

myself and Senator FLAKE, that would pave the way for the establishment of the Sonoran Corridor and the future Interstate 11, I-11, ensuring Arizona has the critical infrastructure it needs to develop significant international trade routes for the Western United States. These provisions would designate the Sonoran Corridor as a future interstate to connect I-19 to I-10 south of the Tucson International Airport and extend the future I-11 through the State of Nevada to I-80 and south toward Arizona's southern border.

As the population in Arizona continues to grow and innovative businesses increasingly settle in our State, we must ensure that we have the infrastructure in place to foster economic development, international trade and job creation. These two top-priority transportation projects will make Arizona a key part of an international trade route that reaches all the way to the southern border. I appreciate Chairman INHOFE's support of these important provisions, as well as Senator FLAKE, Governor Doug Ducey and leaders from across the State of Arizona for their strong partnership in advancing these designations that will connect Arizona businesses and communities to major domestic and international trade partners.

I am proud of the bipartisan effort that went into this bill. It is unfortunate that we ultimately had to pass yet another short-term highway extension today to avoid a transportation shutdown across the country. This stop-gap measure should be the last. When we return following the August break, I urge the House to take up and pass this bill and send it to the President's desk for signature.

REBUILD ACT

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I join with my House colleague from Baltimore, Congressman ELLIAH CUMMINGS, to introduce the REBUILD Act. The people who live in our most distressed neighborhoods deserve a government on their side—one that works as hard for them as they work for their own families and communities. This bill is about rehabilitating neighborhoods, making them healthier and safer, and creating jobs today and jobs tomorrow for communities that need it most. By supporting small businesses, rebuilding infrastructure, expanding opportunity for our young people and tackling crime, we will lay the foundation for a brighter future.

The REBUILD Act is an emergency supplemental bill for fiscal year 2015 to help inner-city neighborhoods across the United States. It focuses on four key areas: physical infrastructure, meeting compelling human needs, community safety, and assistance to small business owners.

This bill provides robust funding for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development programs that will remove blight, rehabilitate aging housing

properties, including those with lead paint, and fund youth and senior centers. I especially want to highlight the Community Development Block Grant funding to help those communities most impacted by violence and civil unrest this year. That includes my hometown of Baltimore. This bill also extends the moving-to-work contracts through 2028.

For meeting compelling human needs, this bill funds U.S. Department of Labor's job training and apprenticeship programs to help dislocated workers, veterans and youth make a living wage and learn new job skills. It also funds the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy Start Initiative. This program helps moms and infants get access to primary and preventative health care to reduce infant mortality rates.

In the area of community safety, there is significant funding for targeted U.S. Department of Justice grant programs. This funding will help reduce youth violence, tackle crime hot spots controlled by gangs and rampant with gun violence, and reduce methamphetamine and heroin trafficking. There is additional funding for drug, mental health and veterans courts to break the cycle of drug use and criminal behavior.

For our small business owners and entrepreneurs, this bill provides loans, grants, training and counseling services. There also is money to help underserved businesses with Federal contracting.

Recent events like the riots in Baltimore remind us of the unmet needs of our Nation's inner city neighborhoods. We must do more. This means immediately getting to work on a sequel to the landmark Murray-Ryan budget deal to replace sequester. The impact of the status quo and deep cuts to our Federal programs on the mission to lift up these communities is unacceptable. The opportunity of the American Dream should be within every American's reach.

VETERAN HOUSING STABILITY ACT OF 2015

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, yesterday, as ranking member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I introduced S. 1885, the Veteran Housing Stability Act of 2015. I would like to thank Senators SANDERS, BROWN, and HIRONO for joining me to introduce this bill, and the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans and the National Alliance to End Homelessness for their support of this legislation. At a time when the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, has taken on an aggressive initiative to end homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015, much progress has been made yet there is still more progress needed.

The VA initiative has led to a 33 percent decrease in the homeless veteran population since 2010. These declining numbers are a reflection of the com-

bined efforts of VA and its Federal, State, local, tribal, and community partners as they continue aggressive efforts to decrease veteran homelessness and implement a system through which veterans who become homeless can be rapidly placed in appropriate housing situations that meet their needs. The statistics are staggering—49,000 veterans are homeless in America today, 1 in 10 of all homeless men and women—a searing failure in the greatest, strongest Nation in the world's history. It reflects a failure to keep faith that this legislation will help correct. We cannot allow another veteran to slip through the cracks. We must give communities the flexibility and tools they need to create housing systems that can maximize existing resources collaboratively in order to identify and sustain appropriate housing placements for vulnerable veterans.

The legislation would reaffirm this Nation's commitment to safe and affordable housing for veterans by improving and expanding upon VA's programs to prevent and end homelessness among veterans. VA's housing programs for homeless and at-risk veterans must modernize to ensure that they are meeting the needs of the very veterans they are intended to serve. One of the challenges many identify as causing difficulty is one that mainstream housing programs also struggle with—insufficient availability of safe, affordable, permanent housing options.

This measure will address the egregious, abhorrent problem of veteran homelessness with several commonsense, effective steps to increase housing for homeless and at-risk veterans. The Homeless Veterans Prevention Act of 2015 would expand access to housing by requiring VA to collaborate with U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and other entities to conduct more robust landlord outreach and encourage more landlords to rent to veterans.

Further, this bill would modify a VA program that provides critical savings to transitional housing providers, allowing these groups to spend limited funding to provide high-quality services rather than to retire the debt they would take on to acquire a facility in which to operate. VBA's Acquired Property Sales for Homeless Providers Program sells homes from VA's foreclosure inventory at a discount to non-profit organizations for use as transitional housing for homeless veterans. As VA continues to shift its homeless programs into an approach that meets veterans at their point of need, rather than choosing a one-size-fits-all solution, more services are being provided under the housing-first model, which pairs housing with appropriate levels of case management. This pairing allows veterans to deal with the underlying issues that caused homelessness, rather than attempting to work through them while simultaneously looking for housing. It is critical that programs that offer more than transitional housing be