of the study conducted under subsection (a).

(2) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

AMENDMENT NO. 1563

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to jointly submit to Congress a report on the implementation of new or updated electronic health records in certain environments)

At the end of subtitle C of title VII, add the following:

SEC. 738. REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF DATA SECURITY AND TRANSMISSION STANDARDS FOR ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than June 1, 2016, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly submit to Congress a report on the standards for security and transmission of data to be implemented by the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs in deploying the new or updated, as the case may be, electronic health record system of each such Department (required to be deployed by each such Department under section 713 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113-66; 10 U.S.C. 1071 note)) at military installations and in field environments.

(b) TRANSMISSION OF DATA.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include information on standards for transmission of data between the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs and standards for transmission of data between each such Department and private sector entities.

AMENDMENT NO. 1703

(Purpose: To authorize the provision of post-traumatic stress disorder training to military and security forces of the Government of Ukraine)

On page 636, between lines 12 and 13, insert the following:

(10) Training and best practices to identify and treat post-traumatic stress disorder among Ukrainian Armed Forces and National Guard personnel.

AMENDMENT NO. 1944, AS MODIFIED

(Purpose: To reform and improve personnel security, insider threat detection and prevention, and physical security)

At the end of subtitle G of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1085. REFORM AND IMPROVEMENT OF PERSONNEL SECURITY, INSIDER THREAT DETECTION AND PREVENTION, AND PHYSICAL SECURITY.

(a) PERSONNEL SECURITY AND INSIDER THREAT PROTECTION IN DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—

(1) PLANS AND SCHEDULES.—Consistent with the Memorandum of the Secretary of Defense dated March 18, 2014, regarding the recommendations of the reviews of the Washington Navy Yard shooting, the Secretary of Defense shall develop plans and schedules—

(A) to implement a continuous evaluation capability for the national security population for which clearance adjudications are conducted by the Department of Defense Central Adjudication Facility, in coordination with the Suitability Executive Agent, the Security Executive Agent, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget;

(B) to produce a Department-wide insider threat strategy and implementation plan, which includes—

(i) resourcing for the Defense Insider Threat Management and Analysis Center (DITMAC) and component insider threat programs, and

(ii) alignment of insider threat protection programs with continuous evaluation capabilities and processes for personnel security;

(C) to centralize the authority, accountability, and programmatic integration responsibilities, including fiscal control, for personnel security and insider threat protection under the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence;

(D) to align the Department’s consolidated Central Adjudication Facility under the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence;

(E) to develop a defense security enterprise reform investment strategy to ensure a consistent, long-term focus on funding to strengthen all of the Department’s security and insider threat programs, policies, functions, and information technology capabilities, including detecting threat behaviors conveyed in the cyber domain, in a manner that keeps pace with evolving threats and risks;

(F) to resource and expedite deployment of the Identity Management Enterprise Services Architecture (IMESA); and

(G) to implement the recommendations contained in the study conducted by the Director of Cost Analysis and Program Evaluation required by section 907 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2014 (Public Law 113-66; 10 U.S.C. 1564 note), including, specifically, the recommendations to centrally manage and regulate Department of Defense requests for personnel security background investigations.

(2) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing the plans and schedules required under paragraph (1).

(b) PHYSICAL AND LOGICAL ACCESS.—Not later than 270 days after the date of the enactment of this Act—

(1) the Secretary of Defense shall define physical and logical access standards, capabilities, and processes applicable to all personnel with access to Department of Defense installations and information technology systems, including—

(A) periodic or regularized background or records checks appropriate to the type of physical or logical access involved, the security level, the category of individuals authorized, and the level of access to be granted;

(B) standards and methods for verifying the identity of individuals seeking access; and

(C) electronic attribute-based access controls that are appropriate for the type of access and facility or information technology system involved;

(2) the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and the Chair of the Performance Accountability Council, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, and the Administrator of General Services, and in consultation with representatives from stakeholder organizations, shall design a capability to share and apply electronic identity information across the Government to enable real-time, risk-managed physical and logical access decisions; and

(3) the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, in conjunction with the Director of the Office of Personnel Management and in consultation with representatives from stakeholder organizations, shall establish investigative and adjudicative standards for the periodic or regularized reevaluation of the eligibility of an individual to retain credentials issued pursuant to Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (dated August 27, 2004), as appropriate, but not less frequently than the authorization period of the issued credentials.

(c) SECURITY ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget shall—

(1) formalize the Security, Suitability, and Credentialing Line of Business;

(2) submit a report to the appropriate congressional committee that describes plans—

(A) for oversight by the Office of Management and Budget of activities of the executive branch of the Government for personnel security, suitability, and credentialing;

(B) to designate enterprise shared services to optimize investments;

(C) to define and implement data standards to support common electronic access to critical Government records; and

(D) to reduce the burden placed on Government data providers by centralizing requests for records access and ensuring proper sharing of the data with appropriate investigative and adjudicative elements.

(d) RECIPROCITY MANAGEMENT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Chair of the Performance Accountability Council shall ensure that—

(1) a centralized system is available to serve as the reciprocity management system for the Federal Government; and

(2) the centralized system described in paragraph (1) is aligned with, and incorporates results from, continuous evaluation and other enterprise reform initiatives.

(e) REPORTING REQUIREMENTS IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Chair of the Performance Accountability Council, in coordination with the Security Executive Agent, the Suitability Executive Agent, and the Secretary of Defense, shall jointly develop a plan to—

(1) implement the Security Executive Agent Directive on common, standardized employee and contractor security reporting requirements;

(2) establish and implement uniform reporting requirements for employees and Federal contractors, according to risk, relative to the safety of the workforce and protection of the most sensitive information of the Government; and

(3) ensure that reported information is shared appropriately.

(f) ACCESS TO CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORDS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND OTHER PURPOSES.—

(1) DEFINITION.—Section 9101(a) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(7) The terms ‘Security Executive Agent’ and ‘Suitability Executive Agent’ mean the Security Executive Agent and the Suitability Executive Agent, respectively, established under Executive Order 13467 (73 Fed. Reg. 38103), or any successor thereto.”.

(2) COVERED AGENCIES.—Section 9101(a)(6) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(G) The Department of Homeland Security.

“(H) The Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

“(I) An Executive agency that—

“(i) is authorized to conduct background investigations under a Federal statute; or

“(ii) is delegated authority to conduct background investigations in accordance with procedures established by the Security Executive Agent or the Suitability Executive Agent under subsection (b) or (c)(iv) of section 2.3 of Executive Order 13467 (73 Fed. Reg. 38103), or any successor thereto.

“(J) A contractor that conducts a background investigation on behalf of an agency described in subparagraphs (A) through (I).”.

(3) APPLICABLE PURPOSES OF INVESTIGATIONS.—Section 9101(b)(1) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) through (D) as clauses (i) through (iv), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly;

(B) in the matter preceding clause (i), as redesignated—

(i) by striking “the head of”;

(ii) by inserting “all” before “criminal history record information”; and

(iii) by striking “for the purpose of determining eligibility for any of the following:” and inserting “, in accordance with Federal Investigative Standards jointly promulgated by the Suitability Executive Agent and Security Executive Agent, for the purpose of—

“(A) determining eligibility for—”;

(C) in clause (i), as redesignated—

(i) by striking “Access” and inserting “access”; and

(ii) by striking the period and inserting a semicolon;

(D) in clause (ii), as redesignated—

(i) by striking “Assignment” and inserting “assignment”; and

(ii) by striking the period and inserting “or positions;”;

(E) in clause (iii), as redesignated—

(i) by striking “Acceptance” and inserting “acceptance”; and

(ii) by striking the period and inserting “; or”;

(F) in clause (iv), as redesignated—

(i) by striking “Appointment” and inserting “appointment”; and

(ii) by striking “or a critical or sensitive position”; and

(iii) by striking the period and inserting “; or”; and

(G) by adding at the end the following:

“(B) conducting a basic suitability or fitness assessment for Federal or contractor

employees, using Federal Investigative Standards jointly promulgated by the Security Executive Agent and the Suitability Executive Agent in accordance with—

“(i) Executive Order 13467 (73 Fed. Reg. 38103), or any successor thereto; and

“(ii) the Office of Management and Budget Memorandum ‘Assignment of Functions Relating to Coverage of Contractor Employee Fitness in the Federal Investigative Standards’, dated December 6, 2012;

“(C) credentialing under the Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12 (dated August 27, 2004); and

“(D) Federal Aviation Administration checks required under—

“(i) the Federal Aviation Administration Drug Enforcement Assistance Act of 1988 (subtitle E of title VII of Public Law 100-690; 102 Stat. 4424) and the amendments made by that Act; or

“(ii) section 44710 of title 49.”.

(4) BIOMETRIC AND BIOGRAPHIC SEARCHES.—Section 9101(b)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended to read as follows:

“(2)(A) A State central criminal history record depository shall allow a covered agency to conduct both biometric and biographic searches of criminal history record information.

“(B) Nothing in subparagraph (A) shall be construed to prohibit the Federal Bureau of Investigation from requiring a request for criminal history record information to be accompanied by the fingerprints of the individual who is the subject of the request.”.

(5) USE OF MOST COST-EFFECTIVE SYSTEM.—Section 9101(e) of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(6) If a criminal justice agency is able to provide the same information through more than 1 system described in paragraph (1), a covered agency may request information under subsection (b) from the criminal justice agency, and require the criminal justice agency to provide the information, using the system that is most cost-effective for the Federal Government.”.

(6) SEALED OR EXPUNGED RECORDS; JUVENILE RECORDS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Section 9101(a)(2) of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(i) in the first sentence, by inserting before the period the following: “, and includes any analogous juvenile records”; and

(ii) by striking the third sentence and inserting the following: “The term includes those records of a State or locality sealed pursuant to law if such records are accessible by State and local criminal justice agencies for the purpose of conducting background checks.”.

(B) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that the Federal Government should not uniformly reject applicants for employment with the Federal Government or Federal contractors based on—

(i) sealed or expunged criminal records; or

(ii) juvenile records.

(7) INTERACTION WITH LAW ENFORCEMENT AND INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES ABROAD.—Section 9101 of title 5, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) Upon request by a covered agency and in accordance with the applicable provisions of this section, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Overseas Citizens Services shall make available criminal history record information collected by the Deputy Assistant Secretary with respect to an individual who is under investigation by the covered agency regarding any interaction of the individual with a law enforcement agency or intelligence agency of a foreign country.”.

(8) CLARIFICATION OF SECURITY REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTRACTORS CONDUCTING BACKGROUND INVESTIGATIONS.—Section 9101 of

title 5, United States Code, as amended by this subsection, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(h) If a contractor described in subsection (a)(6)(J) uses an automated information delivery system to request criminal history record information, the contractor shall comply with any necessary security requirements for access to that system.”.

(9) CLARIFICATION REGARDING ADVERSE ACTIONS.—Section 7512 of title 5, United States Code, is amended—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking “or”;

(B) in subparagraph (E), by striking the period and inserting “, or”;

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(F) a suitability action taken by the Office under regulations prescribed by the Office, subject to the rules prescribed by the President under this title for the administration of the competitive service.”.

(10) ANNUAL REPORT BY SUITABILITY AND SECURITY CLEARANCE PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY COUNCIL.—Section 9101 of title 5, United States Code, as amended by this subsection, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(i) The Suitability and Security Clearance Performance Accountability Council established under Executive Order 13467 (73 Fed. Reg. 38103), or any successor thereto, shall submit to the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Select Committee on Intelligence of the Senate, and the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, the Committee on Appropriations, and the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence of the House of Representatives, an annual report that—

“(1) describes efforts of the Council to integrate Federal, State, and local systems for sharing criminal history record information;

“(2) analyzes the extent and effectiveness of Federal education programs regarding criminal history record information;

“(3) provides an update on the implementation of best practices for sharing criminal history record information, including ongoing limitations experienced by investigators working for or on behalf of a covered agency with respect to access to State and local criminal history record information; and

“(4) provides a description of limitations on the sharing of information relevant to a background investigation, other than criminal history record information, between—

“(A) investigators working for or on behalf of a covered agency; and

“(B) State and local law enforcement agencies.”.

(11) GAO REPORT ON ENHANCING INTEROPERABILITY AND REDUCING REDUNDANCY IN FEDERAL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION ACCESS CONTROL, BACKGROUND CHECK, AND CREDENTIALING STANDARDS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the congressional defense committees, the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the background check, access control, and credentialing requirements of Federal programs for the protection of critical infrastructure and key resources.

(B) CONTENTS.—The Comptroller General shall include in the report required under subparagraph (A)—

(i) a summary of the major characteristics of each such Federal program, including the types of infrastructure and resources covered;

(ii) a comparison of the requirements, whether mandatory or voluntary in nature, for regulated entities under each such program to—

(I) conduct background checks on employees, contractors, and other individuals;

(II) adjudicate the results of a background check, including the utilization of a standardized set of disqualifying offenses or the consideration of minor, non-violent, or juvenile offenses; and

(III) establish access control systems to deter unauthorized access, or provide a security credential for any level of access to a covered facility or resource;

(iii) a review of any efforts that the Screening Coordination Office of the Department of Homeland Security has undertaken or plans to undertake to harmonize or standardize background check, access control, or credentialing requirements for critical infrastructure and key resource protection programs overseen by the Department; and

(iv) recommendations, developed in consultation with appropriate stakeholders, regarding—

(I) enhancing the interoperability of security credentials across critical infrastructure and key resource protection programs;

(II) eliminating the need for redundant background checks or credentials across existing critical infrastructure and key resource protection programs;

(III) harmonizing, where appropriate, the standards for identifying potentially disqualifying criminal offenses and the weight assigned to minor, nonviolent, or juvenile offenses in adjudicating the results of a completed background check; and

(IV) the development of common, risk-based standards with respect to the background check, access control, and security credentialing requirements for critical infrastructure and key resource protection programs.

(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

(1) the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(A) the congressional defense committees;

(B) the Select Committee on Intelligence and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

(C) the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives; and

(2) the term “Performance Accountability Council” means the Suitability and Security Clearance Performance Accountability Council established under Executive Order 13467 (73 Fed. Reg. 38103), or any successor thereto.

AMENDMENT NO. 1747

(Purpose: To require the Department of Defense to support the security of Afghan women and girls during and after 2015)

At the end of subtitle A of title XII, add the following:

SEC. 1209. SUPPORT FOR SECURITY OF AFGHAN WOMEN AND GIRLS.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Through the sacrifice and dedication of members of the Armed Forces, civilian personnel, and our Afghan partners as well as the American people’s generous investment, oppressive Taliban rule has given way to a nascent democracy in Afghanistan. It is in our national security interest to help prevent Afghanistan from ever again becoming a safe haven and training ground for international terrorism and to solidify and preserve the gains our men and women in uniform fought so hard to establish.

(2) The United States through its National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security

has made firm commitments to support the human rights of the women and girls of Afghanistan. The National Action Plan states that “the engagement and protection of women as agents of peace and stability will be central to United States efforts to promote security, prevent, respond to, and resolve conflict, and rebuild societies”.

(3) As stated in the Department of Defense’s October 2014 Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, the Department of Defense and the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) “maintain a robust program dedicated to improving the recruitment, retention, and treatment of women in the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and to improving the status of Afghan women in general”.

(4) According to the Department of Defense’s October 2014 Report on Progress Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan, the “Afghan MoI showed significant support for women in the MoI and is taking steps to protect and empower female police and female MoI staff”. Although some positive steps have been made, progress remains slow to reach the MoI’s goal of recruiting 10,000 women in the Afghan National Police (ANP) in the next 10 years.

(5) According to Inclusive Security, women only make up approximately 1 percent of the Afghan National Police. There are about 2,200 women serving in the police force, fewer than the goal of 5,000 women set by the Government of Afghanistan.

(6) According to the International Crisis Group, there are not enough female police officers to staff all provincial Family Response Units (FRUs). United Nations Assistance Mission Afghanistan and the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees found that “in the absence of Family Response Units or visible women police officers, women victims almost never approach police stations willingly, fearing they will be arrested, their reputations stained or worse”.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS ON PROMOTION OF SECURITY OF AFGHAN WOMEN.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) it is in the national security interests of the United States to prevent Afghanistan from again becoming a safe haven and training ground for international terrorism;

(2) as an important part of a strategy to achieve this objective and to help Afghanistan achieve its full potential, the United States Government should continue to regularly press the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to commit to the meaningful inclusion of women in the political, economic, and security transition process and to ensure that women’s concerns are fully reflected in relevant negotiations;

(3) the United States Government and the Government of Afghanistan should reaffirm their commitment to supporting Afghan civil society, including women’s organizations, as agreed to during the meeting between the International Community and the Government of Afghanistan on the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) in July 2013;

(4) the United States Government should continue to support and encourage efforts to recruit and retain women in the Afghan National Security Forces, who are critical to the success of NATO’s Resolute Support Mission and future Enduring Partnership mission; and

(5) the United States should bid on no less than one gender advisor billet within the Resolute Support Mission Gender Advisory Unit and continue to work with other countries to ensure that the Resolute Support Mission Gender Advisory Unit billets are fully staffed.

(c) PLAN TO PROMOTE SECURITY OF AFGHAN WOMEN.—

(1) **REPORTING REQUIREMENT.**—The Secretary of Defense, in conjunction with the Secretary of State, shall include in the report required under section 1225 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015 (Public Law 113-291; 128 Stat. 3550)—

(A) an assessment of the security of Afghan women and girls, including information regarding efforts to increase the recruitment and retention of women in the ANSF; and

(B) an assessment of the implementation of the plans for the recruitment, integration, retention, training, treatment, and provision of appropriate facilities and transportation for women in the ANSF, including the challenges associated with such implementation and the steps being taken to address those challenges.

(2) **PLAN REQUIRED.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Defense shall, in coordination with the Secretary of State, to the extent practicable, support the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan to promote the security of Afghan women and girls during and after the security transition process through the development and implementation by the Government of Afghanistan of an Afghan-led plan that should include the elements described in this paragraph.

(B) **TRAINING.**—The Secretary of Defense, working with the NATO-led Resolute Support mission should encourage the Government of Afghanistan to develop—

(i) measures for the evaluation of the effectiveness of existing training for Afghan National Security Forces on this issue;

(ii) a plan to increase the number of female security officers specifically trained to address cases of gender-based violence, including ensuring the Afghan National Police’s Family Response Units (FRUs) have the necessary resources and are available to women across Afghanistan;

(iii) mechanisms to enhance the capacity for units of National Police’s Family Response Units to fulfill their mandate as well as indicators measuring the operational effectiveness of these units;

(iv) a plan to address the development of accountability mechanisms for ANA and ANP personnel who violate codes of conduct related to the human rights of women and girls, including female members of the ANSF; and

(v) a plan to develop training for the ANA and the ANP to increase awareness and responsiveness among ANA and ANP personnel regarding the unique security challenges women confront when serving in those forces.

(C) **ENROLLMENT AND TREATMENT.**—The Secretary of Defense, in cooperation with the Afghan Ministries of Defense and Interior, shall seek to assist the Government of Afghanistan in including as part of the plan developed under subparagraph (A) the development and implementation of a plan to increase the number of female members of the ANA and ANP and to promote their equal treatment, including through such steps as providing appropriate equipment, modifying facilities, and ensuring literacy and gender awareness training for recruits.

(D) **ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.**—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Of the funds available to the Department of Defense for the Afghan Security Forces Fund for Fiscal Year 2016, no less than \$10,000,000 should be used for the recruitment, integration, retention, training, and treatment of women in the ANSF as well as the recruitment, training, and contracting of female security personnel for future elections.

(ii) **TYPES OF PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES.**—Such programs and activities may include—

(I) efforts to recruit women into the ANSF, including the special operations forces;

(II) programs and activities of the Afghan Ministry of Defense Directorate of Human Rights and Gender Integration and the Afghan Ministry of Interior Office of Human Rights, Gender and Child Rights;

(III) development and dissemination of gender and human rights educational and training materials and programs within the Afghan Ministry of Defense and the Afghan Ministry of Interior;

(IV) efforts to address harassment and violence against women within the ANSF;

(V) improvements to infrastructure that address the requirements of women serving in the ANSF, including appropriate equipment for female security and police forces, and transportation for policewomen to their station

(VI) support for ANP Family Response Units; and

(VII) security provisions for high-profile female police and army officers.

AMENDMENT NO. 2006

(Purpose: Relating to the policies of the Department of Defense on the travel of next of kin to participate in the dignified transfer of remains of members of the Armed Forces and civilian employees of the Department of Defense who die overseas)

At the end of subtitle C of title VI, add the following:

SEC. 622. POLICIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ON TRAVEL OF NEXT OF KIN TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DIGNIFIED TRANSFER OF REMAINS OF MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND CIVILIAN EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE WHO DIE OVERSEAS.

(a) **REVIEW OF POLICIES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Defense shall carry out a review of the current policies of the Department of Defense on the travel for next of kin to participate in the dignified transfer of remains of members of the Armed Forces and civilian employees of the Department who die overseas.

(2) **ELEMENTS.**—The review required by this subsection shall include the following:

(A) An assessment of the changes to Department instructions and Federal regulations necessary to provide Government funded travel to the next of kin to participate in the dignified transfer of remains of members of the Armed Forces and civilian employees of the Department who die overseas, regardless whether the death occurred in a combat area or a non-combat area.

(B) An action plan and timeline for making the changes described in subparagraph (A).

(b) **MODIFICATION OF POLICIES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Except as provided in paragraph (2), not later than February 1, 2016, the Secretary of Defense shall take appropriate actions to modify the policies of the Department in order to provide Government funded travel for the next of kin to participate in the dignified transfer of remains of members of the Armed Forces and civilian employees of the Department of Defense who die overseas, regardless whether the death occurs in a combat area or a non-combat area.

(2) **EXCEPTION.**—The Secretary is not required to modify the policies of the Department as described in paragraph (1) if, by not later than March 1, 2016, the Secretary certifies, in writing, to the congressional defense committees that such action is not in the best interest of the United States. The certification shall include the following:

(A) An assessment and reevaluation by the Secretary of the rational for excluding the next of kin from Government funded travel if the death of a member of the Armed Forces

or civilian employee of the Department overseas occurs in a non-combat area.

(B) Recommendations for alternative plans to ensure that the next of kin of members of the Armed Forces and civilian employees of the Department who die overseas in a non-combat area may participate in the dignified transfer of the remains of the deceased at Dover Port Mortuary, including through the actions of appropriate non-governmental organizations.

AMENDMENT NO. 1931

(Purpose: To improve the annual reports of the Chief of the National Guard Bureau on the ability of the National Guard to meet its mission)

At the end of subtitle F of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1065. ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU ON THE ABILITY OF THE NATIONAL GUARD TO MEETS ITS MISSIONS.

Section 10504(a) of title 10, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting “(1)” before “The Chief of the National Guard Bureau”;

(2) in paragraph (1), as so designated, by striking “, through the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force.”;

(3) by striking the second sentence; and

(4) by adding at the end the following new paragraphs:

“(2) Each report shall include the following:

“(A) An assessment, prepared in conjunction with the Secretaries of the Army and the Air Force, of the ability of the National Guard to carry out its Federal missions.

“(B) An assessment, prepared in conjunction with the chief executive officers of the States and territories, of the ability of the National Guard to carry out emergency support functions of the National Response Framework.

“(3) Each report may be submitted in classified and unclassified versions.”.

AMENDMENT NO. 2011

(Purpose: To provide for cooperation between the United States and Israel on anti-tunnel capabilities)

Strike section 1272 and insert the following:

SEC. 1272. UNITED STATES-ISRAEL ANTI-TUNNEL COOPERATION.

(a) **FINDINGS.**—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Tunnels can be used for criminal purposes, such as smuggling drugs, weapons, or humans, or for terrorist or military purposes, such as launching surprise attacks or detonating explosives underneath civilian or military infrastructure.

(2) Tunnels have been a growing threat on the southern border of the United States for years.

(3) In the conflict in Gaza in 2014, terrorists used tunnels to conduct attacks against Israel.

(b) **SENSE OF CONGRESS.**—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) it is in the national security interests of the United States to develop technology to detect and counter tunnels, and the best way to do this is to partner with other affected countries;

(2) the Administration should, on a joint basis with Israel, carry out research, development, test, and evaluation of anti-tunnel capabilities to detect, map, and neutralize underground tunnels that threaten the United States or Israel; and

(3) the Administration should use developed anti-tunnel capabilities to better protect the United States and deployed United States military personnel.

(c) **AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH ANTI-TUNNEL CAPABILITIES PROGRAM WITH ISRAEL.**—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense, upon request of the Ministry of Defense of Israel and in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence, is authorized to carry out research, development, test, and evaluation, on a joint basis with Israel, to establish anti-tunnel capabilities to detect, map, and neutralize underground tunnels that threaten the United States or Israel. Such authority includes authority to construct facilities and install equipment necessary to carry out research, development, test, and evaluation so authorized. Any activities carried out pursuant to such authority shall be conducted in a manner that appropriately protects sensitive information and United States and Israel national security interests.

(2) REPORT.—The activities described in paragraph (1) and subsection (d) may be carried out after the Secretary of Defense submits to the appropriate committees of Congress a report setting forth the following:

(A) A memorandum of agreement between the United States and Israel regarding sharing of research and development costs for the capabilities described in paragraph (1), and any supporting documents.

(B) A certification that the memorandum of agreement—

(i) requires sharing of costs of projects, including in-kind support, between the United States and Israel;

(ii) establishes a framework to negotiate the rights to any intellectual property developed under the memorandum of agreement; and

(iii) requires the United States Government to receive quarterly reports on expenditure of funds, if any, by the Government of Israel, including a description of what the funds have been used for, when funds were expended, and an identification of entities that expended the funds.

(d) ASSISTANCE IN CONNECTION WITH PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense is authorized to provide procurement, maintenance, and sustainment assistance to Israel in support of the anti-tunnel capabilities research, development, test, and evaluation activities authorized in subsection (c)(1).

(2) REPORT.—Assistance may not be provided under paragraph (1) until 15 days after the Secretary submits to the appropriate committees of Congress a report setting forth a detailed description of the assistance to be provided.

(3) MATCHING CONTRIBUTION.—Assistance may not be provided under this subsection unless the Government of Israel contributes an amount not less than the amount of assistance to be so provided to the program, project, or activity for which the assistance is to be so provided.

(e) QUARTERLY REPORTS.—The Secretary of Defense shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress on a quarterly basis a report that contains a copy of the most recent quarterly report provided by the Government of Israel to the Department of Defense pursuant to subsection (c)(2)(B)(iii).

(f) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CONGRESS DEFINED.—In this section, the term “appropriate committees of Congress” means—

(1) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Homeland Security, and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate; and

(2) the Committee on Armed Services, the Committee on Foreign Affairs, the Committee on Homeland Security, and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

(g) SUNSET.—The authority in this section to carry out activities described in subsection (c), and to provide assistance de-

scribed in subsection (d), shall expire on the date that is three years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

AMENDMENT NO. 1916

(Purpose: To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to designate a construction agent for certain construction projects by the Department of Veterans Affairs)

At the end of subtitle G of title X, add the following:

SEC. 1085. DESIGNATION OF CONSTRUCTION AGENT FOR CERTAIN CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS BY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall seek to enter into an agreement subject to subsections (b), (c), and (e) of section 1535 of title 31, United States Code, with the Army Corps of Engineers or another entity of the Federal Government to serve, on a reimbursable basis, as the construction agent on all construction projects of the Department of Veterans Affairs specifically authorized by Congress after the date of the enactment of this Act that involve a total expenditure of more than \$100,000,000, excluding any acquisition by exchange.

(b) AGREEMENT.—Under the agreement entered into under subsection (a), the construction agent shall provide design, procurement, and construction management services for the construction, alteration, and acquisition of facilities of the Department.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that all postclosure time on H.R. 1735 expire at 1:45 p.m. today, with the time equally divided between the managers or their designees for debate only.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I have asked the members of the committee to convene in the President's Room at 1:30 p.m., if they would, because there is a portion of the bill, the annex, that needs to be approved. We need a quorum for that so that we can move forward with the final vote on the bill.

I also wish to thank all Members on both sides of the aisle for the conduct of this debate in consideration of a very large and very complex piece of legislation.

I especially thank my friend from Rhode Island, who has worked diligently, along with his staff, to see that we arrive at this point. We have a lot of other hurdles to go through, but without getting through this one, we couldn't have been prepared for those that are laid before us before the President puts his signature on this most important piece of legislation.

I yield to my friend from Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. REED. Madam President, I, too, want to commend the chairman and his staff for extraordinarily diligent, cooperative, and careful work. I am pleased to be here to support this block of amendments. As the chairman noted, we are on the verge of passage of the legislation. Then we will be able to move forward and address other issues.

I thank the chairman for his cooperation and his great leadership.

Mr. MCCAIN. Madam President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Mr. CORNYN. Madam President, I congratulate the chairman and ranking member of the Armed Services Committee for this heroic effort, doing, as the chairman said, the most important business we can do as part of the Federal Government; that is, keeping America safe and making sure we keep our commitments to those who volunteer to serve, many in harm's way, to protect our liberties.

In a couple hours, we will vote to pass the Defense authorization bill, and that is an important bipartisan accomplishment. It is just another step in a new Congress which has acted in a bipartisan way to deal with a number of challenges confronting the country.

I am more optimistic today than I have been in a long time that the Senate is finally back to work and Congress is doing what the American people who elected us sent us here to do, and that is to do their work and to represent them to the best of our ability, which is one reason why I have come to the floor to express some of my concerns at what we have heard from the Democratic leadership about their intentions with regard to the next piece of legislation we turn to—the Defense appropriations bill. As we all know, the Democratic leader and some Democrats in his caucus have threatened not to move forward on this Defense appropriations bill.

I want to talk about the consequences in the real world of holding up this Defense appropriations bill and particularly how it will affect my home State of Texas.

Obviously, the Defense appropriations bill will provide the military with resources necessary to meet the significant demands they face and we face as a country around the world but most basically to defend our country and to keep us safe.

This bill provides for training and readiness funds and makes sure our troops are well prepared to carry out any mission that might be assigned to them anywhere in the world.

The appropriations bill provides the money for critical modernization of our aircraft, ships, ground vehicles, and other equipment so that our troops can fight with the best cutting-edge weapons systems at our disposal so they can accomplish their objective.

Perhaps most importantly, this legislation helps make sure our troops and military families enjoy a good quality of life. We have an all-volunteer military, and the family members of those who wear the uniform serve no less than the ones who wear the uniform. So making sure the families of our military members enjoy a good quality of life is very important. We will never be able to repay our troops for all they

have given us, but we can at least provide appropriate benefits to their families to help make their lives a little easier.

This bill also includes funding to actually pay our troops their salary and provides them a modest, well-deserved raise.

Like the Presiding Officer, I am proud of those who serve our Nation and our military and our home States. Nearly 120,000 Texans are serving on Active Duty today, as well as more than 55,000 Guardsmen and Reservists. We have 15 major military installations in Texas, which have more than 168,000 Active and Reserve component servicemembers assigned to them. These world-class bases, posts, air stations, and depots are critical facilities where our troops train for combat and learn the skills they need in order to accomplish their mission and where we maintain essential military equipment. So when I consider the possibility that for a cynical political reason some might decide to block this appropriations bill that actually literally pays the salary of the troops, I am very disappointed. I hope they will reconsider.

These resources we will vote on—starting this afternoon, we will start that process—go to places such as Fort Bliss and Fort Hood, TX, homes to the finest heavy ground combat units in the world.

Fort Bliss in El Paso sits on more than 1 million acres. It is an irreplaceable training range for our troops, and it is the Army's second largest installation by size. It is the proud home of the Army's famed 1st Armored Division. And Fort Hood, which serves as home to both III Corps and the storied 1st Cavalry Division, has more Army brigades than any Army installation in the country.

When I think about Members of the Senate actually considering the possibility of blocking pay for our troops and support for our military, I also think about bases such as Dyess Air Force Base in Abilene, TX. This key base is home to units that have deployed time and time again in recent years in support of combat missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, including the 317th Airlift Group. Dyess is also home to the 7th Bomb Wing, one of only two B-1 strategic bomber wings in the U.S. Air Force. The 7th has been the tip of the spear in the fight against ISIL, conducting airstrikes against the terrorist army in Iraq and in Syria.

We are also proud in my State to boast the Corpus Christi Army Depot, the largest rotary wing repair facility in the world. When our Army helicopters come back from battle, many of them are pretty beat up and barely operable. They typically make a pit stop in Corpus Christi to make sure our battle-tested warfighting equipment is ready for the next challenge.

Between our naval air stations at Corpus Christi and Kingsville, Texas provides the proving ground and crucible for more than 1,000 new Navy and

Marine aviators each year. Shortly after they leave Texas, they find themselves in skies over Iraq or Syria or landing in rough seas, in near-zero visibility, on aircraft carriers bordering hostile shores around the globe. But these bases represent only a fraction of the U.S. military presence in Texas. All of our military installations are integral to making sure our military is prepared, trained, healthy, and ready for action.

The Defense appropriations bill that some have threatened to filibuster in order to extract a negotiation about more government spending makes sure that the servicemembers assigned to those bases and countless others across our Nation have what they need.

We ask a lot of our men and women in uniform. The very least we can do is pass legislation that provides for the training and equipment they need in order to accomplish their mission and to ensure them the quality of life they and their families have so richly earned.

I find it very troubling and, indeed, dumbfounding that some of our colleagues from across the aisle who have already voted overwhelmingly to move forward on the Defense authorization bill would today talk about blocking the necessary appropriations bill to actually carry out that policy that we will pass shortly in the Defense authorization bill.

I believe that to be consistent after such a big vote, as I anticipate we will have on the Defense authorization bill, any notion of blocking the appropriations bill that would actually pay for those policies to be carried out should simply evaporate.

So I hope our colleagues across the aisle—many of whom have said they actually support the policies behind this legislation—will defy their party's leadership and their misguided advice about blocking this legislation in order to extract a negotiation on more government spending and will decide instead to move this legislation forward. The brave men and women in Texas and throughout the country who are fighting on our behalf deserve nothing less. And I hope our colleagues who are even considering for a moment the idea of blocking the funding that would actually help pay our troops will reconsider and cast their vote in support of the troops and not cast their vote in favor of some cynical political strategy which will undermine our support for our troops.

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

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

3RD ANNIVERSARY OF DACA PROGRAM

Mr. HEINRICH. Madam President, 3 years ago, President Obama announced

that DREAMers—young people who were brought to the United States as children—would have the opportunity to apply for temporary protection from deportation through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program or what has become known as DACA.

Today, more than 660,000 young people across this Nation have benefitted from DACA, including more than 7,000 in my home State of New Mexico. These are some of our brightest students and veterans who no longer have to fear deportation. Not only do DREAMers want to earn an education and work, they want to give back to their communities and their country. In fact, I would suggest that DREAMers don't know how to be anything but American.

We hear again and again of the remarkable stories of immigrants overcoming very difficult challenges in the genuine pursuit of a better life. Across the country, there are DREAMers working to become doctors, scientists, lawyers, and engineers. They want to start businesses or teach in classrooms. They want to contribute to America's success.

I had the privilege of meeting these twin sisters who are pictured here, Jazmin and Yazmin, earlier this year. They immigrated to the United States with their mother from Mexico when they were just 3 years old.

As students at Del Norte High School in Albuquerque, Jazmin and Yazmin worked hard to earn good grades, and as juniors and seniors, they took dual credit courses at Central New Mexico Community College.

Jazmin will graduate magna cum laude from the University of New Mexico with a bachelor of business administration, concentrating in finance. She earned an interdisciplinary studies distinction from the University of New Mexico Honors College, and her sister Yazmin would go on to graduate magna cum laude from the University of New Mexico with a bachelor of science in biology and Spanish, a minor in chemistry, and completed the University Honors Program. She received departmental summa cum laude honors.

These two young women are working tirelessly to ensure they have a better future for themselves and their mother.

In August, Jazmin will begin her second year at the University of New Mexico School of Law, and Yazmin will begin her first year at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine.

Given their immigration status, the journey for Jazmin and Yazmin to get to where they are today was anything but easy. They have overcome many hardships, including homelessness and hunger.

After their mother—who is a single mom—suffered a stroke, it was up to them to find work to support their family, cover her medical costs, and pay for their education. To this day, there is another heavy burden these young women carry with them; it is

living with the fear that at any moment their mother, whom they love dearly, will be deported because of her immigration status. Under these circumstances, you have to ask what drives these two bright young women and what keeps them going, and it is simple: They want to give back to their communities.

Jazmin, who is currently a summer law clerk at New Mexico's Center on Law and Poverty, wants to be a lawyer to ensure that every person has equal access to the law.

Yazmin, who is currently a medical assistant at the Casa de Salud Medical Office in the South Valley, wants to be a primary care physician so she can help families gain access to quality health care.

This is who DREAMers are, and I think their stories are absolutely inspiring.

This young man's name is Cesar. He is 26 years old and a DACA recipient.

Cesar and his family moved from Ciudad Juarez to Las Cruces, NM, when he was in the fifth grade.

As a middle and high school student, he earned great grades, and through local scholarships he enrolled at New Mexico State University. He earned a bachelor degree in biology, microbiology, and Spanish, not to mention minors in chemistry and biochemistry.

When he graduated from college in 2011, Cesar couldn't put his degrees to work because of his immigration status. So instead of working in the laboratory, he went to work as a landscaper.

When the President made his DACA announcement, Cesar immediately applied and was approved for deferred action. Because of DACA, Cesar was able to work and earn an income to help pay for graduate school.

This year, Cesar earned his master's degree in biology and a minor in molecular biology from New Mexico State University, where he focused his research on bioinformatics.

Cesar makes it a point to get involved in the local community. He has volunteered at La Casa and helped with the biology graduate organization. He said:

Once you start volunteering, you wish you had more time because you love it so much. It can improve your outlook on everything you're doing.

Cesar's dream is to become a doctor so he can work to help prevent disease. Soon he will take a major step toward that goal. This coming school year, Cesar will be a medical and Ph.D. student at Loyola University in Chicago. "DACA has changed my life," he said. "Within two to three years, I went from working in landscaping to becoming a medical student."

The stories of Cesar, Jazmin, and Yazmin represent what makes this country great. They are inspiring, and there are hundreds of thousands of DREAMers like them across this country.

Immigrants make the United States a more prosperous nation. In New Mex-

ico, our State's remarkable history is rooted in our diversity, our history, and our culture, which has always been enriched by our immigrant communities and their family members.

My own father is an immigrant who came to America from Nazi Germany in the 1930s, and I am sure many of us in this Chamber have immigrant roots in our own families which have contributed to America's success story. We are not a country that kicks out our best and brightest students, and we are not a nation that tears families apart.

The current DACA Program is only a temporary solution. DACA recipients have to renew every 2 years in order to maintain their deferred status, but that is no way to live. It is unfair for these DREAMers to live their lives 2 years at a time. We desperately need robust immigration reform.

Now, let's step back for a moment and remember that the Senate passed a comprehensive, bipartisan immigration bill almost 2 years ago now. That bill would have modernized our immigration system to meet the needs of our economy, provided an accountable pathway to earned citizenship for the undocumented workers currently living in the shadows, including making the DREAM Act the law of the land, and it would have dramatically strengthened security at our borders. Accountable immigration reform received 68 votes in this body and demonstrated the kind of legislation we can pass when we work together.

As a nation, we value the twin promises of freedom and opportunity. Those ideals are important no matter where you were born. However, too many of my Republican colleagues don't see it that way. Several of them want to rescind or even defund DACA and roll back the progress we have made over the past 3 years.

Why would we end such a successful program? What I would say to those who do this is come back to the table and work with us to pass immigration reform. We need pragmatic solutions to fix our broken immigration laws, and we need them now. Let's make the dream a reality after all.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call under rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate be waived with respect to the cloture vote on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2685.

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

TRAGEDY IN CHARLESTON

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I come to the floor to speak about the

terrible news out of Charleston, which is a true tragedy. That an event such as this could occur at a house of worship makes it even worse.

It is always awful when one of these events takes place, but to have it happen at a house of worship makes it even worse. Churches should be a place of refuge, a place where people feel safe and secure, a place of mercy, a place of compassion. The depth of loss these families must be feeling is simply awful.

I want the American people to know the Senate is thinking of the families today and the victims they loved. We are also thinking of the entire congregation at this historic church. We will continue to do so as more about this tragedy is learned in the hours and days to come.

Our hearts go out to the families who have been affected by this awful tragedy.

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. REED. 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.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, after almost 3 weeks, we are completing consideration of the fiscal year 2016 National Defense Authorization Act. Again, I want to thank Senator McCain for what has largely been a bipartisan, serious consideration of issues important to the Department of Defense and to the national security of the United States. He has led the way, initially with a series of very thoughtful hearings with foreign policy experts setting the context for our debate.

Then we listened to our uniformed military leaders and our Defense Department officials. In the process of drafting the legislation, before it went to the subcommittees, there was a collaboration that was inspired by his commitment—which he has always demonstrated—to do what he thought was in the best interest of the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States. His presence and his leadership, has, I think, brought us to this point where we are getting ready to consider a major piece of legislation on behalf of the men and women of the Armed Forces of the United States and of the country.

We have considered many issues. We were briefly sidetracked by the cyber amendment. We all understand that the cyber bill is absolutely critical. In fact, I think it has to be addressed as soon as possible. That is probably the next piece of business we should take up in this Senate. But it was brought up in a procedure—in an unexpected way, in a way in which we could not give it the full consideration it deserves. So, once again, I think we should commit ourselves as a Senate to

bringing up this bill as rapidly as possible—in fact, I would suggest it as the next major piece of legislation.

In the process of considering this National Defense Authorization Act, we brought a bill to the floor which had some very thoughtful and important provisions. Six hundred amendments were filed. We were able to consider many of them, both Republican and Democratic, either through votes on the floor in a very open process or through managers' packages which we put together and approved. We debated on very important issues—interrogation techniques, sexual assault in our military, and U.S. policies in Iraq and elsewhere. I think these debates and votes ensured that this authorization bill is better than it was when it left the committee.

There is, however, one overarching problem that remains with this bill, and it is one that I have persistently pointed to and persistently argued has to be corrected, and it is the fact that the bill is funded through the OCO accounts in a significant way, using an escape valve from the Budget Control Act, which OCO provides exclusively for defense, with some minor deviations for other some national security programs and other agencies, but essentially this is the defense funding mechanism. As a result, what we are confronted with is a bill that is over-reliant upon the overseas contingency account. Ironically, it provides the same level of resources that the President asked for, but instead of putting it in the base budget, it grows OCO from roughly \$50 billion to \$90 billion, and that is all deficit spending. So this is not a way in which we are improving our fiscal situation; we are just adding \$40 billion of deficit spending.

The other aspect of this that is so critical is that if we adhere to the Budget Control Act, we will not adequately fund other agencies, and many of these other agencies are as vital to our national security as the Department of Defense—the FBI, Homeland Security, and the State Department.

We have had speakers on floor talk about—rightfully so—this huge refugee crisis we are seeing all through the Middle East because of the instability in Iraq and Syria. Those refugees—when we try to help them, that help is typically sent through the State Department, through USAID, through those agencies, and they are still within the sequester caps.

As a result, I was very pleased to offer both in the committee and on the floor an amendment that would essentially say: Let's stop for a second. We have this \$39 billion of additional OCO spending that we are giving to the Department of Defense because it is not subject to BCA. Before we do that, let's put a fence around it, to put it in colloquial terminology, let's just say that money is there because we recognize that the needs of the Department of Defense are critical and they have to be fulfilled, but it is going to stay

there until we fix the underlying issue, in my view, and that is the BCA, the sequestration issues that affect the State Department and every other Department in the government.

We had a very good debate. I am thankful to the chairman for encouraging that debate, allowing it to take place, and for it coming to a vote. We lost, 54 to 46. It had strong support on our side of the aisle, but it was a fair and full debate and we lost. The result, though, is that the problem remains. We are in a situation where, if we continue down this pathway, we will see the OCO account as an escape valve for defense while everyone else is subject to sequestration. I don't think that is good. I don't think it is good for defense. I certainly don't think it is good for these other agencies, and it is not good for our overall national security.

There are many who say: Don't worry about that. This is just an authorization bill. The appropriations bill is where we will have the appropriate discussion and debate.

I think that is going to happen, but my view is that authorizations and appropriations are so closely related that we couldn't ignore one and we couldn't ignore this authorization.

So, again, I think we have to recognize that underpinning this authorization, with all of its worthy programs, is this very difficult issue of overreliance on OCO funding.

Then there are some who say: Well, even so, it is a 1-year fix.

Well, I don't think that is the case at all. I think if we use these types of gimmicks—as some have called them—and accounting tricks once, our tendency to use them again will be there. In fact, once we use it once, it is easier to use it two, three, four, five times.

We have had this discussion on the floor, for example, interestingly enough, about how medical research in the Department of Defense went from \$25 million or so in 1992 to \$13 billion today. Well, the answer is easy. Back then, because we had similar—not identical—arrangements where we capped discretionary domestic spending but uncapped defense spending, people went to where—the chairman referred to the Willie Sutton approach—the money was. It was defense. And it has grown and it has grown. I think that is what is going to happen again if we take this trajectory, this pathway, using OCO.

I sense that if we make tough decisions today, it will benefit us in the long run. One of those tough decisions—and one I make very reluctantly—is to oppose this legislation. It is worthy legislation in many respects. I think we have to fix this problem, and I think we have to fix it now. I have tried in my efforts to focus the attention on the need to correct the BCA, the need to get us on a sustainable pathway where we do include within the base of the Department of Defense those funds they need to operate and then OCO really is for overseas contingency operations.

Let me conclude my comments by saying there has been tremendous cooperation and support. It starts with the chairman. I particularly want to thank his staff director, Chris Brose, for his great work.

I thank my colleagues on the Democratic side: Liz King, Gary Leeling, Creighton Greene, Kirk McConnell, Bill Monahan, Mike Kuiken, John Quirk, Jon Clark, Jonathan Epstein, Arun Seraphin, Carolyn Chuhta, Mike Noblet, Ozge Guzelsu, Maggie McNamara, Jody Bennett, and, once again, my staff director, Liz King.

I would like to thank the floor staff. I have come to appreciate more than I ever knew how vital a role they play on both sides of the aisle, and I thank them for what they have done.

Finally, this bill has some extraordinarily good provisions in it. Many of them are tough, hard, path-breaking provisions that are there because the chairman decided he was going to go all in on many different aspects, from acquisition, to troop support efforts, to incorporating provisions of the commission on pay and retirement, all of those things, and I commend him for that. It is just that I think I have to stand and say we have to fix this issue with respect to the underpinning fundamental budget approach which says: We will let BCA stand for every other agency, but we will be able to exploit, in a way, this OCO exception, and we will use it. And I think that is not the path we want to pursue.

With that, and again with my thanks to the chairman, I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arizona.

MR. MCCAIN. Mr. President, as we approach a final vote on the National Defense Authorization Act, I take this opportunity to thank my friend and colleague from Rhode Island, Senator REED. Despite his lack of substantive education somewhere on the Hudson River, he has been thoughtful, bipartisan, and he has maintained that throughout the consideration of this legislation.

We worked together through hundreds of amendments in markup and hundreds more during the past 2 weeks, and obviously we have some differences from time to time. Senator REED has never stopped searching for common ground and consensus, and so this legislation would not be what it is without his leadership and his cooperation.

I would just remind my friend, however, that the title of this legislation is “to authorize appropriations”—not to appropriate but to authorize appropriations. That is the task of the Appropriations Committee. So the OCO issue, which he and I are largely in agreement on, should have been repeal of sequestration. That is an issue which should be addressed where the authority lies—in appropriations, not in authorization. We can't increase or decrease a single penny of authorization except what was given to us through the Budget Committee process, which

was votes and decisions made on this floor on the budget.

So I say with respect and friendship, if there is a problem here, it is not with the authorization. We don't spend a penny. We authorize the expenditure of money. And that is an issue that my friend from Rhode Island and I disagree on, but it did not prohibit him, me, our staffs, and members of the committee on both sides of the aisle from working on a piece of legislation that, in my view, which is clearly subjective, is a reform bill—a reform bill, working together, that is almost unprecedented, at least in the last 30 years when you look at the extent and the nature of the reforms in this legislation.

I thank the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, for his commitment to resuming regular order. Under Senator MCCONNELL's leadership, the Senate has been able to take up this critical national security legislation on time, allowing for thoughtful consideration of amendments. This is how the Senate should operate—regular order, on time, giving our military the certainty they need to plan and execute their missions.

For 53 consecutive years, Congress has passed a National Defense Authorization Act. That is testimony to the vital importance of this legislation, which provides the necessary funding and authorities for our military to defend the Nation.

But perhaps at no time in the last half century has this legislation ever been so critical. Over the past few months, the Senate Armed Services Committee has received testimony from many of America's most respected statesmen, thinkers, and former military commanders. These leaders had a common warning, and that warning is clear: America is facing the most diverse and complex array of crises since the Second World War.

I won't go into all the different events that have taken place that authenticate that assertion by the most respected leaders who served under both Republican and Democratic administrations.

We have faced challenges before. We marshalled our power—both soft and hard power—to defend the rules-based national order that is the foundation of our prosperity and security. We have deterred aggression, defended allies, defeated adversaries, and built peace through strength. As we look at our challenges today, the question being asked all over the world by both friend and foe alike and the question we must answer now is, Are we equal to those challenges again?

There is only so much one piece of legislation can do to answer that question, but the National Defense Authorization Act before the Senate today is a strong first step toward rising to the challenge of an increasingly dangerous world. This is an ambitious piece of legislation, but in the times we live, we cannot afford business as usual in the Department of Defense. To prepare our

military to confront our present and future national security challenges, we must champion the cause of defense reform, rigorously root out Pentagon waste, and invest in modernization and next-generation technologies to maintain our military technological advantage. That is what this legislation is all about. It is a reform bill. It tackles acquisition reform, headquarters and management reform, military retirement reform, and personnel reform.

The bill authorizes every dollar of the President's budget request of \$612 billion but focuses these resources more directly on our warfighters. The Committee on Armed Services identified \$10 billion of excess and unnecessary spending in the budget request, and we reinvested those savings in the military capabilities our troops need to succeed. We did all of this while upholding our commitments to our servicemembers, retirees, and their families.

My friends, America's military technological advantage is eroding—and eroding fast. One of the primary causes of this is a broken Defense Acquisition System that takes too long, costs too much, and wastes billions of dollars—often on weapons programs that never become operational and with no one ever being held responsible. That is why this legislation includes the most sweeping acquisition reforms in a generation. We put the services back into the acquisition process, create new mechanisms to ensure accountability for results, streamline regulation, and open the defense acquisition process to our Nation's innovators.

This bill advances unprecedented reforms to our military retirement system. Under the current 70-year-old system, 83 percent of servicemembers leave the service without any retirement assets. This system excludes the vast majority of current servicemembers who will not complete 20 years of uniformed service, including many veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The NDAA creates a modernized retirement system and extends retirement benefits to the vast majority of servicemembers through a new plan, offering more value and choice. Under this new plan, 75 percent of servicemembers would get retirement benefits. This reform is estimated to save \$15 billion a year in the out years.

In addition to retirement reform, the NDAA focuses on improving the quality of life of our military servicemembers, retirees, and their families. It authorizes a 1.3-percent pay raise for members of the uniformed services at the grade of O-6 and below. The bill authorizes \$30 million in support for schools serving military dependent children, including those with severe disabilities. It includes many provisions to improve the military health system and TRICARE. The NDAA allows a TRICARE beneficiary up to four urgent care visits without making them get a preauthorization and requires the Department of Defense to

focus more on health care quality, patient safety, and beneficiary satisfaction by making them publish health outcome measures on their Web sites.

The NDAA builds on military justice reforms of the past few years to prevent and respond to military sexual assault. It contains a number of provisions aimed at strengthening the authorities of Special Victims' Counsel to provide services to victims of sexual assault. The legislation also enhances confidential reporting options for victims of sexual assault and increases access to timely disclosure of certain materials and information in connection with the prosecution of offenses.

On management reform, the NDAA ensures 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. While staff at Army Headquarters increased 60 percent over the past decade, the Army is now cutting brigade combat teams. The Air Force evaded mandated cuts to Headquarters personnel by creating two new Headquarters entities, while at the same time complaining it had insufficient personnel to maintain combat aircraft. The NDAA directs targeted reductions in Headquarters and administrative staff that would generate \$1.7 billion in savings in just the next fiscal year.

With these savings and billions more identified, this bill invests in providing critical military capabilities for our warfighters and meeting the unfunded priorities of our service chiefs and combatant commanders.

Even as challenges to maritime security increase in the Middle East and the Western Pacific and pressures on our shipbuilding budget increase, the Navy remains well below its fleet size requirement of 306 ships. The NDAA directs savings identified in the budget request to accelerate Navy modernization and shipbuilding, to mitigate impacts of the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine replacement, and to grow the Navy to meet rising threats.

As adversaries seek to counter and thwart American military power, the NDAA looks to the future and invests in the technologies that will maintain America's military technological superiority. It provides \$400 million in additional funding to support the so-called third offset strategy to outpace our emerging adversaries.

The NDAA details robust assistance to our allies and partners as they confront urgent challenges. The legislation authorizes nearly \$3.8 billion in support of the Afghan National Security Forces.

After an overwhelming bipartisan vote on an amendment offered by Senator FEINSTEIN and myself, the NDAA reaffirms the prohibition on torture and ensures that every U.S. Government agency always applies the same effective, humane interrogation standards as the U.S. military. Past interrogation policies compromised our values, stained our national honor, and

did little practical good. This legislation provides greater assurances that never again will the United States follow that dark path of sacrificing our values for our short-term security needs. I thank Senator FEINSTEIN for her hard work on this vitally important issue.

Finally, this legislation contains a bipartisan compromise on how to address the challenge of the detention facility of Guantanamo Bay. President Obama has said from day one of his Presidency that he wants to close Guantanamo. But 6½ years into his Presidency, the administration has never provided a plan to do so. This legislation requires the administration to submit that plan. We are simply asking the executive branch to explain where it will hold those set for trial, how it will continue to detain dangerous terrorists pursuant to the laws of war, and how it will mitigate the risks of moving this population.

If the administration can provide answers to these basic questions to the satisfaction of the American people and their elected representatives, then congressional restrictions on the movement of these detainees will be lifted and the plan can be implemented. If the Congress does not approve the plan, nothing would change. The ban on domestic transfers would stay in force, and the certification standards for foreign transfers included in the NDAA would remain.

My friends, America has reached a key inflection point. The rules-based international order, which has been anchored by U.S. hard power for seven decades, is being seriously stressed, and with it the foundation of our security and prosperity. It does not have to be this way. We can choose a better future for ourselves, make the right decisions now, and set our Nation on a better course.

That is what this legislation is all about—living up to our constitutional duty to provide for the common defense, increasing the effectiveness of our military, and restoring America's global leadership. This legislation is a small step towards accomplishing these goals, but it is an important step we can take right now, together. We owe the brave men and women in uniform nothing less.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The amendment was ordered to be engrossed, and the bill to be read a third time.

The bill was read the third time.

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

Mr. DURBIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM), the Senator from Utah (Mr. LEE), and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. SCOTT).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Missouri (Mrs. MCCASKILL), is necessarily absent.

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

The result was announced—yeas 71, nays 25, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 215 Leg.]

YEAS—71

Alexander	Ernst	Murray
Ayotte	Feinstein	Perdue
Barrasso	Fischer	Peters
Bennet	Flake	Portman
Blumenthal	Gardner	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hatch	Rounds
Burr	Heinrich	Rubio
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Sasse
Capito	Heller	Schatz
Carper	Hoeven	Sessions
Casey	Inhofe	Shaheen
Cassidy	Isakson	Shelby
Coats	Johnson	Stabenow
Cochran	Kaine	Sullivan
Collins	King	Tester
Cooms	Kirk	Thune
Corker	Klobuchar	Tillis
Cornyn	Lankford	Toomey
Cotton	McCain	Udall
Crapo	McConnell	Vitter
Daines	Moran	Warner
Donnelly	Murkowski	Wicker
Enzi	Murphy	

NAYS—25

Baldwin	Hirono	Reed
Booker	Leahy	Reid
Boxer	Manchin	Sanders
Brown	Markey	Schumer
Cardin	Menendez	Warren
Cruz	Merkley	Whitehouse
Durbin	Mikulski	Wyden
Franken	Nelson	
Gillibrand	Paul	

NOT VOTING—4

Graham	McCaskill
Lee	Scott

The bill (H.R. 1735), as amended, was passed.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I understand the Democratic leader would like to make some remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. REID. To respond to the majority leader, I have nothing to say until I hear what he has to say.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, America asks a lot of the men and women of its voluntary military force: to undertake dangerous missions in far-off lands, to spend months and

years away from their families, and always to sacrifice so that we might live in freedom.

These brave men and women do it all without reservation. They ask precious little in return, save for the resources they need to do the job and the support they need to look after their families. It is the least we can do, to provide for them. We just voted 71 to 25 for a bill that promises a lot of things for our men and women.

It would be very cruel indeed for any Senator who just made that promise to turn around now and block the rest of us from fulfilling the pledge to our troops. Passing the legislation before us is a way to fulfill the promise we just made, 71 to 25. That is why nearly every Democrat voted to pass it in committee, 27 to 3. That is why Democrats have hailed this bill as a win-win-win and a victory for each of their States.

They know it gives President Obama the same level of funding he asked for. They know it adheres to a bipartisan spending level that both parties agreed to, that President Obama signed into law, and that President Obama campaigned on in the last Presidential election.

Now our friends face a choice.

Option 1: Allow the promise just made to our troops to be fulfilled by voting for a bill they can't stop praising.

Option 2: Break the promise they just made by killing a bill they claim to love, all in the service of some unrelated and completely incomprehensible partisan plan.

It is the road of bipartisanship and support for our troops that brought us this far. We shouldn't let partisan politics trip us up now. We don't have to—not if commonsense Democrats continue to prioritize pay raises and medical care for our troops over some unrelated gambit to funnel more cash to bureaucracies such as the IRS and the EPA.

I will just leave my colleagues with something one of our Democratic friends said of men and women in the military. Here is what he had to say: "Just as we called on them to protect us, they are calling on us to provide them with the resources they need. . . ."

They are. Senators just promised they would, 71 to 25. They just made the promise. So now they shouldn't block us from fulfilling that promise by preventing us from getting on the Defense appropriations measure.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The minority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the bill that just passed the Senate, the Defense authorization bill, has 52 Republicans voting to fix sequestration. Only 2 voted against it. We are all in favor of fixing the sequester.

My friend, the Republican leader, is talking in a dreamland.

Ash Carter, the Secretary of Defense, is a very good man. We are so fortunate