

sit down and negotiate a long-term bipartisan plan to avoid another shutdown. From the start, it has been clear that Republicans are not serious about governing.

A party that is serious about governing does not do the things they have done. For example, in the wake of mass shootings by individuals—it is in every newspaper in the country, and it has been for weeks. There were new deaths in Tennessee and Colorado. It doesn't matter. I am sorry to say that we have lost track of where they all are.

Even after these mass shootings, Republicans still want to cut our funding for mental health services. Gee-whiz—how could they do that? The Republican bill cuts funding for substance abuse and mental health services. They blocked research for funding for the Centers for Disease Control to study the cause and effect of gun violence. They are cutting funding for counseling programs in elementary and secondary schools. That is only on one subject. A party that is serious about governing doesn't cut critical funding to our Nation's security. They have cut funding for the Bureau of Tobacco, Alcohol and Firearms, they cut funding to vital cyber-security upgrades and financial agencies. They cut funding for U.S. marshals, the brave men and women who helped to catch those two murderers who escaped from the prison in New York.

A party that is serious about governing doesn't wage war against our Nation's infrastructure. They have cut funding for the Nation's electric grid by 40 percent, leaving our utilities susceptible to cyber attacks. Senate Republicans have cut transit projects all across this country. They have cut funding of the air traffic control system. The list is endless. There are cuts to education, women's health, agriculture, energy, and job training.

If the Republican leader and the Speaker wanted to get serious about governing, they would sit down with us and craft a bipartisan compromise to prevent another government shutdown.

On the bill before us, the Speaker of the House of Representatives has referred to that bill by using a very derogatory word which starts with the letter "s." If the Republican leader and the Speaker want to get serious about governing, then they need to sit down with us so we can craft a bipartisan compromise to prevent another government shutdown. Instead they have already given up. Both the Speaker and the Republican leader have said that what we are going to do is abandon the appropriations process in favor of a continuing resolution, which is a buzzword for failure. Failure is another word for a government shutdown. It is another way to close our government.

By relying on a continuing resolution, it leaves in place sequester cuts and underfunds critical priorities for working American families. Republicans are neglecting their responsibilities. They are not showing up for

work. It doesn't have to be this way. We have time to come up with a balanced solution to keep our government funded. We have 2 months to come together, but a CR will not work. Sequestration will kick in, and it will harm every agency in the government. It will especially hurt the middle class of our country. If they are serious about governing, they will work together with us on appropriations bills rather than ignore us.

Republicans need to sit down and get to work on their most important job, as is dictated by the Constitution.

I apologize to everyone for taking more time than I normally do, but it was brought about by my friend the Republican leader.

I ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

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

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 22, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 22) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

McConnell modified amendment No. 2266, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell amendment No. 2421 (to amendment No. 2266), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell (for Inhofe) amendment No. 2533 (to amendment No. 2421), relating to Federal-aid highways and highway safety construction programs.

McConnell amendment No. 2417 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2266), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2418 (to amendment No. 2417), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be divided in the usual form.

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

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

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

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

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I had some time reserved, and I am halfway through that time now. So I will talk a little faster than usual because we have an Armed Services meeting right now, and we are trying get to the bottom of this side agreement that was apparently made with Iran.

I wish to applaud the Senate for taking another step, and that is what we are going to be doing in just a few minutes with the DRIVE Act in Congress with these votes, and tomorrow we expect to see a final vote for passage so we can send it to the House. This will be my sixth reauthorization over the past number of years. These bills are all about compromise. It is hard to do. There are a lot of Members of this body who didn't think they got what they wanted in this bill, and I have to say that I didn't get what I wanted. I suspect that the occupier of the chair didn't get what he wanted, and Senator BOXER didn't get what she wanted. That is not the way this works because this is a bill to get us away from the short-term extensions.

It has been obvious that Members of this body are opposed to moving to a 6-year reauthorization bill and are willing to use any procedural means to slow it down, and that is what happened. If we had not dragged on yesterday, and if we had yielded back some of the time, we could have had these votes that we are about to have now yesterday. If we had done that, we could have final passage today, and it would be sent over to the House before they leave. They are going to leave. That doesn't mean that this is not important. What we are doing today and tomorrow is passing this bill. Even though the House is going home, they all agree that we need a good, long-term bill as soon as they get back. That is why we have a motion before us for a short-term delay—so they will have time to do it.

We will have a good bill for them. We have worked on it for several months. It passed out of committee unanimously. Every Republican and every Democrat voted for it. We will have a chance to do that.

Also, I have State sheets on every State. I can read off how every State benefits from this 6-year reauthorization bill. All you have to do is talk to the Governors, mayors, and the departments of transportation across the country. They fully expected Congress only to deliver piecemeal extensions, as we have in the past.

We have to keep in mind that the last reauthorization bill that we had was in 2005. I remember that vividly because I was the author of the bill. When we passed it, everyone rejoiced. Yesterday the Senator from Minnesota was talking about the tragedy of the fallen bridge in Minnesota, where 13 people died. I told the story about how a bridge in Oklahoma City had a chunk of concrete fall off of it and hit a mother of three children and kill her. You don't want to wait until this happens.

We have bridges in this country—and we have talked about each one of them on the Senate floor during the discussion on this bill—that are deteriorating, and we have to do something about it.

If any Member or the staff of any Member—I know the staffs are all

watching right now. We have every State listed on these sheets, and it shows what they will have and how they will benefit from the DRIVE Act, which will be before us in a moment. If we don't do it, there are consequences, and I have to remind everyone of that today as we approach a shutdown of the transit programs. I urge my colleagues to join in voting yes on this procedural hurdle today. If you vote no, you are reinforcing current laws and extensions, which is the worst possible outcome.

One area deals with big projects. We cannot do big projects with 3-month, 4-month or even 1-year extensions. We have gone through 33 short-term extensions since the SAFETEA-LU bill was passed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator's time has expired.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be given 5 additional minutes.

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

Mr. INHOFE. We have the problem of not having any of the big projects, and everyone knows that is a problem. The reason big projects can't be done is due to the costs. But a study has been done by Gary Ridley, who is one of the foremost authorities nationwide on this subject, and in that study he came to the conclusion that it costs an additional 30 percent off the top to do short-term extensions.

If there is anyone who is a conservative and wants to take the conservative position on this issue, the conservative position is to vote for a long-term reauthorization bill, and that is what is before us now. The current funding has no growth—not even for inflation. The DRIVE Act provides growth in the highway and transit systems in each State. For those who are interested, we have all of this listed State by State. The current law gives States and local governments no certainty. However, the certainty is there in the DRIVE Act. So we have every reason to do this.

Project delivery. We are going to be able to deliver the projects. We can't even start the projects on short-term extensions.

Freight. We have a freight section. We have never had a freight section before for moving freight across the country.

Transparency. Everything is there so that everyone can see every nickel that is used. This is the most transparent of all of the reauthorizations we have had.

Lastly, innovation. The DRIVE Act prepares our transportation system for the future. That is why it is so important that we get to it today.

I compliment the leaders for moving us forward and making every effort to get this done before the House goes home.

This will give them a good start on what to do during the recess.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2417

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to table amendment No. 2417.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion to table.

The motion was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2533

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the Inhofe amendment No. 2533.

The amendment (No. 2533) was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2421, AS AMENDED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to vitiate the yeas and nays on amendment No. 2421.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2421, as amended.

The amendment (No. 2421), as amended, was agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2266, AS MODIFIED, AS AMENDED

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2266, as modified, as amended.

The yeas and nays were previously ordered.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

The result was announced—yeas 62, nays 38, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 258 Leg.]

YEAS—62

Alexander	Feinstein	McConnell
Ayotte	Fischer	Moran
Baldwin	Franken	Murray
Barrasso	Gardner	Nelson
Bennet	Graham	Peters
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Boxer	Heitkamp	Rounds
Burr	Heller	Sanders
Cantwell	Hoeven	Schatz
Capito	Inhofe	Sessions
Cassidy	Isakson	Shaheen
Coats	Johnson	Stabenow
Cochran	Kaine	Sullivan
Collins	King	Tester
Coons	Kirk	Thune
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Tillis
Daines	Leahy	Vitter
Durbin	Manchin	Whitehouse
Enzi	McCain	Wicker
Ernst	McCaskill	

NAYS—38

Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reid
Booker	Hirono	Risch
Brown	Lankford	Rubio
Cardin	Lee	Sasse
Carper	Markey	Schumer
Casey	Menendez	Scott
Corker	Merkley	Shelby
Cotton	Mikulski	Toomey
Crapo	Murkowski	Udall
Cruz	Murphy	Warner
Donnelly	Paul	Warren
Flake	Perdue	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	

The amendment (No. 2266), as modified, as amended, was agreed to.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

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

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

The legislative clerk read as follows.

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on H.R. 22, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, Orrin G. Hatch, John Barrasso, Pat Roberts, Richard Burr, Thom Tillis, David Vitter, Lindsey Graham, Kelly Ayotte, Lamar Alexander, Daniel Coats, John Hoeven, James M. Inhofe, Roger F. Wicker, Susan M. Collins, John Thune.

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

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on H.R. 22, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, as amended, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 65, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 259 Leg.]

YEAS—65

Alexander	Fischer	McConnell
Ayotte	Flake	Moran
Baldwin	Franken	Murray
Barrasso	Gardner	Nelson
Bennet	Graham	Peters
Blunt	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hatch	Roberts
Boxer	Heitkamp	Rounds
Burr	Heller	Sanders
Cantwell	Hoeven	Schatz
Capito	Inhofe	Scott
Cassidy	Isakson	Sessions
Coats	Johnson	Shaheen
Cochran	Kaine	Stabenow
Collins	King	Sullivan
Coons	Kirk	Tester
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Thune
Daines	Lankford	Tillis
Durbin	Leahy	Vitter
Enzi	Manchin	Whitehouse
Ernst	McCain	Wicker
Feinstein	McCaskill	

NAYS—35

Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reid
Booker	Hirono	Risch
Brown	Lee	Rubio
Cardin	Markey	Sasse
Carper	Menendez	Schumer
Casey	Merkley	Shelby
Corker	Mikulski	Toomey
Cotton	Murkowski	Udall
Crapo	Murphy	Warner
Cruz	Paul	Warren
Donnelly	Perdue	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 65, the nays are 35.

Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF ALLISON BECK TO BE FEDERAL MEDIATION AND CONCILIATION DIRECTOR

NOMINATION OF JEFFREY MICHAEL PRIETO TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

NOMINATION OF CAROL FORTINE OCHOA TO BE INSPECTOR GENERAL, GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Allison Beck, of the District of Columbia, to be Federal Mediation and Conciliation Director; Jeffrey Michael Prieto, of California, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture; and Carol Fortine Ochoa, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, General Services Administration.

VOTE ON BECK NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Allison Beck, of the District of Columbia, to be Federal Mediation and Conciliation Director?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON PRIETO NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Jeffrey Michael Prieto, of California, to be General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture?

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON OCHOA NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Carol Fortine Ochoa, of Virginia, to be Inspector General, General Services Administration?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will now resume legislative session.

HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the next 40 minutes be under the control of the Democratic

side and that the time be equally divided among the following Senators: REID, BOXER, WHITEHOUSE, MARKEY, SCHATZ, and SCHUMER.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, at virtually every caucus we have, every Tuesday caucus, I have Senators report on what is going on in the world as it relates to climate change.

I wish these were fun-filled presentations where people laughed, clapped, and smiled, but they are not. They are very downbeat because each Senator who makes a presentation—whether it is the senior Senator from New Hampshire, who talks about moose dying in her State because the fleas and ticks no longer die in the cold weather, she explained how about one-third of the moose are dead in New Hampshire, or whether it is the junior Senator from the State of Michigan talking about what is going on in that beautiful State of Michigan.

Without going through the list of Senators who have reported what is going on as they see it with climate change, everyone within the sound of my voice should rest assured things are not good. Our world is changing and has already changed drastically.

The Earth is undergoing a shift, a manmade climate change shift. We don't need to travel to the polar icecaps for proof, although if we did, we would see that too. There is evidence all around. Talking about the polar icecap, think about Alaska. Millions of acres are on fire as we speak—not a fire as we see in the forest or the range lands of Nevada, where you see fire flames flip up into the sky so high it is hard to believe sometimes. But this is burning underground at the permafrost. It is awful what is happening in Alaska.

But let's talk about Nevada. Nevada is an unusual State in many different ways. We have over 32 mountains more than 11,000 feet high. We have one mountain we share with California that is 14,000 feet high. We have beautiful, beautiful wilderness.

I have had the good fortune during my time in the Senate to legislate. When I came here, we had about 60,000 acres of wilderness. We are now approaching about 4 million acres of wilderness, and it is beautiful, beautiful country. There are beautiful mountains, antelope, and mountain sheep, of course. We even have mountain goats. It is a beautiful, beautiful State.

We share Lake Tahoe with California—beautiful, beautiful Lake Tahoe that Mark Twain said is the fairest place on all the Earth. The water level this summer is at a record low. Water we used to take for granted that would come out of the lake isn't coming out anymore.

Snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains is a fraction of normal levels. A few decades ago, we used to have

piles of snow that were unbelievable, tens and tens of feet of snow every winter—no longer. In fact, this past March, World Cup ski cross and snowboardcross races had to be cancelled. Why? We had no snow—no snow at a place where we had the Winter Olympics in Squaw Valley—no snow. They cancelled the races.

As I have said on the floor, because it is so traumatic as far as I am concerned, many of our black bears aren't even hibernating. It is not cold enough. This past June, a few weeks ago—Lake Mead at one time was the largest manmade lake in America. It isn't anymore because of Lake Powell, which overtook Nevada for the largest manmade lake in America. Lake Powell is on the road to being eliminated. It is part of the great Colorado River program that allows the States of California—all the upper Colorado States—Arizona, and Nevada, to survive.

This past June, Lake Mead water levels sunk to record lows—record lows. Towns that were buried with the making of the Boulder, Hoover Dam, we can see them again. St. Thomas is an example. An early Mormon settlement there was buried in the water—no longer. Now they are doing archeological work on what was buried under Lake Mead previously.

Now, that is only Nevada, and that is only a touch of what is happening in Nevada. Wildfires are devastating our State, wiping out native grasses and plants, causing endangered species that need to be listed as threatened or going extinct because, for example, if you have birds survive in our sagebrush, sagebrush is burned and no longer exists, you get these foreign species that come in, mainly cheatgrass, and it is no good for anything other than more fires. That is what we have in Nevada, devastating wildfires.

Around the United States, massive floods are destroying life around the globe. The poles are melting. By the year 2050, scientists estimate the sea level will rise in the world by 16 feet.

What will that do to Florida? Of all the major cities in the world, with virtually no exception, they are all in coastal areas. What coastal city in the world is going to be hit hardest in the world by this climate change, the rising of the seas? Miami, FL, the State of Florida.

Massive floods are destroying life around the globe. Poles are melting. I repeat, ocean resources are being exhausted.

Stunningly, Republicans in Congress are ignoring changes to our environment that we are all witnessing. They are here. They are in denial. They are in what I refer to as Koch denial because, remember, everybody, the two Koch brothers don't want us to do anything on climate change. Why? No. 1, it may prevent them from making more billions. They are heavily invested in tar sands in Canada, and, of course, their original fortunes were made in